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Recapturing a Homeric Legacy

EDITED BY CASEY DUÉ

CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES

TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

DISTRIBUTED BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, AND LONDON, ENGLAND

2009

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Edited by Casey Dué

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Published by Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C.

Distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England

Printed in Ann Arbor, MI by Edwards Brothers, Inc.

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Recapturing a Homeric Legacy : images and insights from the Venetus A manuscript of the Iliad / edited by Casey Dué.

p. cm. -- (Hellenic studies ; 35)

English and Greek, with preface also in Italian.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-674-03202-6 (alk. paper)

I. Homer. Iliad. 2. Homer. Iliad--Manuscripts. 3. Biblioteca nazionale marciana. Manuscript. Gr. 454 I. Dué, Casey, 1974- II. Title. III. Series.

PA4037.A5R44 2009

883'.01--dc22

Recapturing a Homeric Legacy: Images and Insights from the Venetus A Manuscript of the *Iliad*

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Introduzione

MARINO ZORZI

Il famoso manoscritto di cui si offre la riproduzione apparteneva al cardinale Bessarione. Esso proveniva da Costantinopoli, la capitale dell'Impero Romano d'Oriente, da secoli ormai greco. Benché ridotto a un territorio di modestissima estensione, interamente circondato dai Turchi, l'Impero greco era ancora lo scrigno meraviglioso di inestimabili tesori artistici e culturali.

Bessarione fu una figura di straordinaria importanza nell'umanesimo italiano ed europeo. Egli consacrò grandi sforzi—coronati dal successo—a favorire la penetrazione della cultura greca nella civiltà occidentale; e raccolse una grande biblioteca, con l'intento di creare un luogo, ideale ma anche materiale, dove i suoi connazionali potessero trovare intatti, una volta passata la tempesta dell'invasione turca, i capolavori della loro grande civiltà. Questo era il suo intento, ch'egli espresse in una commovente lettera indirizzata all'amico Michele Apostolis poco dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli, nel 1453: formare una biblioteca nazionale ellenica, per i Greci anzitutto, ma anche a beneficio dell'umanità.

Nel 1468 egli donò la sua biblioteca alla Repubblica Veneta, certo che il governo veneziano, in cui egli nutriva una profonda fiducia, avrebbe conservato il suo dono per sempre. La sua aspirazione non fu delusa. La sua biblioteca ancora sussiste, conservata nella Libreria di San Marco, o Marciana.

Omero non poteva mancare nella biblioteca del cardinale, ch'egli voleva contenesse tutte le opere rimaste dell'antica civiltà ellenica; e infatti vi sono presenti vari codici omerici, ma nessuno di un'importanza paragonabile all'*Homerus Venetus A*, qui riprodotto.

Il testo dell'*Iliade* fu accuratamente e criticamente copiato da un dotto bizantino del X secolo; ma la massima importanza spetta alle glosse, nelle quali viene riassunta la secolare elaborazione critica dei grandi studiosi del Museion di Alessandria: un'intera biblioteca in un solo manoscritto! Senza i fogli pergamenacei di questo singolo codice noi ignoreremmo tesori di intelligenza e di cultura, dato che i manoscritti da cui il dotto bizantino trae le sue note sono perduti.

Nel Settecento Jean Baptiste d'Ansse de Villoison pubblicò un'edizione di queste glosse, l'unica uscita a stampa sino ad oggi. Ma non c'è confronto possibile con questa edizione in facsimile, che apre straordinarie possibilità agli studiosi.



Foreword

Sono certo che Bessarione ne sarebbe stato molto contento. Egli era un grande ammiratore del progresso tecnico, in tutti i campi, in particolare dell'arte della stampa, che protesse e finanziò. Il suo grande sogno era di dare la massima possibile diffusione ai capolavori dell'antica civiltà greca, e per questo appunto egli apprezzava l'arte tipografica, che consentiva una circolazione di quelle opere prima impensabile. Possiamo immaginare come sarebbe stato entusiasta se avesse saputo che il mondo intero potrebbe ora leggere il suo Omero a casa, con poca spesa, solo mettendo in moto un nuovo strumento.

Per queste ragioni sono orgoglioso di esser riuscito a raggiungere con il Centro di Studi Greci di Harvard un accordo che ha permesso alla Marciana e a Harvard di collaborare al fine di ottenere questa straordinaria riproduzione. Questo accordo è stato uno degli ultimi atti conclusi durante il periodo della mia direzione della Marciana, e sono felice di averlo compiuto. Sono quindi molto grato al professor Gregory Nagy e agli altri membri della sua organizzazione, in particolare ai suoi abilissimi tecnici, nonché naturalmente alla mia collega Susy Marcon e ai suoi collaboratori dell'Ufficio Manoscritti, che hanno reso possibile la realizzazione di questa importante operazione culturale.

Foreword

MARINO ZORZI

The famous manuscript reproduced in this volume belonged to the collection of Cardinal Bessarion. It came from Constantinople, the capital of the Roman Empire in the East, which had been Greek for many centuries. Although reduced to a territory of very modest dimensions, entirely surrounded by the Turks, Constantinople was a marvelous container of inestimable artistic and cultural treasures.

Cardinal Bessarion was a figure of the utmost importance in Italian and European humanism. He endeavored with great effort to successfully diffuse Greek culture within Western civilization. He amassed a precious library for the purpose of creating an ideal place where, once the storm of the Turkish invasion was over, the remaining Greeks could find the masterpieces of their civilization preserved and available. This was his intent, an intent he expressed in a moving letter addressed to his friend Michael Apostolis, just after the fall of Constantinople in 1453: to create a national Greek library, for the Greeks above all, but also for the benefit of humanity.

In 1468 Bessarion donated his library to the Venetian Republic with the certainty that the government of the city, one he greatly trusted, would preserve it forever. His hope was not betrayed and his library still exists in Venice, in the Marciana, the Library of St Mark.

Bessarion wanted the library to contain all the works of ancient Greek culture, and for this reason the work of Homer could not have been absent from his collection. And, in fact, his library had many manuscripts of Homer, but by far the most important was the text of the *Iliad* known as the Venetus A, which is reproduced here.

The text of the *Iliad* was accurately copied by a scholar of the 10th century; even more important are the glossae (marginal scholia), where the critical and cultural elaborations of the great scholars of the Museion of Alexandria are assembled: a whole library in a single manuscript! Without this single manuscript treasures of intelligence and knowledge would be unknown to us, as the original manuscripts from which the Byzantine scholar took his notes are lost.

In the 18th century Jean Baptiste d'Ansse de Villoison published an edition of these glossae. Even his edition, however, cannot be compared with this new facsimile edition, which will open extraordinary scholarly opportunities.

X FOREWORD

I am sure that Cardinal Bessarion would be happy with it, as he was a great admirer of technological developments, in particular of the art of printing, which he protected and financed. His great dream was to give the widest possible diffusion to the masterpieces of the ancient Greek civilization, and for this reason he appreciated printing. We can now imagine how enthusiastic he would be, had he known that the whole world would be able to read his Homer, at home, with a limited expense, just by utilizing a new tool.

For these reasons I am proud to have been able to reach an agreement with the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies which allowed the Marciana and Harvard to cooperate in order to produce this extraordinary electronic facsimile.

This was one of the last acts of my service as Director of the Marciana and I am really happy to have been able to do it. I am grateful to Professor Gregory Nagy and to the other members and skillful technicians of the Harvard team, and of course to my colleague Susy Marcon and her collaborators, who made this great enterprise both possible and successful.

Homeri Ilias, in pergameno, pulchra

SUSY MARCON

Opera della raffinata editoria constantinopolitana nell'epoca della rinascenza macedone, il codice marciano Gr. Z. 454 (=822) presenta in un unico manoscritto di grandi dimensioni (mm 390 x 290) il testo dell'*Iliade* e gli scolii che erano stati elaborati lungo il tempo, a partire dall'Alessandria tolemaica e dai commentatori e filologi tardo antichi. Di tali commenti il manoscritto, denominato Venetus A, risulta in buona parte testimone unico. La datazione al medio decimo secolo, o poco oltre, è stata proposta in particolare sulla base dell'analisi paleografica della scrittura, una minuscola strettamente omogenea a quella dell'Aristotele Parigino Gr. 1741. Congruenti i capilettera decorati che danno inizio a ciascuno dei libri. Posti all'esterno dello specchio di scrittura, hanno dimensioni veramente piccole, e presentano colori brillanti come di smalto con solo oro, azzurro intenso e rosso.

I 316 fogli, di scelta pergamena, furono scritti seguendo una messa in pagina che teneva conto della collocazione tradizionale del testo accompagnato da apparati, secondo uno schema che si ritrova nelle edizioni coeve. La rigatura venne tracciata, dal lato pelo sui fogli aperti, lasciando larghi i margini esterni e inferiori delle pagine, dove righe aggiuntive erano destinate ad accogliere con regolarità il vasto apparato degli scolii.

Trascorsi cinque secoli, il manoscritto giunse nella casa romana del Bessarione, portato attraverso una delle numerose vie che permisero al cardinale greco di ricoverare la cultura e l'eredità di Bisanzio nel mondo latino, che era ormai vivamente interessato ai testi e alla civiltà greca. Un'altra, importante *Iliade* di simile concezione, il manoscritto Venetus B, oggi marciano Gr. Z. 453 (=821), era stato acquistato dallo stesso Bessarione prima del 1468, attraverso l'umanista Giovanni Aurispa. La presente *Iliade* sembra invece non potersi riconoscere nell'inventario bessarioneo del 1468, e la si trova invece inserita tra i volumi portati a Venezia dopo la morte del cardinale, avvenuta nel 1472. Nell'inventario del 1474 è riconoscibile tra i libri accuratamente scritti e di buona lezione, e dunque belli: "*Homeri Ilias, in pergameno, pulchra.*"

Come era solito fare per i suoi manoscritti più importanti, Bessarione impose nuova vita a quell'*Iliade*, intervenendo con un restauro integrativo. È stata riferita alla sua stessa mano la copia del testo nei diciannove fogli inseriti nel codice in sostituzione di quelli caduti. I nuovi fogli ricomposero la regolarità dei quaterni originali. Le segnature che furono allora apposte lungo i fascicoli mediante lettere latine, in modo



Introduction

analogo a quanto venne fatto in altri codici della medesima biblioteca, comprovano che il restauro bessarioneo comportò una nuova cucitura delle pergamene, e probabilmente una legatura diversa.

Anche gli undici fogli che adesso si trovano uniti, anteposti all'*Iliade* nel Venetus A, si trovarono nella casa del Bessarione. Tra alcune pergamene originali, dal testo lacunoso, furono inseriti fogli bianchi, rigati in maniera analoga alle integrazioni apportate nell'*Iliade*, ma qui lasciati bianchi, privi della desiderata integrazione testuale. Contengono testi accessori introduttivi all'*Iliade*: la *Vita Homeri*, e parti della *Chrestomathia* di Proclo, corredati da un ciclo illustrativo con episodi della guerra di Troia. Scrittura e miniature hanno portato a riferire questa parte interpolata a un ambito provinciale, e a un'età più tarda di almeno due secoli o più rispetto al corpo principale dell'attuale manoscritto. Questi fogli, giunti al Bessarione alquanto lacunosi, forse restarono allora slegati: non portano segnature latine, e ora si presentano disturbati nella sequenza, e con importanti cadute di pigmenti nelle miniature.

Il codice cambiò il suo aspetto esterno verso il 1740, quando lo Stato veneziano volle dare una veste uniforme ai preziosissimi manoscritti, affinché la biblioteca si eguagliasse alle raccolte reali europee. Il codice ebbe allora una nuova cucitura moderna, con la coperta dalle assi in cartone che porta impresso sulla pelle il leone simbolo di san Marco. Lo studio degli scolii minuti perseguito nel Settecento, continuato nel secolo successivo, e favorito dall'edizione facsimilare Sijthoff, del 1901, può ora essere affrontato con maggiore agio grazie alle riprese fotografiche effettuate a cura del Center for Hellenic Studies, che, multispettrali, portano in evidenza anche le lettere evanide. Del resto, il manoscritto è stato molto consultato nel tempo, tanto da aver avuto necessità di un restauro moderno. Come osserva Silvia Pugliese, che, quale responsabile del settore restauro della Biblioteca, ha seguito presso la Biblioteca Marciana alcuni aspetti relativi alla manipolazione del codice ai fini del progetto attuato in collaborazione con il CHS, il restauro, eseguito a Venezia nel 1970–1971 dal laboratorio del Monastero di San Giorgio Maggiore, ha comportato una nuova cucitura e il rifacimento di parti della legatura settecentesca, nonché incollaggi e risarcimenti di alcune parti marginali delle pergamene.

A Lovely Edition of the *Iliad* of Homer, on Parchment

SUSY MARCON

The Marciana Library's codex Gr.Z. 454 (=822), the result of refined editing in Constantinople in the age of the Macedonian Renaissance, presents in a single, large manuscript (mm 390 x 290) the text of the *Iliad* and accompanying scholia accumulated over centuries, beginning with the scholars of Ptolemaic Alexandria and the late antique annotators and philologists. This manuscript, called Venetus A, is for the most part the only surviving witness to those commentaries. It is dated between the mid-to-end of the 10th century, dating based primarily on the paleographic analysis of the writing, a small fragment of which is homogeneous with that of Aristotle Parisianus Gr. 1741. The decorated initial letters which open each book are also compatible with that date. These are situated outside the written space, have very small dimensions, and present vivid enamel colors using only gold, intense blue, and red.

The 316 sheets of prime parchment were written according to a traditional format: the text accompanied with an apparatus, a scheme that corresponds to the editions of that time period. The ruling was traced from the hair side on open sheets, leaving large external and bottom margins, where additional lines were intended for holding the extensive apparatus of the scholia.

After five centuries, the manuscript reached Bessarion's Roman house through one of the numerous possible avenues that allowed the Greek Cardinal, who was already at that point deeply interested in Greek texts and civilization, to recapture Byzantine culture and heritage in the Latin world. Another important *Iliad* from a similar source, the Venetus B manuscript (today the Marciana Library's codex Gr. Z. 453 [=821]), was purchased by Bessarion before 1468, through the humanist Giovanni Aurispa. This *Iliad* seems not to be included in the catalogue of Bessarion of 1468, but it is one of the volumes that was brought to Venice after the death of the Cardinal in 1472. In the catalogue of 1474 it is identified among the books as accurately written, lovely to read, and thus beautiful: "*Homeri Ilias, in pergameno, pulchra.*"

As he used to do with his most important manuscripts, Bessarion gave new life to his *Iliad* with an integrative restoration of the Venetus A. The text of the 19 sheets inserted in the manuscript as replacements for lost pages have been ascribed

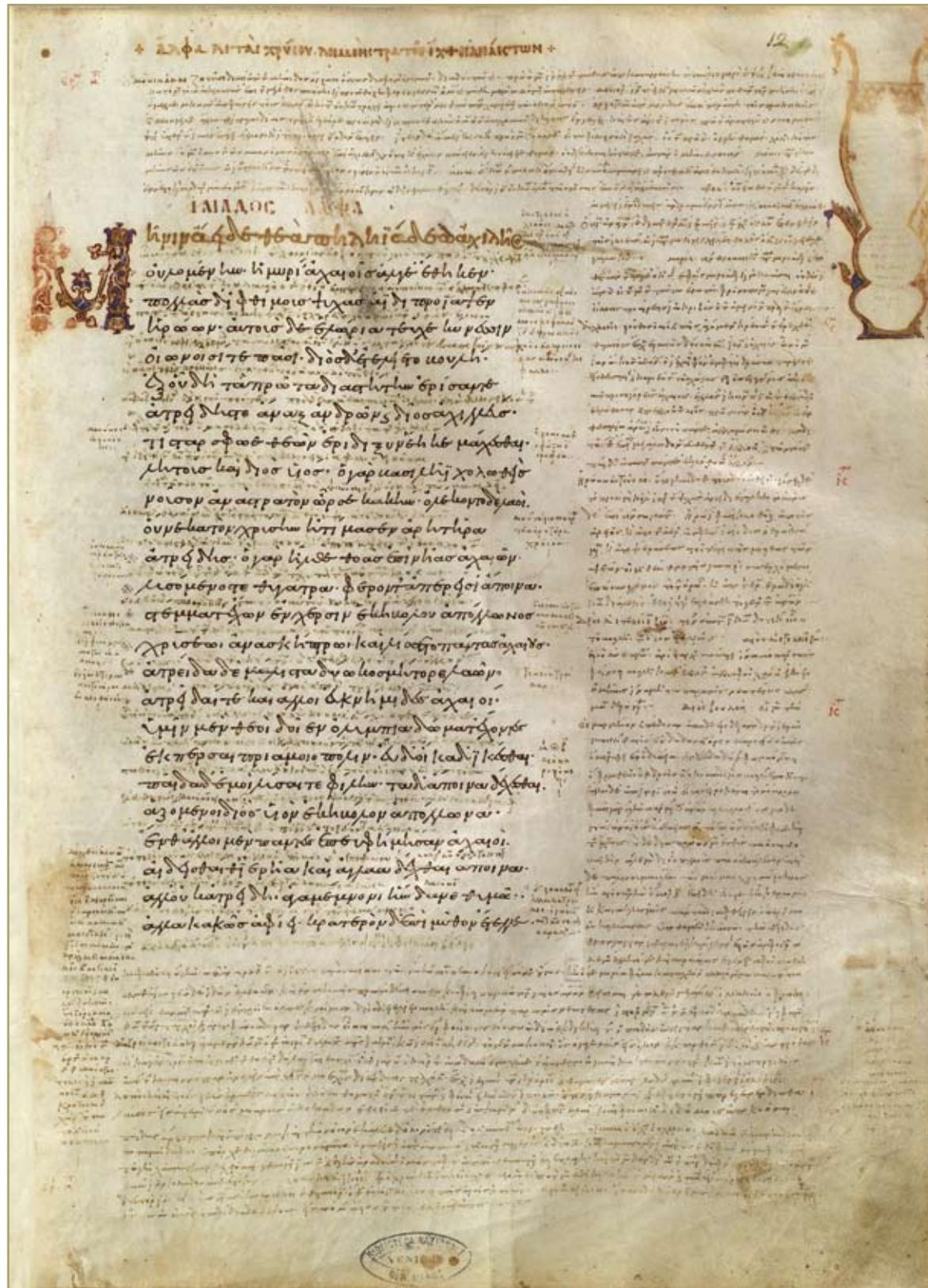
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to his own hand. The new sheets resembled the regularity of the original quires of eight folios. The fascicles were signed with Latin letters, analogous to what was done in other codices of the same library, attesting that the restoration by Bessarion required a new sewing, and likely a different binding as well.

Additionally, the 11 sheets which are now placed before the *Iliad* in the Venetus A were found in Bessarion's house. Blank sheets were inserted between some of the original folios. These sheets were ruled similarly to the pages of the *Iliad*, but they remained blank, without the desired textual integration. They include additional texts introducing the *Iliad*: the *Vita Homeri* and parts of the *Chrestomathia* by Proclus, supplied with a series of illustrations of events of the Trojan war. Writing and illumination have led us to ascribe this interpolated part to a provincial area, and to an age which is at least two centuries later than the main corpus of the present manuscript. These sheets came to Bessarion rough and incomplete and, perhaps accordingly, remained unbound: they do not have Latin signatures, are now out of sequence, and the intensity of the pigments has greatly diminished.

The external form of the codex changed in about 1740, when the Venetian Republic standardized the form of the most precious manuscripts, in order to make its library equal to the royal European collections. The codex then acquired a new modern binding of leather over paste-board, which has the Lion, symbol of St. Mark, stamped on it.

Over the centuries the manuscript was continually consulted, to the point that it demanded a modern restoration. Silvia Pugliese, who as the head of the Restoration Department of St. Mark's Library oversaw aspects of the codex's manipulation for the project with the Center for Hellenic Studies, observes that the restoration performed in Venice in 1970–71 in the laboratory of the Monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore brought a new sewing and the recreation of some parts of the 18th-century binding, as well as the re-gluing and resizing of margins for some of the sheets. The study of the minute scholia, which has been pursued since the 18th and 19th centuries, facilitated by the Sijthoff facsimile edition (ed. D. Comparetti, 1901), can now be carried on more successfully thanks to the photographic reproduction and multispectral images made by the Center for Hellenic Studies, which additionally reveal once-faded letters.



Homer and History in the Venetus A

CHRISTOPHER W. BLACKWELL AND CASEY DUÉ

THE BOOK

The *Iliad* is a poem of 16,000 lines, in an ancient and unique form of Greek. Its topic is the events of a few weeks during the Trojan War. It tells the story of how the wrath of Achilles brought destruction on Greeks and Trojans alike. The *Iliad* is the cornerstone of Greek literature and the central text of classical Greek civilization, although it is much older than the classical period. Its origins lie in the second millennium BCE, and it has been a source of pleasure, of controversy, of study, and of reverence for over three thousand years.

The manuscript Marcianus Graecus Z. 454 [= 822], known to Homeric scholars as the Venetus A, is the oldest complete text of the *Iliad* in existence. A scribe whose name we will never know labored to create the 654 pages of this book during the tenth century CE, the age of the Byzantine scholar-emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.

The sight of the vellum pages with their red-brown ink transports a reader back a thousand years, but its historical reach extends much further. The poem it contains seems to have emerged over the course of a millennium or more from a tradition of songs about heroes and heroic deeds. The writings in the margins of this book preserve the scholarship collected in the Library of Alexandria, from intellectuals who studied this poem in Alexandria, in Rome, and in Byzantium from the second century BCE until the middle ages.

In 2007, a team of colleagues from Greece, Italy, Austria, the United Kingdom, and the United States came together to rediscover this book and its contents, to capture its pages with the greatest fidelity that the technology of our time could afford, and to share the resulting images freely with all who might enjoy them. In this essay, we will try briefly to locate the Venetus A manuscript of the *Iliad* in history. We hope to explain something of its significance and to describe the work of preserving it in digital form.

We feel the deepest gratitude and admiration for the dedication of the librarians at the Biblioteca Marciana, the public library of St. Mark in Venice, and hope to repay them by inviting others to explore their charge with wonder and delight. For over five hundred years they have cared for this priceless artifact, since it was put in their care after being saved from the ruins of a great empire.



ONE

Figure 1. Folio 12r of the Venetus A manuscript of the *Iliad*. This is the first page of the text of the poem. The preceding folios contain introductory material assembled in antiquity about Homer, Homeric scholarship, and the epic tradition.

THE FALL OF AN EMPIRE

Easter Sunday of 1453 fell on the first day of April, and the last Greek Emperor of Constantinople prepared to defend his city. In the Sea of Marmara and the waters of the Bosphorus, Constantine XI Palaeologus had the ten remaining ships of his own navy, five ships from Venice, three from Crete (sent by the Venetians), and eight others, from Genoa, Ancona, Catalonia, and Provence. For the 14 miles of city walls he had fewer than seven thousand men, both citizens of the city and foreigners who had come to lend aid.

Opposing these meager forces was a Turkish fleet of 126 heavy warships and transports, and a fleet of light cutters and sloops. And marching from the Ottoman capital at Adrianople was an army of over 100,000 men led by 12,000 Janissaries, the elite troops of the Ottoman army. With this army the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmet II aimed to assail the walls of the ancient city.

In its thousand-year history Constantinople had fallen to an attacking army twice, in 1203 and in 1204, but both times the attackers had approached from the sea. The citizens of the city were convinced that their landward walls were impregnable. These walls had stood since 413, when they were built by the Praetorian Prefect Anthemius, acting as regent to the child-emperor Theodosius II. In 447, Attila the Hun had gazed on them, despaired, and turned his army away; in 813 these walls thwarted Krum of Bulgaria, and one hundred years later, his great-grandson Symeon. But Mehmet's army was bringing something new: a cannon, the work of the German engineer Urban, a hollow column of bronze 27 feet long with walls eight inches thick, able to throw a thousand-pound ball over a mile. The cannon came across Thrace drawn by 30 oxen and 200 men.

On April 6, 1453, the cannon began to fire. By the 29th of May, Constantine XI was dead, his citizens dead, dying, or in desperate flight as refugees, and Sultan Mehmet II stood in the Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Mehmet II was no barbarian—by the age of nineteen, it is said, he was fluent in Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek—and Constantinople's fall was not the end of civilization. But it was the end of a grand empire that had survived 1,123 years, rising in power for centuries, flourishing for centuries, and declining only slowly. Its fall was the end of a tradition of civilization that united Roman law with a profound mysticism and a dedication to learning that extended from its citizens—illiteracy was unknown except among the very lowest classes—to its rulers. Never before or since has an empire boasted so many emperors renowned as widely for their scholarship as for their military prowess. Constantinople was the caretaker of the Greek past, back to the earliest and most glorious treasures of pagan antiquity. Some of this treasure survived.

THE BOOK COLLECTOR

The Byzantine Empire fell neither suddenly nor without warning. Its decline was visible to any discerning eye long before the young Sultan, the second Mehmet, was born. Fifty years earlier, an ambassador from the court of Henry III of Castile, Ruy González de Clavijo, described the capital city's decline:

“Despite its size and the huge circuit of its walls, it is poorly populated; for in the midst of it are a number of hills and valleys on which there are fields of corn and vineyards and many orchards; and in these cultivated areas the houses are clustered together like villages; and this is in the midst of the city. . . . The city of Constantinople contains many great churches and monasteries, but most of them are in ruins; though it seems that, in former times, when the city was in its youth, it was the most renowned city in the world.”¹

It must have been clear to many that as the strength of the old empire faded its most valuable riches, the storehouse of Hellenic learning, had to be saved. It was certainly clear to one young man, a student of philosophy in the Byzantine city of Mistra, in the Peloponnese.

Basileus Bessarion began collecting books at a very early age, and initially on a very constrained budget. In the 1420s while a student he began to buy, or to borrow and have copied, works of Greek learning, focusing first on Platonic philosophy (his chosen field of study) but branching into ancient science, geography, and letters. As his career in the church advanced, his ability to acquire manuscripts increased, and so did his desire to amass a great library. In 1437 the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Philologus made him Metropolitan of Nicaea and dispatched him to Italy to participate in the decades-long negotiations between the Western and Eastern churches. These negotiations intended to reconcile the two churches, but hindered by plague, by misunderstandings in translation of most subtle theological distinctions, and by clashes of personalities and perceived slights to ecclesiastical dignities, they were ultimately fruitless. They did, however, bring Bessarion into the sight of powerful figures in politics, and most importantly, in 1438, they brought him to the city of Venice. This city, the *Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia*, the Most Serene Republic, came to represent for Bessarion a hope for a “Second Byzantium.”

As the fall of Constantinople came to seem more inevitable, Bessarion's efforts toward building an all-encompassing library of Greek learning took on a new urgency. He employed even more copyists, and hired carters to transport books to his lodgings, in Florence during the 1430s, in Rome during the 1440s, and

¹Markham 1859:46.

in Bologna during the terrible 1450s. When news of the fall of Constantinople came to Italy, Bessarion wrote to his friend Michael Apostolis (from whom he had already borrowed, bought, and copied a great number of books, including works on Homeric epic by Quintus of Smyrna). Formerly, he wrote, he had collected books for his own pleasure. Now that Constantinople was in the hands of the Ottoman Sultan, he wanted to acquire all Greek literature, to keep it in some safe place, where it would be accessible to all readers until Greece was once again free.

During the next decades Bessarion's career was punctuated by dramatic opportunities and disappointments. He was nominated for the Papacy in 1455, but lost the election to Alfons de Borja, who became Calixtus III and who is remembered mainly for being feeble and incompetent. In 1458 Bessarion was sent to Venice by (the much more capable) Pope Pius II to negotiate for a new crusade to liberate Constantinople, a movement that ultimately collapsed. In 1463 he was made Uniate Patriarch of Constantinople (from Venice) and was able to work for the benefit of Greek refugees who came to that city.

But amid all of these secular and spiritual works, Bessarion advanced his project to make Venice the New Byzantium in the most important sense, the repository of Greek learning. In 1468 after successful negotiations, his Act of Donation created a public library that not only preserved his collection of books, but enlightened the West with works hitherto unknown. Bessarion's Donation included the works of philosophers, scientists, and theologians, and was responsible for the rediscovery in Europe of such authors as Athenaeus and Ptolemy the Geographer. Because of Bessarion, Ptolemy came to the attention of Fra Mauro, whose maps (still in the Biblioteca Marciana) created modern cartography in the West. There is a crater on the moon named for Mauro and, near it, one named Bessarion.

But nowhere is the depth and significance of Bessarion's gift more apparent than in his donation of two complete manuscripts of the Homeric *Iliad*. These are now known from their catalogue entries in the Marciana library as Marcianus Graecus Z. 454 [= 822], the Venetus A, and Marcianus Graecus Z. 453 [= 821], the Venetus B. Both contain the text of the *Iliad*, surrounded by notes, or *scholia*, many of which refer to Aristarchus, the great librarian of Alexandria in the second century BCE.²

A century earlier, the greatest humanists of Italy knew no Greek. Petrarch was said to have owned a copy of the *Iliad*, and from time to time to have kissed it in reverence, but he could not read it. There was no professor of Greek in Italy until Manuel Chrysoloras assumed the Chair of Greek in Florence, in 1396. Enthusiasm for Greek generally, and for Homer in particular, spread quickly. In 1424, Giovanni

²For this history of the Marciana library and Bessarion's donation see Labowski 1979.

Aurispa, a scholar and bibliophile, wrote a letter to a certain Ambrose in which he lists many of the 238 Greek volumes in his possession, including the “work of Aristarchus on the *Iliad* in two volumes.”³ Because we know that Bessarion knew Aurispa, and acquired many books from him, it is tempting to see this reference to Aristarchus's work on the *Iliad* in “two volumes” as referring to these manuscripts, the Venetus A and B. Romance must yield to evidence, however, and it is more likely that the two volume commentary referred to is in fact the commentary of Eustathius (Laurentianus LIX 2 and 3), attested in Florence a century later in the library of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici (later the Laurentian Library).⁴

Basileus Bessarion died in 1472, having been a defender of his faith against external enemies and the follies of its own adherents; he had held high office, had traveled widely, and had been party to the great councils of his age. But his greatest achievement was the gift of his books to Venice. Already this city—as a center of commerce, a military power, and a starkly progressive democracy—was a light among chaos. Bessarion's library, the public library of his Act of Donation, made Venice a new Constantinople. Our manuscripts of the *Iliad* are among its most prized possessions.

LOST, THEN FOUND

The Venetus A resided among Bessarion's books in the Doge's Palace until a permanent building was completed to house the Library in 1565. But decades before our Homeric manuscripts came to reside in their permanent home on the Piazzetta San Marco, the technology of the written word had moved on. In 1488, in Florence, Demetrius Chalcondylas produced the *editio princeps* of the *Iliad*, that is, the first printed edition of the poem.

The printing press, with its promise of rapid, exact copies of a literary work, marked the end of a tradition for the Homeric poems. They had arisen in the Greek Bronze Age as performances on heroic themes; they had coalesced into recognizable and discrete songs of the heroes of the Trojan War, their battles and their journeys home from battle; they had solidified into canonical poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, still sung but from scripts rather than out of the improvisational genius of singers working with a traditional art. These scripts gave way to texts, copied by hand in distinct versions city by city, fancy versions and popular versions. This multiplicity of versions passed through the hands of scholars in Egyptian Alexandria and Rome and emerged as two common texts, one of the *Iliad* and one of the *Odyssey*, supplemented with notes that preserved the rich and varying tradition. These were copied by generations of scribes through the first millennium of the Common Era,

³*Aristarchum super Iliade in duobus voluminibus, opus quoddam spatiosum et pretiosissimum; aliud commentum super Iliade, cuius eundem auctorem esse puto et illius quod ex me Nicolaus noster habuit super Ulixiae.*

⁴This is the argument of Diller 1960. Erbse (1969), however, accepts (without reference to Diller) that Aurispa's letter refers to the Venetus A and B.

work that eventually produced the great codices, the bound books of the tenth and eleventh centuries like those that Bessarion brought to Venice. But with the first printing, these *texts* became *editions*, and the tradition of multiformity and the wholesome impulse to preserve the richness of variation through notes and commentaries fell away. The attention of the world wandered from the hand-written vellum books of the Marciana to the cleanly printed paper volumes that emerged from the printing presses of Florence, Milan, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Paris, and London.

The manuscript faded from the awareness of European scholars over the next centuries, until it was rediscovered in the Marciana by the French humanist Jean Baptiste Gaspard d'Ansse de Villoison, who recognized the value of the manuscript and published a printed edition of its contents in 1788. This edition had the immediate effect of spurring a new interest in Homer and the tradition of Homeric scholarship, one which extends back to the Alexandrian Library and is illustrated in the Venetus A.

ON THE PAGE—SCHOLIA

What Villoison found on each page of the Venetus A can be seen in Figure 1 (facing the first page of this chapter), and is described in detail in Myriam Hecquet's chapter later in this volume. In general, the contents of a codex—a manuscript bound as a book—are identified by their folio and side. Each folio is a physical page, each of which has two sides, the *recto* (front), and the *verso* (back). In the Venetus A the first lines of Book 1 of the *Iliad* appear on “12r,” that is, on the front (*recto*) of the twelfth folio. The text of the Venetus A appears in two different styles of handwriting, or two different “hands.” The “miniscule hand” is a style of handwriting that uses upper- and lower-case letters, often linked together for ease and speed of writing. The “semiuncial hand” reflects an older, transitional style of writing, where a lower-case cursive script is mixed with more formal upper-case letterforms. In some cases, the date of a particular piece of writing on the manuscript can be ascertained by the style of the letters, but on this manuscript, some of the text that was written at the same time will appear in different styles.

A typical folio in the Venetus A (with a few exceptions) contains 25 lines of the Homeric text, surrounded on three sides by a body of marginal notes, all written in the same minuscule hand. These scholia are what make the Venetus A such a treasure for students of Homer.

Individual comments in the main body of scholia are generally but not always preceded by lemmata (short quotations of the text being commented upon) in

semiuncial script (see Gregory Nagy's chapter, below). In the gutters (the inner margins where the folios are bound) of each page and in the margins between the text and scholia are written, most likely by the same scribe, an additional set of scholia, in the same semiuncial script as the lemmata. Outside the main column of scholia in the far outside margins of each page are sometimes additional semiuncial scholia; on a few folios these scholia are extensive, as is the case with folios 12v and 154v. These additional scholia are often written in the shape of a cross, column, or another object. Still more semiuncial scholia may be found between lines and very near the text in various places around the page. At the far edge of many pages are the traces of (very likely) two correcting hands (see 24r and Allen 1899:172ff.), and from the beginning of the poem up until verse 188 of Book 2 an interlinear paraphrase appears in a late (thirteenth century) hand.

What is the source of so much scholarly material? Over the centuries since Villoison first published the manuscript, scholars have debated whether the scholia were copied from an exemplar that was very much like our Venetus A, or whether our scribe took two or more separate traditions and combined them in our manuscript. (For more on this topic see the chapter by Myriam Hecquet, below.) Whatever the answer is about the immediate exemplar(s), through very careful reading, comparison, collation, and analysis, scholars of Homer have identified several distinct traditions of commentary that are the ultimate sources for the scholia on the Venetus A.

The Venetus A itself tells us where many of the scholia come from. At the end of most of the books of the poem⁵ there appears this subscription:

ΠΑΡΑΚΕΙΤΑΙ Τὰ ἈΡΙΣΤΟΝΙΚΟΥ ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ Τὰ ΔΙΔΥΜΟΥ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ
ἈΡΙΣΤΑΡΧΕΪΟΥ ΔΙΟΡΘΩΣΕΩΣ, ΤΙΝὰ ΚΑΙ Ἐκ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΔΙΑΣ ἩΡΩΔΙΑΝΟΥ
ΚΑΙ Ἐκ ΤῶΝ ΝΙΚΑΝΟΡΟΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΣΤΙΓΜῆΣ.

Alongside the text lie the *Signs* of Aristonicus, and Didymus' work *On the Edition of Aristarchus*, as well as some things from the *Prosody* of Herodian and Nicanor's *On Punctuation*.

So, many of the scholia are derived from the work of these four Homeric scholars from antiquity. Didymus and Aristonicus are the oldest, having worked during the first century BCE. Nicanor lived during the time of the Roman emperor Hadrian, the first and second centuries CE. Herodian lived a century later, during the latter half of the second century CE, under the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Scholars refer to the work of these men as the “four-man commentary,” or VMK (from the German *Viermännerkommentar*).⁶ The repeated subscriptions in the Venetus

⁵The exceptions are Books 17 and 24.

⁶On the VMK see Nagy 2004:6-7.

A identify the areas of Homeric studies to which each of the four contributed. Aristonicus wrote on the topic of editorial symbols attached to the text. Herodian wrote on questions of prosody, that is, poetic meter. Nicanor wrote about punctuation. And Didymus wrote about the earlier editorial work of the great Alexandrian scholar Aristarchus.

A certain category of scholia, while related to the VMK, has been separately identified and named the “D Scholia.” These were once thought to have come originally from Didymus, hence their name, but this view is no longer generally accepted. The D Scholia appear on several Byzantine and medieval manuscripts of the *Iliad* and generally contain information about mythology, the meanings of obscure words, and pieces of allegorical interpretation. On the Venetus A the D Scholia appear as interlinear notes written in a semiuncial script, and are largely “glosses,” short definitions, of words in the poems. One of the most interesting aspects of the D Scholia is their lemmata, the Homeric passages that a scholion may quote before commenting. In many cases, these lemmata do not match the Homeric text that appears on the manuscript. Thus, these scholia may offer insights into alternative versions of the text, other examples of traditional material that fell out of the common text of the *Iliad* by the ninth century, but are preserved here and there in brief quotations by the scholiasts, the writers of these marginal notes.

Still other scholia on our manuscript derive from the work of the scholar and philosopher Porphyry, who lived during the third century CE. Among his writings, many of which had to do with Platonic philosophy, was a treatise entitled “Homeric Questions” (Ὀμήρικα ζητήματα, *Homērika Zētēmata*, or in its more commonly given Latin translation, *Quaestiones Homericae*). This work exists only in a fragmentary state; the first book of Porphyry survives in a single manuscript, written in 1314 and now in the Vatican Library (Vaticanus Graecus 305), and the rest of what we know of its contents comes from close reading of various scholia on Homeric manuscripts.⁷ Porphyry’s work is an example of the late-antique genre of ζητήματα, which is generally translated “Questions,” consisting of inquiries into various topics with (often) varying and debatable answers. Ancient works on ζητήματα covered ethical, legal, and historical topics, and Porphyry’s work on Homer is one of the few examples of literary “Questions.” The scholiastic material that comes from this work is valuable for a number of reasons, although its value has not always been appreciated. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, scholars have dismissed Porphyry as telling us little about Homeric poetry itself, but much about the literary “parlor games” played by intelligent aristocrats in antiquity. But these scholia preserve some observations on Homeric poetry made by Aristotle and Plato, which in turn can tell

⁷The surviving fragments of Porphyry’s *Homeric Questions* have been published by A.R. Sodano (1970). For a recent edition and translation, see that of Schlunk 1993.

us about the particular vocabulary those ancient thinkers used when they discussed epic poetry, and thus much about the ancient experience of listening to this poetry.

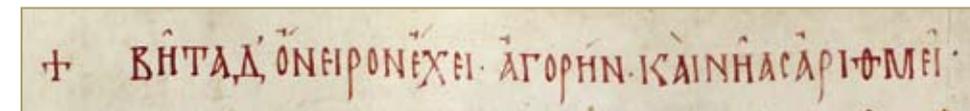
Finally, there are scholia related to a group known as the “bT” scholia. These get their name from the Townley Manuscript of the *Iliad*, an eleventh-century codex now in the British Museum (BM, Burney 86); this manuscript is believed to have been one of several copied from an even older manuscript, which is now lost, to which scholars refer by the *siglum* “b,” hence the “bT” scholia. These scholia, which may also be derived from the work of Porphyry, offer explanations of thematic matters found in the *Iliad*, cultural practices, questions of cosmology or theology, and so forth. These scholia have not enjoyed a high reputation among scholars. Their most famous critic, K. Lehrs, said that “not one word in them is to be believed” (*nullum unum verbum iis credendum esse*).⁸ But more recent students of this material have found them more valuable, suggesting that they offer important insight into how the ancient Greeks understood Homer, but also provide more access to the work of Aristarchus at the Library of Alexandria.⁹

There is disagreement among scholars as to how and when the VMK was created (proposed dates range from the fourth to seventh centuries CE) and whether or not the semiuncial scholia and the main scholia have the same redactor, that is, whether they were compiled by the same editor.¹⁰ The 20th century scholars most interested in the Homeric scholia believed that the VMK tradition was combined with the D Scholia and the bT Scholia at some time during the eighth century CE, about two centuries before our nameless scribe produced the elaborately annotated manuscript we call the Venetus A. (See Allen 1931b, Erbse 1969, and Van der Valk 1963.)

ON THE PAGE—ADORNMENT

The Venetus A is remarkable for the care with which it was produced, and the richness of the many features that ornament the text and scholia. On the first page of each book of the *Iliad*, we find an illuminated capital marking the first word of the book. (See Chapter 6, below.)

At the top of each page that begins a new book of the *Iliad*, the manuscript includes a one-line summary or highlights of the contents of that book, in red ink (Figure 2). These summaries are, themselves, in the dactylic hexameter meter of Homeric poetry. These have not been published and translated before, and so we include



⁸Lehrs 1882:32.

⁹See Schmidt 1976.

¹⁰Standard treatments are Erbse 1960 and 1969 and Van der Valk 1963. See also Ludwig 1884-1885.

Figure 2. On the first page of each book of the *Iliad* a metrical summary of the book appears, consisting of one hexameter verse.

them here (each of the 24 books of the *Iliad* is traditionally identified by one of the 24 letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha - omega):

Α ἄλφα λιταὶ Χρύσοῦ· λοιμὸν στρατοῦ· ἔχθος ἀνάκτων.

Alpha: prayers of Chrysēs; plague among the army; enmity of the leaders. (12r)

Β βῆτα δ' ὄνειρον ἔχει ἀγορὴν· καὶ νῆας ἀριθμεῖ·

And Beta includes a dream, an assembly, and enumerates the ships. (24r)

Γ γάμμα δ' ἄρ' ἀφ' Ἑλένης· οἷοις μόθος ἔστιν ἀκοίταις·

And then Gamma is from the point of view of Helen; the pitch of battle is only for husbands. (42r)

Δ δέλτα θεῶν ἀγορῆν· ὄρκων χύσιν· ἄρεος ἀρχήν.

Delta contains an assembly of the gods, many oaths, the beginning of battle. (51r)

Ε εἶ· βάλλει Κυθέρειαν· ἄρῃα τε· Τυδέος υἱός.

Epsilon: The son of Tydeus strikes Aphrodite and Ares. (62r)

Ζ ζῆτα δ' ἄρ' ἀνδρομάχης τε καὶ Ἑκτορός ἐστ' ὁ ἀριστεύς.

And then Zeta is the best book of Andromache and Hektor. (80v)

Η ἦτα δ' αἶας πολέμιζε μόνῳ μόνος Ἑκτορι Δίῳ.

And Eta: Aias fights one-on-one with radiant Hektor. (91r)

Θ θῆτα· θεῶν ἀγορὴν· Τρώων κράτος· Ἑκτορος εὖχος.

Theta contains an assembly of the gods, the power of the Trojans, the boast of Hektor. (100v)

Ι ἐξεσίη δ' ἀχιλῆος ἀπειθέσος ἐστὶν ἰῶτα.

A mission, and about implacable Achilles, is Iota. (111v)

Κ κάππα δ' ἄρ' ἀμφοτέρων σκοπιάζεμεν ἥλυθον ἄνδρες.

And Kappa: men from both sides went forth to spy. (126r)

Λ λάμβδα δ' ἀριστήας Δαναῶν βάλλον Ἑκτορος ἄνδρες.

And Lambda. Men of Hektor strike the best of the Danaans. (137v)

Μ μῦ· Τρώων παλάμησι κατήριπε τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν.

Mu. By the hands of the Trojans, the Achaians' wall is hurled down. (154v)

Ν νῦ· δὲ Ποσειδάων Δαναοῖς κράτος ὤπασε λάθρη.

And Nu. Poseidon gives power to the Danaans in secret. (164r)

Ξ ξί· Κρονίδην ὕπνωι λεχέεσσι τε ἠπαφεν Ἥρη.

Xi. Hera beguiles the Son of Kronos by sleep and the pleasures of the couch. (180v)

Ο ὄν· Κρονίδης κεχόλωτο Ποσειδάωνι καὶ Ἥρῃ.

Omicron. The Son of Kronos is angered at Poseidon and Hera. (191r)

Π πι· Πάτροκλον ἔπεφνεν ἀρήϊον Ἑκτορος αἰχμῆ.

Pi. Hektor's spear kills warlike Patroklos. (206r)

Ρ ῥῶ· Δαναοὶ Τρώες τε νέκυν περι χείρας ἔμιστον.

Rho. The Danaans and Trojans clash over the corpse. (223v)

Σ σίγμα· Θέτις Ἀχιλῆϊ παρ' Ἥφαιστον φέρει ὄπλα.

Sigma. Thetis brings arms from Hephaestus for Achilles. (239r)

Τ ταῦ· δ' ἀπέληγε χόλοιο καὶ ἔκθορε διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς.

And Tau. Radiant Achilles sets aside anger and springs forth. (251v)

Υ ὕ· μακάρων ἔρις ὦρτο φέρει δ' ἐπὶ κάρτος Ἀχαιοῖς.

Upsilon. Strife arises among the gods and brings strength to the Achaeans. (260r)

Φ φῖ· κρατερῶι καταχεύματ' ἐδάμνατο Τρώας Ἀχιλλεύς.

Phi. By an even greater downpouring, Achilles overcomes the Trojans. (270r)

Χ χί. Δ' ἄρα τρίς περὶ τεῖχος ἄγων κτάνεν Ἔκτορ'
Ἀχιλλεύς.

Chi. And leading him around the walls three times, Achilles kills
Hektor. (282r)

Ψ ψί. Δαναοῖσιν ἄγωνα δίδους ἐτέλεσεν Ἀχιλλεύς.

Psi. Achilles completes giving games for the Danaans. (292v)

Ω ὦ. Πριάμῳ νέκυν γίος λαβὼν γέρα δῶκεν
Ἀχιλλεύς.

Omega. Achilles, having taken a ransom, gives Priam the corpse of his
son. (310v)

Also remarkable are the critical signs that can be found next to many of the verses of the *Iliad* and in the corresponding notes in the scholia. As Graeme Bird's chapter explains in detail, these signs take us back to the second century BCE and the editorial work of the great Homeric scholar, Aristarchus of Samothrace. These signs, which served to link the Homeric text with the commentary that Aristarchus published in a separate volume, have specialized meanings, with the result that their content can often be surmised where the corresponding note has been lost. They are a precious resource, and as Mary Ebbott explains below, they can teach us a great deal about how Homer was read more than a thousand years before the Venetus A was created.

Last but not least, there is the front matter. As Myriam Hecquet demonstrates below, some of the initial folios of the Venetus A became detached and were rebound out of order, with several folios now missing. What we have contains extremely valuable material, including excerpts from Proclus' *Chrestomathy* (the Life of Homer and summaries of all of the poems of the now lost Epic Cycle except the *Cypria*) and Aristonicus' work on the signs of Aristarchus. (See Graeme Bird's chapter, below.) Painted around this text and in one case over it are illuminations from the twelfth century CE. These illuminations, which depict mythological scenes from the Judgment of Paris up to the fighting of the Trojan War, are described and discussed in chapters by Myriam Hecquet and Ioli Kalavrezou, below.

The scribe of the Venetus A was, for his time, a master of what we now call "information technology." His manuscript brings together a text of the *Iliad*, all the wealth of two thousand years of scholarship, word-glosses, summaries, and bibliography in an extremely efficient, compact, and durable package. This wealth of data was not assembled or presented randomly. Each Iliadic book begins with an illuminated

capital and a metrical summary of the book's contents, and ends with a highlighted subscription, including information on the "four man commentary" and a final note reminding the reader of what book just ended. On each side of each folio—as any reader will be able to see from the high resolution digital images—there are preserved the faintly indented lines with which the scribe laid out the page, planning in advance for the poetic text, the interlinear notes, the inter-marginal notes, and the main body of scholia. The size of the handwritten text varies from the large capitals, several centimeters high, to intermarginal notes written in characters scarcely a millimeter tall. The scribe used different styles of writing for different categories of scholiastic commentary, and different colors of ink for the poem, the commentary, the summaries, and the decorations.

So the value of the book is more than the sum of the text on each page, and more than the sum of the text and the beauty of its presentation. The value of the Venetus A lies in the precise, intentional compilation and juxtaposition of all of these elements, and we can assess this value, and profit from it, only through access to the pages as they appear, in full color and with a definition sufficient to make clear the tiniest and faintest of the writings they contain. Even if the physical volume were in perfect condition, as when it was first produced in the tenth century, we would want high-resolution images of it; a thousand years into its life, we need the enhanced view of these folios that modern imaging affords because the faintest of the text, faded by the years, is no longer legible, or even apparent, to the naked eye.

THE 1901 FACSIMILE

In a subsequent chapter in this volume, Mary Ebbott describes how, at the end of the 19th century, a collaboration among a publisher, A. W. Sijthoff, and two scholars, O. Hartwig and W. N. du Rieu, produced a series of facsimiles of the "most celebrated" manuscripts known to exist. Excited by the promise of the new photographic technologies, they raised funds and enlisted support in an effort to preserve these manuscripts and bring them before a wider audience. The project's admirable goals collided, however, with the limits of 19th century photography, and the economics of producing elaborate bound volumes of "chromolithographs"—color prints of photographs.

The facsimile of the Venetus A that was published in 1901 as part of this series, under the editorship of the Italian humanist Domenico Comparetti, was a marvel, and provided access to the scholia of the Venetus A hitherto unavailable. This facsimile served editors of the *Iliad*, allowed the publication of the text of many of the scholia, and fostered a flowering of scholarship for a century. Much of the



Figure 3. Detail of harp in top right corner of f. 12r, from Comparetti's 1901 facsimile.

Figure 4. Natural light detail of harp in top right corner of f. 12r, as captured in 2007.

text, however, remained illegible on the pages of the facsimile, partly because of the faded ink on the original codex and partly because of the challenge of focusing a large lens evenly over such a big book. But it was economics that had the most limiting effect on the impact of Comparetti's facsimile. This volume, of which only a very few copies were printed, quickly became itself a rare book. Few copies exist in libraries in the United States, and these are not allowed to circulate freely.

THE 2007 ELECTRONIC EDITION

In 2000, the Center for Hellenic Studies of Harvard University (the CHS), under the directorship of Gregory Nagy, began making plans to capture new images of the pages of the Venetus A. Over the next seven years, the CHS negotiated arrangements with the Biblioteca Marciana, assembled a team of specialists in conservation, Homeric studies, digital imaging, and electronic publication. In addition to providing funding from its own resources, the CHS secured financial support for this project from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation.

In April and May of 2007 the Venetus A was photographed with a Hasselblad H1 camera with a 39 megapixel Phase One P45 digital back. The imaging took place at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, under the direction of David Jacobs and with the supervision of the library's director and conservation team. Jacobs and his team of conservators had spent months monitoring the condition of the book and the environment of the room at the Marciana where the work would take place. In late April, the team assembled a custom-built, mechanized conservation cradle, which Manfred Meyer designed and fabricated. This cradle would hold the codex, gently but firmly, and the cameras, ensuring both a consistent angle for photography and protection for the artifact at all times.

Images came from the camera and were analyzed by Classicists, both for clarity and to determine which areas of which folios merited detailed photography. Ultimately, the team took several dozen images of details on the pages. Many of these were under natural light, simple close-up images of particularly small features on the manuscript. Time was the limiting factor for the natural-light details. The Classicists also requested a number of images, either full-page images or details, to be taken under ultraviolet light. UV imaging can reveal ink too faded to be seen normally, but it is also damaging to the manuscript. These requests for UV details, then, were part of a negotiation between the Classicists and the conservators, with the latter having the final word. Ultraviolet photography was used only sparingly, in the end, but to spectacular effect.

For example, on the first page of the text of the *Iliad*, folio 12r (featured on the first page of this article), there is a beautiful lyre adorning the top right corner, and inside that lyre is writing that is completely illegible in both Comparetti's facsimile and in the 2007 natural light image. (See Figures 3 and 4.) Ultraviolet light revealed the bulk of the text (Figure 5), and we were able to determine that it consists of a previously known comment from the D scholia about the way that the action of the poem begins in the tenth year of the war:

διὰ τί

[ἀπὸ τῶν τελευταίων ἤρξατο τοῦ πολέμου ὁ ποιητὴς γράφειν. καὶ φαμέν ὅτι ἅπας μὲν ὁ χρόνος ὁ πρὸ τοῦ δεκαετοῦς οὐκ ἔσχεν οὕτω συνεχεῖς τὰς μάχας διὰ τὸ καὶ τοὺς Τρῶας αὐτοὺς] φόβῳ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ἐντὸς κατακεκλεισθαι τοῦ τείχους. τὸ δὲ δέκατον ἔτος πλείονας ἔσχε τὰς πράξεις καὶ τοὺς πολέμους ἰσοπάλους, τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ὀργιζομένου. ὁ δὲ ποιητὴς οἰκονομικῶς καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἤρξατο μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν τελευταίων. διὰ δὲ τῶν σποράδην αὐτῷ λεχθέντων περιέλαβεν καὶ τὰ πρὸ τούτου πραχθέντα+++.¹¹

(There is a critical sign) because the question arises why the poet began to write from the end of the war. And we say that the whole time before the tenth year did not have battles in such quick succession because of the Trojans being enclosed within their wall for fear of Achilles, and because the tenth year had had more action and battles in which the two sides were



Figure 5. Ultraviolet light detail of harp in top right corner of f. 12r, as captured in 2007.

¹¹ The text has been supplemented where it is no longer legible in Venetus A, using other manuscripts that contain the same note.

evenly matched, while Achilles was angry. The poet economically and to the point began from these things. And by means of the things said by him in digressions interspersed throughout the narrative he folded in the things done before this as well.

This comment happens to survive in three other manuscripts as well, but it is certain that other valuable material to be found only the Venetus A is fading from view just as quickly as that text in the lyre. Indeed, throughout the manuscript both the natural light images and those captured with ultraviolet light reveal text that cannot now be seen with the naked eye. The manuscript is vast, and this project resulted in over a thousand images, which as of this writing have not all been studied thoroughly. With the online publication of these images, freely accessible to all interested readers, we expect scholars, professional and amateurs alike, to add new discoveries about this manuscript, its meticulous construction, and indeed the *Iliad* itself. This process of discovery began already when we were in Venice. But it is not our intention to limit the investigation of these pages to a select group of our people. By making the Venetus A available in this new way, we hope to encourage new and collaborative ways of exploring the *Iliad*, and new methods of scholarship.

ON ELECTRONIC EDITIONS AND LICENSING

As we write, in the Winter of 2007/2008, one complete copy of the digital images of three Homeric manuscripts—Marcianus Graecus Z. 454 (= 822), Marcianus Graecus Z. 458 (= 841), Marcianus Graecus Z. 453 (= 821)—resides in an electronic storage device made by the Western Digital Corporation containing a stack of 3.5-inch magnetic disks that spin at 7200 rotations per minute. This device can store 1 terabyte of data, or 10^{12} bytes, or eight trillion pieces of information, each representing a value of either one or zero. This device can communicate this data to a computer using a protocol defined by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE Standard 1394b) at a rate of 786,000,000 bits per second. The storage device has dimensions of 6.9" x 6.3" x 4.1" and weighs 4.1 pounds. It costs, in early 2008, approximately \$500.

This Western Digital disk drive is a robust piece of equipment. It has survived many trips inside a suitcase, protected only by a wrapping of shirts and sweaters. It has been the source of many other copies of the data from our project, copies whose integrity has been confirmed by generating "checksums," numbers based on the bit-by-bit content of the files; if the checksum generated from a copied set of 3,000 files matches the checksum generated from the original set of files, then we are sure

that the copies are identical. The tenth-century scribe of the Venetus A had no such source of confidence!

We include these technical details partly in the expectation that they will seem quaint and amusing to our readers, many of whom, we hope, are not born as we write. But there is a more important reason to emphasize the particular device that contains our images. *It will fail*. And so will all of the devices to which we have copied this data so carefully.

The vellum manuscripts of the *Iliad* have survived a thousand years. The Venetus B survived a fire and a dousing with water. All of them survived the indignities of being disassembled and rebound, of being feasts for beetles and food for worms, of sunlight, cold, and heat. Well cared for by generations of professional conservators, they nevertheless had to survive (inevitably) the careers of less diligent or even negligent custodians. Yet we can still read them.

By contrast, the electronic devices that currently hold the digital avatars of these manuscripts, including the high-end "enterprise quality storage units" (to use the jargon of our day), will be noteworthy indeed if any are still operational in 2018; it will be a miracle if any still work in 2028.

So all of this effort will come to naught without a constant and active effort of preservation. Digital images are ephemeral, living only as long as the fragile devices that hold them, devices mass-produced at the lowest possible cost, entirely reliant on electricity, limited to communicating only with contemporary devices that understand their particular protocols of communication. We undertake this project in a time when the technology of information is changing beyond recognition, decade by decade, and with each change, information that is not carried forward with intentional effort is irretrievably lost.

In this way, our *Iliad* has come a full circle. Its earliest life was tenuous indeed, the fleeting performance of a singer-of-tales. It survived only through the efforts of those who loved it, who labored to produce another telling of the tale on another occasion, hoping to inspire their own successors.

We too can hope only to inspire others to possess these images of these instances of the *Iliad*. These images will be lost if they are not copied—and not merely copied generation-by-generation, but year-by-year. There are professionals who will assume some responsibility for this, but the greatest hope for these images is in widespread copying by scholars, enthusiasts, hobbyists, and anyone who wants to possess a beautiful link to the past.

18 HOMER & HISTORY

For this reason, the Biblioteca Marciana, which holds any legal rights to the original images of these manuscripts, has used its position to assert the following: All are free to copy and modify these images without seeking permission, for any non-commercial purpose, as long as they acknowledge the Marciana as the source of the images; they are also free to modify the images, and to share them further, as long as they share them under the same conditions of freedom and expectation of acknowledgement.¹²

What does this mean? It is an invitation for everyone to copy these images. It is an invitation to share them, to study them, and to make of them something new. Anyone is free to negotiate to use these images for commercial gain, but the universal right of non-commercial use is irrevocable.

When the news came to Venice that Byzantium had fallen, Bessarion wrote that he wanted to collect the literary heritage of Greece, to keep it *in some safe place, where it would be accessible to all readers*. In 2007 the latest generation of librarians keeping Bessarion's charge decided that "some safe place" meant "everywhere where people care." With this generous, thoughtful, and foresighted decision, the Biblioteca Marciana has justified Bessarion's confidence in the wisdom of Venice.

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Epea Pteroenta:

How We Came to Have Our *Iliad*

CASEY DUÉ

Our *Iliad* consists of “winged words,” to quote a well known Homeric formula. As early as Mycenaean times, poetry in performance has been conceived of as being in flight (Figure 1).

The nature of the *Iliad* as a poem that is created only in performance has profound implications for scholars seeking to establish an authoritative text. It has been suggested that, in Homeric epic, “winged words” are ones that, once uttered, cannot be taken back.¹ And yet this is precisely what editors of Homer have always hoped to do; we strive to recapture the authoritative performance and make it a text. In this essay I propose to describe how a performance tradition that was already well underway in Mycenaean Greece eventually crystallized into what we know as the *Iliad*, and how that poem was transmitted in various media through more than three millennia so as to reach us in the textual form that we now have it. The processes of transmission that I will outline are certainly not without controversy, and in my notes I will point the reader to important recent discussions of these complex issues. My aim is to provide an overview of the research that forms the foundation of the Center for Hellenic Studies’s Multitext Edition of Homer, of which



TWO



¹For an overview of the various meanings proposed for this famous phrase see Létoublon 1999.

Figure 1. This fresco from the Bronze Age palace at Pylos in Greece depicts a lyre player performing. His song is imagined as being a bird in flight. Might this be a visual counterpart to the famous Homeric phrase “winged words”?

the publication of the Venetus A (Marcianus Gr. Z. 454 [=822]), a marvel of the medieval era of book production and the oldest surviving complete text of the *Iliad*, is an integral part. Throughout my essay, I will explore above all two related questions. How does an oral performance become a written text? If the *Iliad* is ultimately derivative of such a performance, what are the implications for the textual tradition of this poem?

PERFORMANCE OF THE *ILIAD* AND *ODYSSEY* IN ANCIENT TIMES

Homeric poetry was known to the ancient world primarily in performance. Most scholars would agree that in their earliest incarnations the poems that came to be our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed orally and in the context of performance, and that this process was occurring over hundreds of years and across vast geographical distances. These basic facts about the creation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* came to be known through two different kinds of investigation. First, there is the evidence that can be gleaned from the poems themselves. The meter of the poetry is the dactylic hexameter, and the language of the poems is a poetic composite of several dialects that was never spoken in any one time or place (Parry 1932, Palmer 1962, Horrocks 1997). The predominant layer consists of Ionic Greek forms, with the result that a large portion of the poem might be surmised to have come into shape in archaic Ionia (Frame 2008). But there are verses that are demonstrably much earlier, in Arcado-Cypriote and Aeolic dialects, and others much later, with a veneer of Attic Greek. Phrases, half verses, whole verses, and even whole scenes are repeated with a regularity that indicates this poetic composite was formed within a traditional system—that is to say, it could not be the product of one person.²

There are, moreover, several passages within the poems that depict performances of epic poetry. In the *Odyssey*, these passages show a bard performing at banquets, often taking requests for various episodes involving well-known heroes. The passages in the Homeric texts that refer to occasions of performance are fascinating windows into how ancient audiences imagined the creation of epic poetry. Certainly the process is entirely oral. References to writing in the epics are famously few and mysterious. The absence of writing in the composition of the poetry is also reflected in ancient biographical traditions about Homer that conceive of him as being blind. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the narrator proclaims that he is a blind man from Chios, and in *Odyssey* Book 8, the blind poet Demodokos who entertains the feasting Phaeacians (and whom many readers equate with “Homer”) is said to be compensated for blindness by his talent: “Him the muse had dearly loved, but

²The traditionality of the language of the Homeric poems was established by Milman Parry in his 1928 doctoral thesis, *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère; Essai sur un problème de style homérique* (“The Traditional Epithet in Homer,” in Parry 1971). It was not until his fieldwork in Yugoslavia in the 1930s that he came to understand that the poems were not just traditional, but also orally composed. See further below.

she had given to him both good and evil, for though she had endowed him with a divine gift of song, she had robbed him of his eyesight” (*Odyssey* 8.63–64).

From the perspective of the internal audience of these performances, such as the suitors who are entertained by Phemios in Odysseus’ house on Ithaca, or the guests who listen in rapt silence to Demodokos in Alkinoos’ house in Phaeacia, the events narrated are both well known but also come from the relatively recent past. The Trojan War has come to an end only ten years before the performances depicted. But for the external audience, such as Athenians at the Panathenaic festival in Athens in the Classical period, the songs of Phemios and Demodokos are the traditional material of poets working within the epic tradition. Phemios sings *Nostoi*, songs about the homeward voyages of the various heroes from Troy; Demodokos sings about a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles at Troy, and later, the sack of Troy. It is worth noting that despite the differences in occasion, for the external audience, the compositional process of these notionally “past” performances and that of the present, framing performance is imagined to be the same. In this way the very ancient performances represented within the poems are placed on a continuum that connects all the way to the audience’s present.³

The second mode of inquiry into the creation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that I wish to highlight is comparative. In the 1930s, Milman Parry and his assistant Albert Lord went to Yugoslavia to study the oral epic tradition that at that time still flourished there, and soon understood that the Homeric poems were not only traditional in content, but were in fact oral poems—that is, products of performance rather than composition through the technology of writing. In two expeditions to the former Yugoslavia in 1933–35 Parry and Lord collected 12,544 songs, stories, and conversations from 169 singers of the South Slavic epic song tradition. Their unsurpassed, original fieldwork has been matched only by the work of Albert Lord himself, who took additional trips in the 1950s and 1960s. No two of the songs collected are exactly alike, nor do any two of the singers have exactly the same repertoire. These singers composed extremely long epic poems in performance. In order to do this they drew on a vast storehouse of traditional themes and phrases that worked within the meter or rhythm of the poetry. That is to say, they used what are called formulas to build each verse as they went along, instead of individual words that are static or memorized in a fixed order. This method results in each song being a new composition and is the reason why no two songs that Parry and Lord recorded were ever exactly the same. Parry and Lord applied this fieldwork to the Homeric poems by analogy, and they were able to show how the workings of the South Slavic system reveal a great deal about how the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed.

³On this point see also Burgess 2006:127.

The collected works of Milman Parry are published in *The Making of Homeric Verse* (edited by his son Adam Parry, Oxford, 1971). In 1960, Albert Lord published *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA), which was the culmination of his decades of fieldwork and research in the study of South Slavic oral poetic traditions. In it he described in detail the training, techniques and practices of an oral poet in that tradition. With this work he fulfilled the intention of his teacher Milman Parry, who died a tragically early death in 1935 at the very beginning of his career. *The Singer of Tales*, as Milman Parry's work had begun to do before his death, demonstrated how the system of oral traditional poetry, within which they proposed the Homeric poems had been composed, worked. What Parry and Lord discovered in Homer was the existence of a sophisticated, traditional, economical, and above all *oral* system that enabled great literature to be composed in performance. They showed how a singer, trained in techniques that were centuries, if not millennia, old, could draw upon a storehouse of traditional language, tales, and heroic figures to compose epic poetry on any given occasion.

The work of Parry and Lord and the scholars who have built on their efforts over the last 70 years suggests above all that in its earliest stages of development there was a great deal of multiformity in the Greek oral epic tradition. Countless variations on the story of the Trojan War, the anger of Achilles, the returns of the heroes, and any number of traditional tales are known to have been current in different times and different places in antiquity, and were likely sung by countless poets whose names are now lost to us. The earliest textual witnesses of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that have survived, the fragmentary papyri from Egypt (discussed further below), postdate this fluid tradition by hundreds of years, but nevertheless contain a great deal of variation that points to an exceptionally creative and dynamic early history of the poems.

THE EARLIEST TEXTS OF THE *ILIAD* AND *ODYSSEY*

How the poems came to be fixed in the form that we now have them and written down is for this reason a matter of great controversy. Even after the tradition of composition-in-performance ended, the primary access to the poems for most people would have been in the performances of professional rhapsodes. What “texts” were these rhapsodes performing? And how do their performances relate to the texts we now have? An important theory advanced by Gregory Nagy posits that the Panathenaic festival in Athens, where strictly regulated contests in the performance of Homeric poetry were taking place as early as the Archaic period, was the context within which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* became crystallized into a relatively fixed form.⁴ The resulting “Panathenaic” texts may have remained in flux for some

⁴On the “Panathenaic bottleneck” see especially Nagy 1999 and 2002:3–35. See also Seaford 1994:151–53. The term “crystallization” is Nagy’s, but others have employed the metaphor as well. See, e.g., Cook 1995:5.

time, influenced by a variety of factors, including political pressure from those in power (Frame 2008). The tyrant Peisistratus, for example, who is credited with the reorganization of the Panathenaia in 566 BCE and possibly the institution of rhapsodic contests,⁵ is cited by several ancient sources as the organizer of a so-called Peisistratean recension, which produced the first written and authoritative text of the Homeric poems.⁶ The story has a close affinity with tales in other cultures about how an oral tradition came to be authoritatively fixed in writing (Nagy 1996b:70–75). Nevertheless, there may be a clue here as to how the first written texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were commissioned. Other epics that are known to have circulated in antiquity, often referred to collectively as the Epic Cycle, were not performed at the Panathenaia and have not survived in written form.⁷

In any case, at some point during the Archaic or early Classical period in Athens texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* began to be produced. However this was done, it must have been done at great cost and with Herculean effort, since writing would have been a new technology, the materials needed would have been expensive and difficult to acquire, literacy would have been restricted to an elite minority, and the performers would have been unaccustomed to slowing down their composition to meet the needs of a scribe. These are the same obstacles that Milman Parry and Albert Lord faced when they attempted to capture in writing the performances of bards in the South Slavic epic song tradition during their fieldwork in Yugoslavia in the 1930s.

Whatever texts were produced at this time were copied, and copied again and again for centuries. I have suggested already above that a “Panathenaic text” may be the exemplar upon which the written texts of Classical antiquity were based. But our evidence suggests strongly that there was no single exemplar that has reached us from Classical Athens. With the exception of a few ancient quotations that survive in other texts, Homeric papyri are the oldest surviving witnesses to the text of Homer (Figure 2). These papyrus documents are all fragmentary, and range in date from as early as the third century BCE to the seventh century CE. The vast majority of the fragments were discovered in Egypt, and now reside in collections located all over the world. The papyrus fragments of Homeric poetry reveal that the texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were still somewhat fluid even after the Classical period in Athens. It is only starting around 150 BCE that the texts seem to become standardized, closely resembling the much later manuscripts of the medieval period. Because this date coincides with the height of the scholarly activity centered around the great Ptolemaic library in Egyptian Alexandria, it has been theorized that scholars such as Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Aristarchus may have played

⁵The ancient evidence comes from the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus* 228–229.

⁶See *Anecdota Graeca* 1.6 and Cicero, *De Oratore* 3.137. For a parallel myth concerning the reassembly of the Homeric poems by Lycurgus, lawgiver of Sparta, see Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 4.4. For more on the myth of the Peisistratean recension see Nagy 1996b:73–75.

⁷Summaries of these poems, made in antiquity by a scholar named Proclus, are preserved on folios 1, 4, and 6 of Venetus A. The few meager surviving fragments of the poems of the Epic Cycle have been edited by A. Bernabé (1987) and M. Davies (1988). For a discussion of the remaining fragments see Davies 1989. On the relationship of the Epic Cycle to the oral epic tradition in which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were created see Burgess 2001.

an important role in establishing this relatively standardized text of Homer that is found in the medieval manuscripts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Reynolds and Wilson 1991:8, Pfeiffer 1968). I will have more to say about the work of the Alexandrian editors momentarily. Others have suggested alternate explanations, such as the rise of the book trade around this time, which must have resulted in greater diffusion of a common text (Nagy 1996b:96–99).

Papyrus fragments are extremely significant for Homeric studies. First, as already noted, they are ancient witnesses to the text of Homer. The medieval manuscript tradition of Homer begins with the tenth-century CE manuscripts of the *Iliad* known commonly as A (Marcianus Gr.Z.454 [=822]) and D (Laurentianus 32.15). Some papyrus fragments predate the medieval tradition by as many as 1200 years. The fragments give us an otherwise irrecoverable picture of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as they were performed and recorded in ancient times. When taken altogether, Homeric papyri reveal a state of the Homeric texts in antiquity that can be quite surprising. There are numerous verses in the papyri that are seemingly intrusive from the standpoint of the medieval transmission. These additional verses, the so-called “plus verses,” are not present in the majority of the medieval manuscripts of the *Iliad*. Other verses that are canonical in the medieval manuscripts are absent from the papyri—these may be termed “minus verses.” Also prevalent is variation in the formulaic phrasing within lines. In other words, it seems from this most ancient evidence that the poems were performed and recorded with a considerable amount of fluidity in antiquity.

Because the papyri that predate 150 BCE present such surprising variations from the medieval texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, they are often termed “wild.” This term, however, is very misleading from an historical point of view. The quotations of

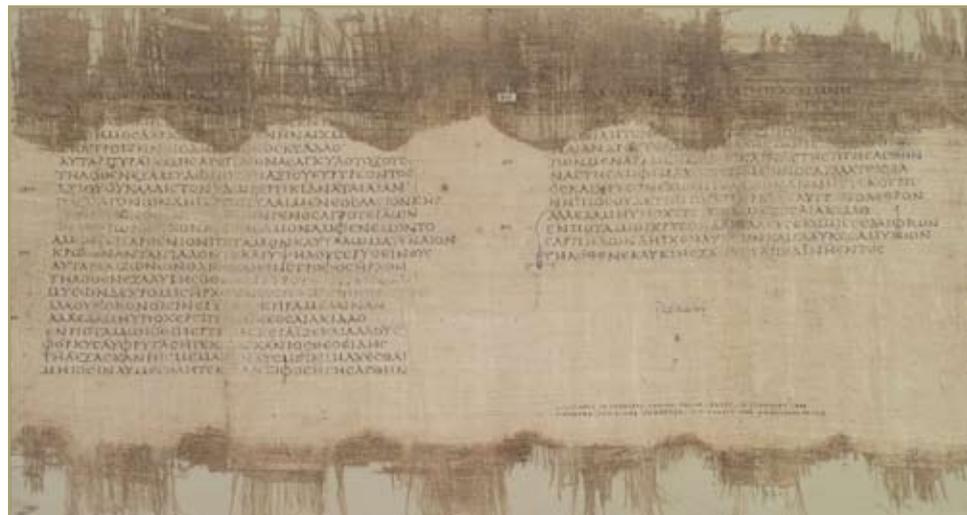


Figure 2. The “Hawara Homer” (Bodl. MS. Gr. class a I (P)), an important papyrus text from the first century CE, excavated in the 1880’s, from Hawara, Egypt. The text of this papyrus varies in several places from medieval texts of the *Iliad*. Papyrus rolls could accommodate 1-2 books of the *Iliad*, and the surviving fragments of this roll contain text from the first two books of the poem.

the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that we find in such fourth-century BCE authors as Plato, Demosthenes, and Aeschines likewise present numerous plus verses, minus verses, and other significant variations from the medieval texts of Homer. In other words, the multiformity of the so-called “wild” texts of the oldest papyri is confirmed by the quotations, which present a similar picture of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in antiquity (Dué 2001). To put it still another way, the further back in time we go, the more multiform—the more “wild”—our text of Homer becomes. This is the exact opposite of what we should find for an author who composed in writing, where we would expect to see more uniformity in the textual witnesses the closer we came to the author’s lifetime.

The wildness of the earliest papyri becomes more understandable and even expected when we take into account the evidence that the Homeric scholia provide about the work of the Alexandrian scholars. As I will discuss further below, the scholia are notes in the margins of medieval manuscripts.⁸ They are therefore part of the medieval transmission of Homeric poetry, but the notes derive ultimately from the work of the Alexandrian scholars and especially Aristarchus, the great second century BCE scholar and editor whose critical work on the text of Homer is referred to throughout the scholia. As Gregory Nagy has demonstrated, Aristarchus had available to him at the library of Ptolemaic Alexandria a great number of Homeric texts (Nagy 2004). Aristarchus’ practice was to collate the many texts known to him and to comment on the various readings that he found, often asserting which reading he felt to be the correct one. Unlike a modern editor, however, Aristarchus confined his opinions to his commentary, which was published in its own separate volume. The text that would have accompanied this commentary was what Aristarchus and subsequent scholars referred to as the “standard” or “common” edition. He himself does not seem to have ever published his own text of Homer with his own preferred readings. But even if he had, we would know from his commentaries about the many other texts that were available to him, and so once again we are forced to confront the multiformity of the Homeric tradition.

This multiformity, however, can be easily explained if we understand that our earliest texts are the products of a traditional system of composition-in-performance. The variations recorded in the early Homeric papyri and the Homeric scholia are the vestiges of a once vibrant performance tradition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In such a tradition no poem is ever composed, performed, or recorded in exactly the same way twice. In the earliest stages of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, each performance would have resulted in an entirely new composition. By the time of the first papyrus fragments, the oral composition-in-performance tradition of Homeric

⁸ Some papyri also contain scholia. On the relationship between the scholia that survive on papyri and those of the medieval manuscripts see McNamee 1981 and 1992.

epic poetry seems to have died out. But variations in the ancient textual tradition, which are, as I say, reflexes of this once-oral and performative tradition, persisted for several more centuries. Moreover, performances of this poetry continued even as written texts were created, sold, and acquired as prestige objects. The variations preserved for us in the Homeric papyri are a unique window into the performance tradition that created them.

THE MEDIEVAL TRANSMISSION AND BEYOND

After papyrus ceased to be used, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were copied onto parchment codices, like the Venetus A (Marcianus Gr. Z. 454 [=822]).⁹ (For more on the differences between papyrus scrolls and parchment codices and the reasons for the transfer, see Mary Ebbott's chapter in this volume.) Marcianus Gr. Z. 454 (=822) is in fact the earliest extant and complete medieval manuscript of Homer, hand copied and assembled by Byzantine Greek scribes in the tenth century CE, and it is the one on which modern printed texts are primarily based. (The few medieval manuscripts that predate it contain commentary and paraphrases of the poem but not a complete text.) The nearly two hundred Homeric manuscripts that succeed it are remarkable for the relative uniformity of their texts, and in this respect they differ considerably from the ancient witnesses. But although they do not vary in remarkable ways from one another, it is important to understand that the medieval manuscripts of Homer do not descend from a single exemplar, nor is there a medieval vulgate for the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. It is clear that a substantial number of texts survived the transfer from papyrus scrolls to parchment codices and that there were therefore multiple channels of transmission. What is not entirely clear is why the versions that survived resemble each other so closely. As I noted above, it has been postulated that the editorial activities of the scholars associated with the library at Alexandria played a role in the standardization of the Homeric text. But this theory does not entirely account for the continued multiformity of the text in the medieval period.

The Venetus A is invaluable to us for much more than its text of the *Iliad*, however. As discussed above and also in the other articles of this volume, this manuscript contains not only the texts of the poem but also excerpts from the scholarly commentaries of these same Alexandrian scholars, which are copied into its margins and between lines of the text. These writings, known as scholia, contain notes on the text that explain points of grammar, usage, the meaning of words, interpretation, and disputes about the authenticity of verses and the correct text. The material contained in these marginal notes derives from scholarly works that predate the manuscript's construction by a thousand years or more. And like the ancient papyri,

⁹For an overview of the work of medieval scribes and the medieval transmission of Greek literature in general see Reynolds and Wilson 1991.

which give us their surprising picture of the state of the Homeric text in antiquity, the scholia give us an historical window into the evolution of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

There are some 200 medieval manuscripts of the *Iliad*, but only a small number of these are deluxe editions complete with scholia.¹⁰ The first printed edition of the Greek text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* was made in Florence in 1488–1489 (without scholia), and this printing was the first crucial step towards making the *Iliad* widely available to a modern audience. Please see Mary Ebbott's contribution in this volume for more on how printed editions of Homer have shaped our understanding of the poems.

ESTABLISHING THE TEXT

The first printed edition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (1488–1489) was edited by Demetrius Chalcondylas, who no doubt consulted several manuscripts available to him at that time (Proctor 1900:66, Sandys 1908:104, and Geanakoplos 1962:57–58). But the application to the Homeric texts of the techniques of textual criticism, in which scholars seek, using a variety of interpretive and deductive methods, to establish the correct text of an ancient author, would not begin in full force for three more centuries. Moreover, the medieval texts on which the early printed editions were based are not the same as the ones that we use now. The A manuscript of the *Iliad* (Marcianus Gr. Z. 454 [=822]) was not published until 1788, when Jean Baptiste d'Anse de Villoison rediscovered it in the Marciana Library in Venice. The manuscript had been there for more than two centuries. It had belonged to the collection of the Greek scholar Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472), whose private library eventually became the core of the Marciana's collection after his death. (For more on the manuscript's history please see Chapter 1 in this volume.)

Between the early Renaissance and the late eighteenth century, when the Venetus A was published by Villoison, the figure of Homer was consistently the focal point of scholarly controversy. The so-called “Homeric Question” was now in the process of being formulated. The “question” (which was, in reality, many questions) was concerned above all with authorship and the creation of the poems. Did the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have the same author? If so, when did he live? Could he write? Did he compose the poems in their entirety, or are parts of them interpolated by later authors? How did the poems come to be in the form that we now have them? Because of the wealth of scholia contained in the Venetus A—those marginal and interlinear notes that derive ultimately from the Alexandrian scholars of antiquity—with the publication of the Venetus A Homeric scholars of the late eighteenth

¹⁰It is a goal of the Multitext project to photograph these other manuscripts as well and provide texts of the scholia contained in them, especially the manuscripts known as G (Genav. 44, thirteenth century CE), and T (Lond. Bibl. Brit. Burney 86, 1059 CE). The manuscript known as B (Marcianus Gr. Z. 453 [=821], eleventh century CE) was photographed at the same time as A, as was the twelfth-to-thirteenth-century Marcianus Gr. Z. 458 (= 841).

century suddenly found themselves blessed with a treasure trove of information about what scholars of the second century BCE knew about Homer. It seemed that it would now be possible to reconstruct Homer and Homer's original text, and that all of the Homeric questions could be solved (Nagy 1997:106).

This was the belief of Villoison, the editor of the *editio princeps* of the Venetus A, who viewed the scholia as an authoritative witness to an authoritative edition of Homer, constructed by the premier textual critic of Homer in antiquity, Aristarchus. But the views of another scholar, Friedrich August Wolf, proved to be more influential. In his 1795 work, *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, Wolf questioned the authoritativeness of the scholia and the work of the Alexandrian critics. Wolf argued, moreover, that the Homeric poems had been transmitted by rhapsodes in an oral tradition that had corrupted the texts irreparably over time. For these reasons, Wolf asserted, the true and genuine text of Homer could never be recovered. Wolf produced his own editions of the Greek texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (1804–1807), relying heavily on the medieval transmission of the two poems and disregarding much of the textual work of the Alexandrians of antiquity. Wolf's editions established a kind of medieval vulgate that continues to be followed to this day in modern printed editions: the line numbers in use by all modern editors are those of the highly conservative "Wolfian vulgate."

The debates associated with the Homeric Question only intensified after the first publication of the Venetus A and its scholia in 1788 and have continued to dominate scholarly discussions of Homer ever since. Inevitably, how each modern editor of the Homeric poems answers this question has to a large extent determined the text that is printed.¹¹ When we seek to understand how we have come to have the text of the *Iliad* that we know today, it is important to understand that the debates between Villoison and Wolf and their scholarly successors about the figure of Homer and nature of the Homeric texts still today guide the choices of modern editors.

The most recent edition of the *Iliad* is Martin West's 1998–2000 Teubner edition. It is based on his conception of Homer, the poet and the man, as explained on the first page of his introduction: *Ilias materiam continet iamdiu per ora cantorum diffusam, formam autem contextumque qualem nos novimus tum primum attinuit, cum conscripta est; quod ut fieret, unius munus fuit maximi poetae.* ("The *Iliad* contains material diffused through the mouths of singers for a long time, but the form and construction that we now know was first attained when it was written down. When this happened, it was the work of one, very great poet.") West acknowledges the oral tradition that furnished material on which the *Iliad* is based, but then says that our *Iliad* took its form when it was

¹¹ I have explored this idea in depth in Dué 2006.

first written down. This was the work of a *maximus poeta* who could write. That the poet was also the writer is made clear as West continues: *per multos annos, credo, elaboravit et, quae primum strictius composuit, deinceps novis episodiis insertis mirifice auxit ac dilatavit.* ("Throughout many years, I believe, he labored over it, and what he had at first put together concisely, he later wonderfully expanded and extended it by inserting new episodes.") As I have argued already elsewhere, the insertion of "credo" here is telling (Dué 2006). West is forced to admit, already on the first page, that his conception of Homer is a matter of faith. And because West believes in a *maximus poeta*, his goal is to restore the transmitted text as closely as possible to the composition of that poet. For him, the superfluity of other possible readings that survive from antiquity are of little interest.

Indeed, West's editorial approach is in keeping with what all modern editors over the past 300 years or so have done. But this methodology is very problematic when it is applied to the Homeric texts (Dué and Ebbott 2008). The practice of textual criticism, as applied to classical Greek texts, has the goal of recovering the original composition of the author. To create a critical edition, a modern editor assembles a text by collating the various written witnesses to an ancient Greek text, understanding their relationship with each other, knowing the kinds and likelihoods of mistakes that can occur when texts are copied by hand, and, in the case of poetry, applying the rules and exceptions of the meter as well as grammar. The final published work will then represent what she or he thinks are the author's own words (or as close to this as possible). An editor may follow one manuscript almost exclusively, or pick and choose between different manuscripts to compile what seems truest to the original. The editor also places in the apparatus criticus what s/he judges to be significant variants recorded in the witnesses. The reader must rely on the editor for the completeness of the apparatus in reporting variants. For a text that was composed and originally published in writing, this goal of recovering the original text is valuable and productive, even if it may never be fully achieved because of the state of the evidence.

But if, as I have argued, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were not composed in writing, this editorial system cannot be applied in the same way.¹² The evidence outlined at the start of this article supports the thesis that the Homeric epics come from a long oral tradition in which they were created, performed, and re-performed, all without the technology of writing. This fundamental difference in the composition and history of this poetry means that we must adjust our assumptions in our understanding of the variations in the written record. What does it mean when we see variations, which still fit the meter and language of the poetry, in the witnesses to

¹² The system is flawed even under West's literate model for the composition of the Homeric texts. His Homer composed in writing, but made changes and expansions over the course of a lifetime.

the texts? Instead of “mistakes” to be corrected, as an editor would treat them in the case of a text composed just once in writing, these variations are testaments to the system of language that underlies the composition-in-performance of the oral tradition.

For these reasons the editors of the Homer Multitext Project (of which publication the 2007 digital images of the Venetus A manuscript are an integral part) do not attempt to answer questions of authorship, nor do they seek a single authoritative text. Rather, the Homer Multitext takes an historical point of departure, and has as its central goal to make available an accurate picture of the transmission in all its complexity. The editors of the Multitext assert that poems that were part of a fluid and dynamic performance tradition should not be frozen in a single snapshot view, and instead intend to publish the *Iliad* at many different stages of transmission.

Publication of the Venetus A is central to this goal. This manuscript is our oldest complete manuscript of the *Iliad*. It serves as a bridge between the ancient and medieval transmission, and it preserves in its margins an historical record of many previous editions of the poems, as well as a treasure trove of ancient scholarly interpretation. As a deluxe edition unparalleled in beauty, design, construction, or execution by any other manuscript produced subsequently, it is a cultural artifact worthy of study in its own right. As Mary Ebbott and Gregory Nagy point out elsewhere in this volume, the Venetus A was on the cutting edge of book technology when it was created, and made the Homeric texts available to its audience in a way that was at that time sophisticated and novel. It allowed its readers to appreciate the poem together with a thousand years of interpretation, and it did so in a format that was far easier to use and more durable than earlier editions of the *Iliad* on papyrus. Even the manuscript’s elegant and compact minuscule script can be seen as a technological advance over the capitals in which the earliest parchment manuscripts must have been written. By publishing the Venetus A as a collection of high resolution digital images, the Homer Multitext will be making a similar technological breakthrough in the presentation of the *Iliad*, and with it readers will receive a much clearer picture of where our *Iliad* comes from.

Text and Technologies: the *Iliad* and the Venetus A

MARY EBBOTT

The *Iliad* has been told for thousands of years. We owe its survival to a particular history of technologies of reading and writing, which, not surprisingly, have had an impact on the form, dissemination, and even interpretation of the Homeric epic over the course of those thousands of years. The tenth-century manuscript commonly known as the Venetus A (its official designation is Marcianus Graecus Z. 454 [=822]) preserves one version of this history. The Venetus A is the oldest complete witness to the *Iliad* that exists today. Through this particular text, we can move backward in time and compare it to what came before. In particular, we can see how it both retains features of earlier technologies and makes use of those of its own day. The Venetus A manuscript is valuable not simply because it is the oldest surviving complete copy; it is also a deluxe edition that contains and therefore preserves centuries of scholarship on this epic. This commentary, called *scholia*, provides multiple windows onto the history of the transmission of the *Iliad*.

Moving forward in time from the tenth-century production of the Venetus A, we can also examine how the artifact itself and the text it contains have encountered new technological developments: the printing press, film photography, and now digital technologies. These more recent technologies aid in both the survival and accessibility of the text within the Venetus A, so that the learning and beauty contained within can be not only preserved but also made more readily available. In these cases, too, there is an overlap with and also an adaptation of older technologies. Yet we will see that the application of new technologies also has the power to change our perceptions and interpretations of this information.

The Homer Multitext project (http://chs.harvard.edu/chs/homer_multitext) and its digital photographs of the Venetus A manuscript (http://chs.harvard.edu/chs/manuscript_images) will use new technologies to present and preserve Homeric epic. But the application of new technologies has always been central to the survival of the Homeric epics, and throughout their history technology has allowed or even caused audiences to consider them in new ways. The epics have undergone transitions from oral to written transmission, from papyrus roll to parchment codex, from manuscript to printed type, and from film photography now to a digital medium. Since reading is both a physical act and an act of interpretation, each transition has the potential to shed new light on these ancient poems. Perhaps one surprise in



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these many transitions is that a digital medium will allow us to go the furthest back in the history of the epics: the newest technology will help us to see the oldest more clearly. Let us begin our examination of this history with the oldest stage and move forward from there.

AN ORAL POEM MEETS THE TECHNOLOGY OF WRITING

As Casey Dué's essay in this volume, "*Epea Pteroenta: How We Came to Have Our Iliad*," has explained in detail, the epics known to us as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were part of a long oral tradition. In that oral tradition the poems were performed by singers without the technology of writing. Instead, these epics were composed in performance. As we know from the comparative research of Milman Parry and Albert Lord into oral traditional poetry, such a mode of composition depends on a system that can best be understood as a specialized language that has its own specialized grammar and vocabulary. The oral poet does not memorize a static, precomposed poem for performance; rather, he learns and uses that specialized language so that he can compose in performance. The result is that each time the song is sung, each time the poem is composed-in-performance, it is composed anew. When Parry and Lord interviewed singers within the then-living Slavic oral tradition, the singers would assert that they sang the same song the same way each time (that is, they sang it the right way: see, e.g., Lord 1960:27, 99). Since Parry and Lord were observers from outside the tradition, however, they could see that some details of the song would change with each new composition. Nevertheless, the variations would still be traditional, using the traditional language. Innovation for its own sake was not valued (Lord 1960:44–45).

The system of oral poetry allows for rapid composition-in-performance because the poetry is composed through formulaic language, a technical term used by Milman Parry (see, e.g., Parry 1971:272–279). The "formulaic" nature of this language—a term which should not be confused with our everyday usage of "formulaic" to mean "uninspired" or "mundane" when applied to artistic narrative—is most familiar to readers of Homeric epic from name-epithet combinations such as "swift-footed Achilles" or "lord of men Agamemnon." But formulaic language comprises even larger building blocks, including type scenes and themes; indeed, the entire epic consists of these formulas. Because such formulas are suited to the meter, they are also flexible and can be interchanged with one another, leading to the variation that is typical of oral poetry. The strength of the tradition, including the premium placed on handing these stories down to new generations as part of the cultural memory, means that the story is entirely traditional, even as it composed anew each time it is sung and even as the narrative can evolve over time. There is evidence within the

language of the poetry that it did just that: the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as we know them evolved over many centuries before the technology of writing was ever applied to them. The composition and transmission of the epics were oral for centuries before they became textual.

How the technology of writing affected this performance tradition is an intriguing and controversial question. We do not know exactly how or when these oral epics came to be written texts. What we do know is that even after alphabetic writing was introduced in ancient Greek culture, around 800 BCE, and even after oral poetry was written down in a variety of ways in the succeeding centuries, the language of this oral poetry persisted. We also know that these epics continued to be performed and to be experienced as performance for centuries.

Variation, which is typical of oral poetry composed in performance, continued along with the system of the oral traditional poetic language, even as transcripts of performances were recorded in writing, and even as these performances relied more and more on scripts than on the techniques of composition-in-performance as time went on (Nagy 1996a:109–112). Accordingly, the earliest surviving witnesses to this poetry shows the most variation. With the passage of time, however, the text became more and more fixed, and eventually the textual tradition took over from the oral tradition. But variations, or, better, to use Lord's term, '*multiforms*' (Lord 1995:23), persisted in the textual tradition. That is, the surviving written sources continued to show multiforms that were part of the language of composition-in-performance. These multiforms serve as a sure sign of the continuing operation of the system that is oral poetry, the medium of the Homeric tradition for centuries before it became a text.

The introduction of alphabetic writing is an early meeting between a new technology and the Homeric epics. From this example we can see how features persist even after the application of a new technology. Writing the poetry down preserved the system of language that made oral composition-in-performance possible, and this language remained central to the poetry even as it became more "textual" and even as, in the ensuing centuries, performances were influenced by and then associated with texts. The next stage of technological development we will consider, then, is an early method of reading and writing the *Iliad*.

FROM ROLL TO CODEX: TECHNOLOGIES OF WRITING AND READING

The application of writing to Homeric epic is the reason we have a text of the *Iliad* today: once the oral tradition gradually gave way to these written texts, handwritten copies after copies were made, and some of these copies survived. Although a flourishing oral tradition could preserve and transmit its poetry for centuries without the technology of writing, it was nevertheless this technology that has preserved the *Iliad* for us. Although alphabetic writing began to develop in the ancient Greek world in the eighth century BCE, our textual record of the *Iliad* goes back only to the third century BCE. There are extant papyrus fragments of the epics produced during that time and also in the next several centuries. So there were already many centuries of performance and then writing of the *Iliad* before any of those surviving texts were produced, and, of course, many more centuries to come before reaching the production of the Venetus A in the tenth century CE. It is the labor and skill of producing these handwritten texts that reach across the centuries to bring us to our manuscript. What were the physical characteristics of these texts, and how did the technologies of writing and reading develop across these centuries?

The earliest written texts of the *Iliad* to have survived were written on papyrus rolls; that is, they used the common technology of their day. The Venetus A is a parchment codex. These two changes, in material and format, have affected the survival of texts, and they suggest implications for methods of writing and reading. Because the change in material is not directly connected to the change from roll to codex (Roberts and Skeat 1987:10), let us look at the material first and then return to format.

Papyrus and parchment: manufacturing something to write on

Papyrus, the writing material, is made from the papyrus plant. The encyclopedic *Natural History* by Pliny the Elder, a Roman writer from the first century CE, gives us an ancient account of the production and uses of papyrus (Pliny, *Natural History* 13.71–89). The plant, Pliny tells us, grew abundantly in Egypt but also in Syria and at the Euphrates river near Babylon. To make the writing material, the reed of the plant was carefully sliced open and the leaves within were separated but kept as broad as possible. (The wider each sheet was, the better its quality, Kenyon 1951:49.) The pieces were then arranged vertically in a first layer and horizontally for the second layer. The two layers were pressed or beaten together, and the plant's own inherent adhesive quality helped to bind them together (cf. Shailor 1991:6, Reynolds & Wilson 1991:3). The sheets were dried in the sun and then pasted

together with a flour and water glue to make one long, continuous sheet, which could be rolled. Especially if the sheet was made from rougher parts of the plant, it might be smoothed with an ivory or shell tool (cf. Shailor 1991:6), and after the sheets were pasted together, they were again beaten thin with a mallet.

Because of the double-layer construction, the two sides of a sheet presented a different quality of writing surface: the horizontal layout of the leaves offered a smoother surface. The horizontal fibers of the plant also provided a natural rule to follow for keeping the lines of text straight. For a published book in the roll format, it was customary to write on only this side of the sheet, not only because of the greater ease of writing on the horizontally laid leaves, but also because the other side was more exposed in the roll format, and therefore the writing could easily be smudged (Reynolds & Wilson 1991:3–4).

Parchment is the general term for a writing material made from animal skins, often the skins of domesticated animals such as goats and sheep. The term vellum is now used as a synonym for parchment from any animal, but technically speaking, vellum is made of calfskin (Shailor 1991:8). Because calfskin parchment had both strength and thinness, a prized combination, the word vellum came to be used for any parchment that exhibited those qualities (Reed 1972:126). Smaller animals were apparently preferred for writing and bookmaking materials (Reed 1972:125). Through the tenth century, goatskin was more commonly used for parchment production, but the use of sheepskin increased in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Reed 1972:129). The Venetus A does indeed seem to be made of goatskin parchment.

Parchment is made by treating an animal skin with a lime bath. The potency of the lime solution and the time the skin soaks are important factors in its strength: different guidelines for preparing parchment dating to the medieval period recommend that the skin stand in the lime bath for a length of time between three and ten days with occasional stirring. The lime helps to remove the hair, a process completed with a knife after liming (Reed 1972:132–138). The pelt is then dried at an ordinary temperature and simultaneously stretched (Reed 1972:119). The key technique of simultaneous drying and stretching is what makes parchment a different texture and thickness compared to that of leather (Reed 1972:120–122; Shailor 1991:8–9). After the skin is dried, it is polished with pumice and chalked (Shailor 1991:9). Care must be taken not to get the parchment too wet, or it becomes hard and inflexible (Reed 1972:123–125). Like papyrus, parchment has two distinct sides: in this case, the flesh side and the hair side. When the parchment is of lesser quality, the hair follicles are visible and the texture can be bumpy, but in finely made parchment, the distinction between the two sides is almost imperceptible.

One technical advantage of good parchment over papyrus for writers and book publishers, then, was that one could write on both sides of the sheet without difficulty. Another was that its strength made it easier to correct mistakes or even to reuse it: by scraping or washing the ink off, the sheet could be written over. (A parchment that has been erased and reused for a new text is called a palimpsest.) While parchment also took ink well, resulting in clearer, easier-to-read script (Reed 1972:5), perhaps the most important technical advantage of parchment from our point of view is its durability. For it is durability that has aided the survival of classical literature in early manuscripts such as the *Venetus A*. In this regard, parchment delivers on the promise of writing, to preserve a text for ages. By way of comparison, we can consider that Pliny marveled at how long-lasting papyrus could actually be: he noted that handwritten documents by the famous brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus from the late second century BCE survived the two centuries to his own day (Pliny, *Natural History* 13.83). In the dry climate of Egypt, where our surviving papyri have been found, the material could survive even longer, although it has often been found in a tattered state. But parchment “is immensely strong, remains flexible indefinitely under normal conditions, does not deteriorate with age, and possesses a smooth, even surface which is both pleasant to the eye and provides unlimited scope for the finest writing and illumination” (Roberts and Skeat 1987:8). As fragile as the *Venetus A* manuscript is in its current state, the durability of parchment, especially compared to that of papyrus, has contributed to its survival for over a thousand years.

Both papyrus and parchment were expensive throughout antiquity and the medieval period, but the evidence we have does not allow us to compare costs directly (Roberts & Skeat 1987:7). That is, surviving ancient and medieval sources give a price for one or the other material at a particular time and place, but not for both at the same time and place. One attempt to calculate the cost of papyrus in Roman Egypt in the first century CE translates the cost of a sheet of papyrus to \$30 to \$35 for a single sheet of paper today (Harris 1989:195). However accurate that calculation may be (it takes into account the cost of a sheet of papyrus compared to the average wage of skilled and unskilled laborers—such are the acrobatics of estimation that the scarce evidence induces—but does not try to figure the cost of export from Egypt to other parts of the Empire), the conclusion must still be that papyrus may have been readily available to the wealthy but was not common among all classes. One way to imagine how expensive parchment could be is to realize that manufacturing a large codex such as the *Venetus A* required the skins from hundreds of animals for the raw materials (Shailor 1991:11; Reed 1972:167), as well as the labor of a skilled craftsman to create parchment from that skin. So,

although we cannot pinpoint the comparative costs of papyrus versus parchment, we can recognize that both writing materials were the province of only those who could afford them. As a consequence, writing and reading were also activities mainly of the wealthy elite.

Factors other than the technical merits and expense of these materials affected their use, however. Papyrus was the writing material of choice in Greek and Roman antiquity, and the change to parchment was neither abrupt nor complete: papyrus continued to be made until the twelfth century CE, long after parchment had become the dominant writing material (Roberts and Skeat 1987:8). There is no one answer to why parchment overtook papyrus as the primary material used for writing. The availability of one or the other was influenced by several factors. The source materials likely made parchment more locally available: made from animals, and a variety of animals at that, it could be produced anywhere, unlike the manufacture of papyrus, which depended on the local availability of the plant (Roberts and Skeat 1987:8). Problems with importing papyrus from Egypt are also mentioned in ancient sources. Pliny recounted that parchment was invented in the second century BCE at Pergamum in response to a lack of papyrus (the Greek word *περγαμινή* and its Latin equivalent *pergamena* come from the name of this city, and the word ‘parchment’ is derived from them). Pliny cited the historian Varro as his source for the following explanation of the impetus behind this innovation: Ptolemy in Egypt and the Pergamene king Eumenes were rivals over their libraries, and Ptolemy put an embargo on the export of papyrus, presumably to deny Eumenes the opportunity to manufacture more books for his library (Pliny, *Natural History* 13.70). Skins had been used for writing long before this event, so the dating of the “invention” should be read skeptically, but the anecdote does indicate that political changes, especially in Egypt, the center of growing and producing papyrus, could affect its availability. Another political factor often identified in the shift away from the use of papyrus is the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641 CE. Others, however, see the differences in manufacture as a more influential cause. The production of papyrus in Egypt already had a long history before the Greeks and Romans began using it, so that we can suppose that an efficient system for its production had been developed. Manufacture of parchment was more difficult technically, and so getting the scale of the production of parchment to match that of papyrus took many years, even centuries (Roberts & Skeat 1987:8–10).

A shortage of papyrus may have affected not only the choice of materials, but the script used as well. Reynolds and Wilson attribute the change from majuscule script (characterized by large, uppercase letters written without breaks) to minuscule

script (lowercase, with word breaks)—a change which occurred by the ninth century—to the papyrus shortage in Byzantium. This shortage created a sharp increase in the demand for parchment, and “to meet this difficulty it appears that the expedient was devised of adapting for use in books the script that had been current for some time in official circles for letters, documents, accounts, and the like; the modern technical term for the revised script is minuscule. It occupied far less space on the page and could be written at high speed by a practised scribe” (Reynolds and Wilson 1991:59). A defining change in writing practice, then, was related to the availability and expense of the materials to write on. (See Gregory Nagy’s essay in this volume for an example of an older writing style, uncial lettering, being preserved and adapted for a new use, as seen in the Venetus A.)

When we examine the technological changes in the publishing and preserving of the *Iliad* over the millennia, however, we repeatedly find that there is a considerable amount of time in which technologies overlap. Just as the oral tradition and oral performance of Homeric epic did not immediately cease to exist once the technology of writing was introduced (rather, it continued on for generations), so also parchment and papyrus coexisted as writing materials for many centuries. The superior technical merits of parchment for writing were not enough to eliminate the use of papyrus. To what extent was the expense of parchment a factor, even considering the import costs of papyrus (see Reed 1972:6)? Or did a strong pull of custom, especially in an association between papyrus and literary texts in particular, influence its continued use? Although I made the distinction at the beginning of this section between the pieces of papyrus rolls that constitute some of our earliest witnesses to the Homeric epic and the Venetus A as a parchment codex, both materials were in fact used in both formats in different times and places. So let us now look at the roll and codex and how those technologies also coexisted.

Roll and codex

A roll was made with several pieces of papyrus or parchment joined together into one long sheet, which was then rolled around itself, sometimes with a rod or cylinder attached at one end. The sheets of papyrus were glued together so that the horizontal fibers all ran in the same direction. The roll was constructed before it was written on. The construction of the codex, on the other hand, was basically the same as that of our book: pages of either papyrus or parchment were sewn together between covers. When parchment was used, the sheets were laid out so that a flesh side faced another flesh side, and hair side faced hair side. Thus when the codex was opened, the facing pages presented the same side. The pages were written on before

they were bound. See Myriam Hecquet’s essay in this volume for her detailed investigation into the construction of the Venetus A codex itself.

The codex format has its origins in a type of ancient writing tablet, which consisted of two flat pieces of wood clasped or sewn together; inside was a surface of wax into which text could be inscribed. This tablet was then further developed into a form that contained pages of parchment instead of the wax surface (Roberts & Skeat 1987:1, 11–23). The poetry of Martial, from the first century CE, records its own publication in a codex format (I.2) and mentions other literary books in this form (in poem XIV.184 Martial mentions Homeric poetry in a codex). Martial describes the advantages of this format, including ease of use in travel and ease of storage, but the innovation does not seem to have become popular for literary texts for another three centuries or so (Roberts & Skeat 1987:24–37). Cultural attitudes that held the roll as the proper form for literature and conservatism in both format and reading practices made the transition from roll to codex a slow one (Roberts & Skeat 1987:24, 73–74). The codex did catch on earlier, however, for Christian literature, and by the second century CE the papyrus codex was already the standard format for collections of Christian texts (Roberts & Skeat 1987:38–44). A Christian influence in the third and fourth centuries is often credited for the emergence of the codex as the standard format for secular literature as well, but an examination of surviving fragments of non-Christian texts in codices suggests that there were many factors affecting the adoption of this format, including comprehensiveness—the ability to make a single-volume edition of longer works, including the *Iliad*—and convenience of use, storage, and reference (Roberts & Skeat 1987:67–73).

Some modern scholars express wonder at the slow transition from roll to codex as the common format for books, since, to their minds, these very characteristics of the codex make it such a clearly superior form. But I think much of their amazement is attributable to the fact that the codex is so familiar to us as readers that the ways in which it is easy and useful are indeed obvious. Deep familiarity with the roll likewise contributed to the continued use of that format: it takes time to realize the advantages of a new technology, especially when the familiar one seems to work just fine. That conservatism is also seen in the transfer of some ways of reading and writing that were developed for the roll but continued in codices, and in the Venetus A in particular.

Since reading from a roll is so unfamiliar, let us consider what it was like. Say an ancient reader wanted to read a portion of the *Iliad* (and we will assume that this reader happened to own a personal copy of the entire epic). First of all, the reader

would have had to choose which part of the poem to start with before sitting down with it. We call the 24 divisions of the *Iliad* “books,” but these were actually units of performance that were then continued as textual units (Nagy 1996a:182–186). A roll could be constructed to be only so long, and one could hold at most two or three “books” of the *Iliad*. Here is how that conclusion is drawn from the evidence. From what we can tell both from surviving papyri and from references to the manufacture of rolls in ancient sources, it seems that “blank” rolls were manufactured at a length of about 15 feet, while literary rolls could be specially manufactured (perhaps by simply joining two rolls together) to be longer, from 20 feet up to 35 feet long (Kenyon 1951:54). Papyrus rolls were 7–12 inches high, again depending on the width of the papyrus leaves used (Kenyon 1951:51). Using a particular first- or early second-century CE papyrus fragment of the *Iliad* as an example, it has been estimated that the entire poem would have required nearly 300 feet of papyrus (Shailor 1991:6). The whole epic, then, would require from 10–15 rolls. As we can see from the Venetus A as well as other codex manuscripts, by contrast, the entire epic can be contained in one volume when a codex format was used. The rolls in this reader’s library might be stored upright in a book-box (if so, all the scrolls for the *Iliad* could be organized within a box) or horizontally on a shelf. While stored, valuable papyrus rolls would be covered: either with a cover sheet of papyrus, or with a leather or parchment cover. The box or the cover might be dyed a color as a finding aid, or the book could have a tag on its end with the author and/or title (Reed 1972:7, Kenyon 1951:62).

Once she had selected the desired roll, our model reader would hold the roll in her right hand and unroll it with her left to the point where she wanted to begin. She would see a series of columns of writing with margins between them. Because the epic was composed in hexameter lines, the width of the column would be determined by the length of the verses, whereas a prose text would have a column of a fixed length, often three to four inches wide (Kenyon 1951:55–56). Depending on the height of the sheet and the size of the writing, a column could have anywhere from 25 to about 45 lines of text (Kenyon 1951:58–59). If the sheet were 10–12 inches high, the columns would be about eight to ten inches in height: in the papyrus roll of the *Iliad* mentioned above, each column seems to have allowed about 36 lines (Reynolds & Wilson 1991:3; Shailor 1991:6). If our reader were starting anywhere but at the very beginning, or as soon as she is finished with one section, she would need to roll up in her left hand what she had gone through. After she was finished with the roll, it would need to be rerolled back to the beginning again. It is often pointed out that this rolling and rerolling caused wear and tear on the book, and on the ink especially.

The writing our reader would have seen does not give the same visual aids we are accustomed to: word breaks and punctuation are rare in ancient books. The title of the work was written at the end rather than the beginning. Lack of word and paragraph breaks made reference to a particular section difficult (Kenyon 1951:67–69). If our reader wanted to start at a particular place in the epic that is not at the beginning of the scroll, she may have had to search column by column to find where she wanted to begin. We can compare the ease of finding a particular passage in a roll versus a codex to a more recent technological change. To contemplate searching a roll, think of trying to find a particular song on a cassette tape. You usually do a certain amount of rewinding and fast-forwarding before reaching the very start of the desired song. There are certainly clues to guide you, including which song comes before and after, but the process takes a little more effort and is more hit-or-miss than finding individual songs on a CD, where each song, as a “subsection” of the album, is clearly marked and the technology allows you to go right to it. In terms of this kind of search, there is no difference between the two formats when starting at the beginning, but both rolls and cassette tapes may have to be rewound first.

One other characteristic of ancient reading (whether from a roll or a codex) must be mentioned as we imagine our reader. Literary reading was not usually a silent or even solitary affair in antiquity. In both ancient Greece and Rome, literary texts were read aloud, either to oneself, or by a servant (slave or freed). Writings from elite Romans such as Cicero and Pliny the Younger (the nephew of the Pliny who described the manufacture of papyrus) tell of servants with the title *lector*, or ‘reader’, who read literary texts especially, and particularly if the texts were being read (and heard) for entertainment or pleasure (Starr 1991). But they might also read to their masters in situations when we would be accustomed to reading to ourselves: for example, Suetonius’ biography of the emperor Augustus records that he might have a *lector* read to him when he woke up in the middle of the night and could not get back to sleep (Suetonius, *Augustus* 78.2; Starr 1991:342). There are most likely several factors behind this style of reading, including the influence of a long history of the performance of poetry as well as the pleasures of listening to poetry, the possibilities of “reading” while doing something else, and the difficulties of visually deciphering the text without word breaks or punctuation (Starr 1991:342–343). See as well Gregory Nagy’s essay in this volume for his argument that the *scholia* of the Venetus A show us how ancient readers read the Homeric verse aloud.

Reading aloud, then, is one method that carried over from roll to codex. There is even evidence suggesting that scholars in Alexandria working with the texts of the Homeric epics would have employed lectors while they worked. It is in the work

of these scholars that we see other technologies of reading and writing with rolls that are carried over to our codex-formatted Venetus A manuscript. At the Library of Alexandria in the third and second centuries BCE, an enormous amount of scholarly activity was devoted to collecting and studying texts of Homeric epic, and the heads of the Library produced their own editions, compiling and commenting on what they had seen in multiple exemplars. The scholia in the Venetus A, which include compilations of this and other ancient scholarship on the epics, allow us to see the careful and intense scrutiny that these scholars gave to the multiple texts and the variations they read in them. This comparative reading—that is, looking at multiple copies produced in many places—involved new ways of thinking about and reading the text. One result of this approach to the text was the production of an edition that recorded and commented upon other attested lines. In other words, the *Iliad* in this period was now an object of scholarly reading and writing, and the goal of this activity was to produce the “best” text.

Aristarchus, the head of the Library around 150 BCE, wrote extensive *hupomnēmata*, or ‘commentaries’, on the *Iliad*. Aristarchus privileged the textual tradition he could access in these multiple manuscripts over the performance tradition (see Nagy 1996a:114–152 for more on Aristarchus and his methods). His predecessors, such as Zenodotus, had already used an editorial format of marginalia: that is, they used the space in the margins of the text to indicate in some way their editorial judgments about particular lines, a practice which Aristarchus continued (Nagy 1996a:122). Papyri that survive from this period do not show the quantity of marginal commentary we see in codex manuscripts like the Venetus A; papyri that do include marginalia have only brief notes, because the design of rolls did not accommodate lengthier comments (McNamee 1981:254). The particular layout of Aristarchus’ commentaries, however, placed the text in one roll and the corresponding commentary in another (Pfeiffer 1968:218; McNamee 1981:252). Aristarchus’ system provided more space for commentary and would allow a reader to have both rolls open at the same time and thus to read back and forth, following along in order. Aristarchus marked pertinent lines in the text roll with signs in the margin to alert the reader to relevant comments about that line in the commentary roll (and also to indicate something about what kind of comment to expect; see Graeme Bird’s essay in this volume for more on Aristarchus’ critical signs). In the commentary roll, the reader would find the comment by means of a *lemma* (the plural is *lemmata*), a phrase from the text of the epic. Judging from the evidence of this system as preserved in the Venetus A, this lemma is often the very word or words being explained or commented on in the *hupomnēmata*, though it does

not always correspond exactly—the lemma at its most basic level indicates the line (there were no line numbers to use) and is an aid for the reader.

In the Venetus A codex, the scribe carefully copied the signs alongside the lines of the text, even though the commentary was now on the same page. Copied as well were the lemmata, which would still be needed to help the reader’s eye find the corresponding comment. To consider one brief example of how this works, we can look at the scholia in the Venetus A on *Iliad* 3.100. At this point in the narrative, Hektor has proposed on behalf of his brother Alexander a duel between the two men who claim Helen, Alexander and Menelaos. This marginal note records a variation in Menelaos’ speech in which he says that he should fight Alexander alone because the original dispute was between them. The main text of the Venetus A (and most modern editions) reads: εἵνεκ’ ἐμῆς ἔριδος καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔνεκ’ ἀρχῆς: “because of my conflict and because of the way it started with Alexander.” The comment in the margin preserves Zenodotus’ reading of ἄτης for ἀρχῆς, which then means “because of Alexander’s error.” Here is how the manuscript layout looks for this line and the marginal commentary (Figure 1):

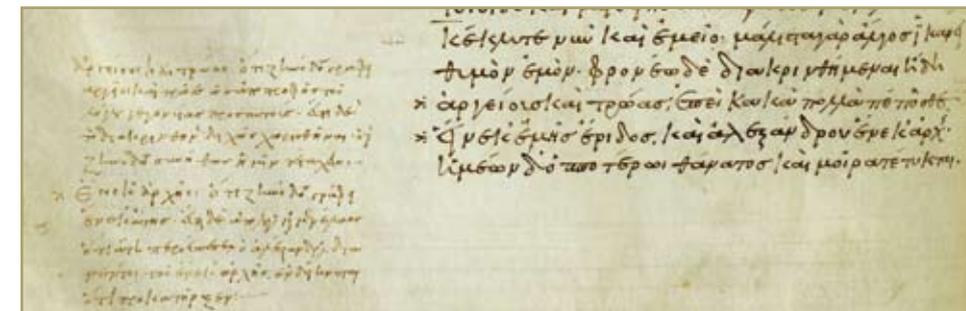


Figure 1. Bottom of f. 43v from the Venetus A.

Line 100 is the second to last in the main text on this page (folio 43v). It is marked with a sign called a *diplē periēstigmēnē* (>:), which Aristarchus used to indicate his disagreement with a reading by Zenodotus on that line (Pfeiffer 1968:218; McNamee 1981:247n3). The scribe of the Venetus A did not have direct access to Aristarchus’ commentary—these signs had been copied into many intermediary copies—but we see that it has been carefully maintained along with the corresponding different reading about which the two scholars disagreed. When we go to the marginal note (it is the second paragraph seen above on the left), it too uses this sign. It should be noted that the inclusion of the sign with the comment as well as the lemma is the exception rather than the norm (see Graeme Bird’s essay in this volume for the statistics). For this scholion, the lemma is εἵνεκ’ ἀρχῆς, here indicating that the comment is about that phrase. The note itself reads: ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος γράφει “ἔνεκ’ ἄτης”. ἔσται δὲ ἀπολογούμενος Μενέλαος ὅτι ἄτη περιέπεσεν ὁ

Ἀλέξανδρος, διὰ μέντοι τοῦ ἔνεκ' ἀρχῆς ἐνδείκνυται ὅτι προκατήρξεν: “[it is marked] because Zenodotus writes ‘because of [his] error’. This would be Menelaos saying in his defense that Alexander [was the one who] had fallen into error. With ‘because of his beginning’ however, it reveals that he began the hostilities.”

Even in this one brief note in the margins of the Venetus A (others certainly are longer and more detailed), we can see layers of reading and writing. Aristarchus could read Zenodotus’ text, which was produced in the previous century, and make a particular note of his disagreement with Zenodotus’ editorial choice in a separate roll, using the sign and the lemma to cross-refer between them. Then yet another commentator, Aristonicus (who lived about 150 years later than Aristarchus), could explain why Aristarchus marked the text and the difference in meaning between the two variations. And, of course, this note had to be copied multiple times before being recorded in this manuscript. During the Alexandrian period, the study of the *Iliad* was a textual criticism (Nagy 1996a:150), and the marginal notes in the Venetus A capture this scholarly process, which continued over subsequent centuries.

We can compare the methods of writing and reading in the Venetus A to another manuscript of the *Iliad* also owned by the Marciana Library, the so-called Venetus B (Marcianus Graecus Z. 453 [=821]). This manuscript was produced in the eleventh century, and it has a different method of coordinating text with the commentary in the margins. (It also has different content in its commentary.) Instead of Aristarchus’ critical signs and lemmata, it uses numbers, comparable to footnote numbers. (A second, later scribe added further commentary in the margins, using symbols comparable to asterisks and daggers to mark both where in the text and where in the margin a new note was made, to coordinate the two.) On this page (coincidentally also folio 43v), line 3.100 is the second from the top (Figure 2):

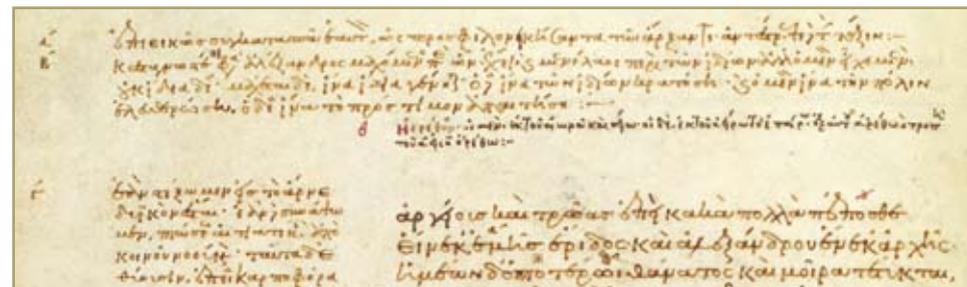


Figure 2. Top of f. 43v from the Venetus B.

In this manuscript, the commentary is keyed to the beginning of the line, rather than the end, as is shown not by a lemma, but by a number: the alpha marked with a prime is the ancient Greek symbol for the number 1. Here is a closer look at the number written above the line (Figure 3):

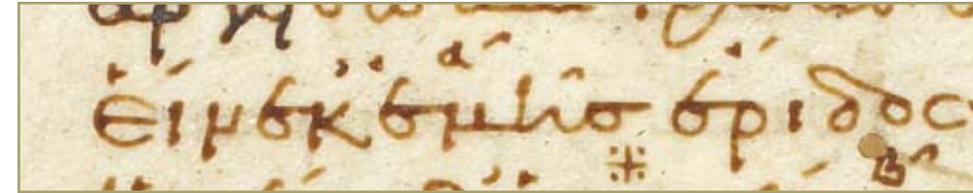


Figure 3. Close-up of alpha prime comment marker from Venetus B, f. 43v.

The alpha prime at the top left of the full page, then, marks the corresponding note, which in this manuscript does not record a variation, but rather interprets why Menelaos calls it “my strife”—hence the placement of the number over the word ἐμῆς ‘my’.

This numbering system is used throughout the manuscript. The numbers start at 1 on each verso side of a folio, each left-hand page. So as you look at the open codex, the numbers continue consecutively from the top of the left-hand page to the bottom of the right-hand page. When you turn the page, the numbers begin again at 1. This system is therefore native to the codex format of this manuscript, with its two facing pages, while the system in the Venetus A reflects the rolls that the Alexandrian scholars were using for their texts and commentaries. As illustrated in the first picture of the Venetus B above, the second set of commentary, in different handwriting and a different color of ink, uses symbols to mark the line and the corresponding note. Because these comments were added later, the spacing is not as consistent or precise as the numbered notes: the commentary is placed wherever there was space on the page.

Let us return to the Venetus A and review the ways we have seen it reveal various stages within the history of the *Iliad*. The language of the poetry itself, written here in a minuscule script, is still the language of an oral traditional epic, composed in performance. The fine parchment of this deluxe edition has a durability that has allowed it to survive. The codex format has the capacity to contain the entire epic in one volume, and, significantly, it places the commentary in the margins of the same page as the text itself, even as it retains the system that keyed the commentary to the text when they resided in separate rolls. Several centuries of the epic’s past have thus been compiled in this one document.

PUBLISHING THE VENETUS A: A MANUSCRIPT BECOMES A PRINTED BOOK

We move now forward in time and consider how the Venetus A has encountered the technologies of the printing press, film photography, and, most recently, digital photography. Not much is known for certain about what happened to the manuscript for centuries after its production (see the essays by Christopher Blackwell

and Casey Dué and by Myriam Hecquet in this volume for more on the history of the manuscript itself). At some point in the fifteenth century it became part of the personal library of Cardinal Bessarion, who bequeathed his collection of manuscripts to the Republic of Venice in 1468. This manuscript became part of the founding collection of the Biblioteca Marciana. In the eighteenth century, another era of very active Homeric scholarship, the rediscovery of the manuscript drew intense interest. A scholar by the name of Jean Baptiste Gaspard d'Ansse de Villoison went to Venice to see the manuscript, and he began to spread word about what it contained. One notice in an English journal told of the “almost unheeded” manuscript’s “great quantity of various readings,” and noted that the scholia’s explanations of passages “throw new light on several parts of the *Iliad*” (Francheville 1781:508–510). It was indeed the variations contained in the scholia that would attract the attention of Homeric scholars.

In 1788 Villoison published the text and scholia from the Venetus A as a printed book. What the scholia disclosed about the Alexandrian scholarship from nearly two thousand years earlier was momentous for Homeric scholarship and sparked new discussions about how to understand the text that had survived. The margins of the Venetus A revealed the collating done by the Alexandrian scholars and their successors, showing that they had known many variations and had brought them together and commented on them in their editions. This revelation had the effect of making the multiformity of the transmission the focus of scholarship once again. Villoison himself and an even more famous contemporary, Friedrich August Wolf, as well as other Homerists of their time, already felt that the composition and transmission of the Homeric epics were different from that of the poetry of other (later) ancient poets. Both Villoison and Wolf recognized the oral nature of the epics, but both also wanted to establish a stable and accurate text with the evidence they had. They differed, however, as to how the evidence presented by the multiform readings in the scholia of the Venetus A might be useful for that textual criticism.

Villoison saw great value in the scholia for interpreting the poetry and for establishing the text. He claimed that the scholia could be used to establish the “genuine and uncorrupt reading” (*germana et sincera lectio*, Villoison 1788:xxxiv). Villoison believed that the text of Aristarchus could be recovered from the scholia in the Venetus A that discussed his editorial choices, and that Aristarchus’ text would be authoritative for the genuine text (see Nagy 2004:3–5). That is, he wanted to use the Venetus A to read backwards to Aristarchus’ own text.

Wolf, on the other hand, doubted whether Aristarchus or the other Alexandrian critics had access to what he considered a genuine text, and he did not trust their

methods of textual criticism (Wolf 1985:188–216). In 1795 Wolf published his *Prolegomena ad Homerum*: he styled it as an introduction to his edition of the text, which would be published a decade later. In this work Wolf expressed admiration for Villoison’s publication of the Venetus A and credited the “disappointment” expressed by others to the fact that they had expected to gain access to complete commentaries and even “editions” of scholars like Aristarchus, rather than the brief excerpts or abbreviated comments that appear in the scholia (Wolf 1985:50). In other words, the layers of reading that we saw above in our example of the scholia on *Iliad* 3.100 would require a textual criticism of their own, according to Wolf. Thus, the rediscovery and publication of the Venetus A in the eighteenth century led to differing ways of reading what was found there. The essential difference was whether the scholia helped to stabilize the text and get closer to the “original,” as Villoison believed, or whether they destabilized the text and rendered the recovery of Homer’s own words impossible, as Wolf contended (see Nagy 2004:4–5).

When Villoison published the contents of the manuscript as a book printed on a printing press, however, a very important change in format occurred, one that had consequences for how the scholia have been read ever since. Aristarchus’ critical signs from the Venetus A were reproduced in the margins of the text, but the commentary from the scholia was published in the back of the book, after the text. Figures 4 and 5 (below) show images from Villoison’s edition of the same passage, including *Iliad* 3.100, that we examined in the two Venice manuscripts.

On page 13, *Iliad* 3.100 appears with a *diple periastigmenē* indicating, as it does in the manuscript itself, that there is a note that has to do with a difference in reading between Aristarchus and Zenodotus. But the reader of this edition must turn to page 91 to find out what this scholion says. Once there, the reader also discovers that a different comment exists in the Venetus B, which is also included there. The inclusion of the scholia from the Venetus B (as well as the manuscript here called ‘L’) is certainly convenient for the reader, yet it obfuscates somewhat the individual transmissions of these commentaries. Since Villoison uses a double-column format for each page, we may wonder whether it would have been possible for him to have used a layout in which the text occupied one column and the scholia the other, in an attempt to keep these two components on the same page.

Villoison himself thought that the scholia were of the utmost importance in reading and understanding the text. Yet the print layout of his edition removed them from their place next to the text, where the reader could readily go back and forth between them. The separation of the scholia from the text would become even

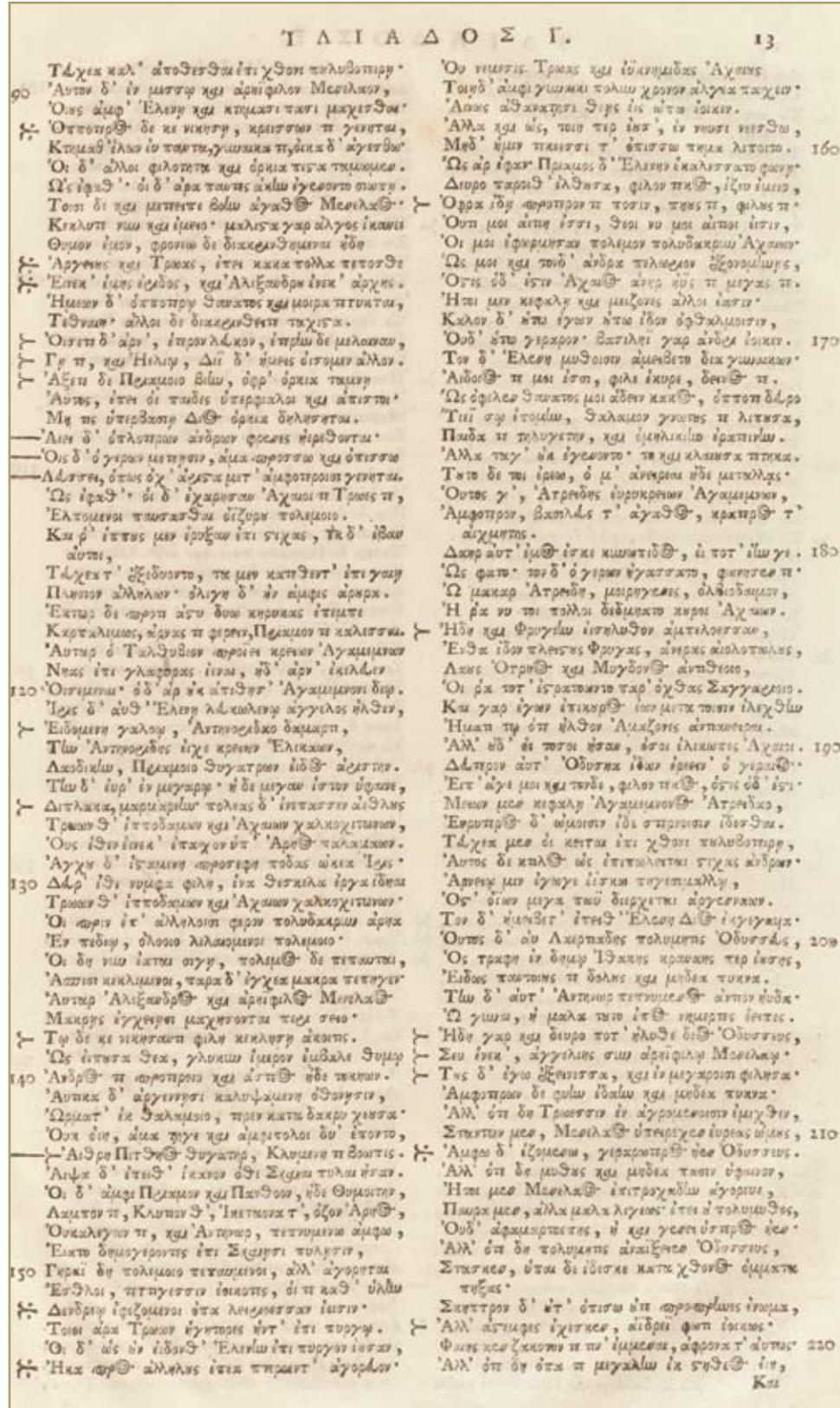


Figure 4. Villoison 1788:13, including Iliad 3.100.

ποιος, ἔκτισε Λακωνῶν· Ἰκτῶ δὲ, τὴν φησὶ
 Ἥλιον· πλάτυσαντες δὲ αὐτῶν, ὁ νεώτερός
 ἀδελφῶν Ἀγαμέμνων ἐπετραπέυε τὴν χώραν πολλῶν
 ἔκτων ἐπαγομένων· ὅθεν ἐλάθη ἰπποδάμοιο μετὰ
 τοῦ Ἀργῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀγηνῶν ἰππῶν ἀπὸ δὲ
 Ἰκτῶν, Ἰκτῶν, καὶ Πιλαργῶν ἀπὸ Πιλαργῶν.
 ἰσορῆ Ἑλληνική· ἐν τοῖς Ἀργολοκοῖς.
 V. 75. Ἀχαιῶν καλλιγυναικῶν.) τῶν πατρῶν
 Ἑλλήνων γῶν Ἀχαιῶν φησὶ· τῆ δὲ ἐρωτὶ Ἑ-
 λληνῶν, τῶν πατρῶν τοιαυτῶν ἴστω ὑπολαβῆσαι.
 A & B & L.
 V. 76. Ἐκτῶν δ' αὐτῶν ἔχουσι μίγχα.) ἰ-
 κτώσι ἔδεται· ἢ γὰρ νικῆται, ἢ ἀλλήλους ἀδελφῶν
 ἀπαλλαγῆσθαι. B & L.
 V. 79. Τῶν δ' ἐπιτελέοντο.) πληρῶν γὰρ
 τῶν μὲν μαχίμων ἦσαν· Ἀλεξάνδρῳ δὲ ποιοῦν-
 τος, ὅδε φρονήσαντι. B & L.
 V. 80. Ἰστίον πειτυσσομενοι.) ἢ δι-
 πλῆ, ὅτι Ὀμηρῶς το βαλλῆν ἐπὶ τῆ τιτυσσομεν
 τισθῶν· καὶ δὲ ἐμφορῶν ἔχει.
 V. 80. Ἰστίον πειτυσσομενοι λαιστοὶ τ' ἰβελ-
 λων.) ἀπὸ μίγχα· ἢ ἢμῶν· ὅι δὲ ἀπὸ κοινῆ
 το ἰβελλῶν· ὅι δὲ, πειτυσσομενοι, ἴστω ἐτελέοντο.
 το τιτυσσομενοι, ἀπὸ τῆ κατιτυσσομενοι. ση-
 μαίνει δὲ καὶ το ἰστομαχίμων, ὡς τῶ, ὡς ἴστω,
 ὅτ' ὄχι μίγχα τιτυσσομενοι. καὶ το ψυχικῶν σοχα-
 ζῶσθαι, ὡς τῶ, τιτυσσομενοι δὲ φησὶ ἴστω. B & L.
 V. 80. Τιτυσσομενοι.) ὡς ἀλλῶν, ἀλλῶν,
 καὶ ἀλλῶν, τῶ ἰστίων. ὡς καὶ τῶν, τυ-
 σσο, πορτοῦ τῆ σ, καὶ διπλασιασμοῦ, πειτυ-
 σσο, ὅσιν πητυσσομενοι, κατιτυσσομενοι. L.
 V. 82. Ἰστίον Ἀργῶν, μὴ βαλλεῖται
 κερῶν Ἀχαιῶν.) ἢ διπλῆ, ὅτι το βαλλεῖται, αὐ-
 τῶ τῆ τιτυσσομεν.
 V. 83. Ἰστίον γὰρ τῆ ἰππῶν κορυ-
 φαιος Ἐκτῶν.) ἢ διπλῆ, ὅτι το σπυρῶν,
 αὐτῶ τῆ κατὰ διακονῶν ὀφείλονται.
 V. 87. Μυθῶν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, τῆ ἰστίων νεοκῶν
 ὄρατος.) οἶδος ἀδικῶν ἀχαιῶν· διο Ἀλεξάνδρῳ φη-
 σὶν ἰστίον, ὅτ' ἴστω λόγον, ἐλάθησαν ἰστίον.
 ἐπιδοχεῖται δὲ αὐτῶ, φησὶ, τῆ ἰστίων. B & L.
 V. 90. Αὐτῶν δ' ἐν μετῶν καὶ ἀρίστῶν Μι-
 νηλων.) βραχὺ διαγαλῶν· κοινῶ γὰρ το κη-
 λεῖται ἄρῃα.
 V. 92. Ἰστίον πειτυσσομενοι καὶ νικῆται, κρησσο-
 πῶ γινῶντο.) ἢ διπλῆ τελεμαχίμων, ὅτι Ζη-
 νοδοτος γράφει χρωσῶ τῆ ν, κρησσο. τῶ δὲ τῶ-
 κωτῆ συγκρησσομεν ἰππῶ τῶ ὄρατος το ν πορτολα-
 βῶν.
 V. 94. Ὀρῶν τῶν τιτυσσομεν.) μετὰ γὰρ τῶν
 τῶν ἰστίων τῶν ὅι ὄρατος σπυρῶνται. B & L.
 V. 95. Ἀλλῶν ἰστίων σπυρῶν.) κατιπλη-
 σσο αὐτῶ το ἴστω, ὡς ἢ τῶ μοχίμων δικασίμων
 ἴστω, πορτοκαίνο τοι ἀδελφῶ τῶ γυναικῶν εἰς
 μαχίμων, ὡς μετὰ τῆ γυναικῶν καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἀ-
 φημιαν. Ἀχαιῶν δὲ ὅθεν φησὶ γινῶντο, ἀπὸ
 πορτοκαίνο τῶν ἀδελφῶν φίλων φιλadelphῶν
 γὰρ· ἀπὸ ἀκαθῆσθαι· ὅ γὰρ ἴστω, γινῶντο
 τῶ κρησσομεν τῶν ὄρατος. πορτοκαίνο δὲ τῶ
 ὅι πολλῶ σπυρῶν· ἴστω γὰρ εἰς μαχίμων πορτοκα-
 λῶντο. B & L.
 Το δὲ ἀλλῶν, ἴστω, ἐπιρῶν μετῶν ἴστω
 σημαίνει δὲ καὶ το ἀρῶν. γινῶντο δὲ τῶν
 ἀπὸ ὅ σημαίνει τῶν ἐκπλησῶν, κατὰ μετῶν
 τῶ γ εἰς κ, ὡς ἴστω καὶ το λυγῶν, ὅ σημαίνει
 το σπυρῶν· λυγῶν καὶ λυκοφῶν, ὡς καὶ ἀ-
 γῶ, ἀπῶ, καὶ κατὰ μετῶν τῶν τῶν, ἀπῶ
 καὶ ἴστω αὐτῶ τῶ ἴστω. οἶδος γὰρ ἢ ἐκπλη-
 σσο.

καὶ ἀρῶν ἰστίων· ἢ τῶν το μὴ χρωσῶν.
 B & L.
 V. 97. Κρησσομεν καὶ πορτοκαίνο τῶ Πωτῶ.
 V. 97. Κρησσομεν καὶ ἴστω· μαχίμων γὰρ
 ἀλλῶν ἰστίων.) ἀπῶ μῶν, φησὶν, ὡς ὄρα-
 τῶ μῶν ἰππῶν δικασίμων κρησσομεν, ἀλλῶ
 λυγῶν· ἴστω ἴστω κατῶν κρησσομεν καὶ ἴστω ἀπαλλαγῶν
 ἴστω, τῶν ἀλλῶν ὑποδομοῦ πορτοκαίνο. το δὲ
 κρησσο σημαίνει δυο· γινῶντο δὲ ἢ τῶ κρησσο
 το δὲ καὶ, καὶ το ἀπῶ. καὶ ἢ μῶν σημαίνει τῶ
 ὄρατος, γινῶντο ἢ τῶ κρησσο, κρησσο καὶ ὄρατος
 ἀπὸ τῶ κρησσο, κρησσο, καὶ ἴστω, ἴστω, ὡς καὶ ἀπὸ
 τῶ κρησσο, κρησσο· ἀπῶ ἢ καὶ κρησσο, ὡς τῶ, δε-
 κρησσο. ἢ δὲ σημαίνει το ἀπῶ, γινῶντο ἀπὸ
 τῶ κρησσο, το κρησσο, κρησσο, κρησσο, κρησσο,
 κρησσο, καὶ διπλασιασμοῦ, κρησσο· κρησσο μῶν
 ἀργυροσσο. ὡς καὶ ἴστω. B & L.
 V. 99. Ἰστίον Ἀργῶν καὶ Τρωῶν.) ἢ διπλῆ τε-
 λεμαχίμων, ὅτι Ζηνοδοτος γράφει, Ἀργῶν καὶ
 Τρωῶν, ὡς ἀποστροφῶν τῶ λόγον γινῶντο πορτο-
 καίνο. ἴστω δὲ το διακρησσομεν, διχῶν χρωσσο-
 καίνο. ὅ δὲ Ζηνοδοτος· σπυρῶν ἴστω πητυσσο.
 V. 99. Πειτυσσο.) ὁ μῶν Ἡρωδοτῶν ἴστω
 τῶν το τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν,
 τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν,
 ἴστω δὲ, ἢ τῶ τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν,
 τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν, τῶν,
 καὶ ἀποστροφῶν τῶν νη συλλαβῶν, τῶν, ἀπῶ
 τῶ τῶν. B & L.
 V. 100. Ἰστίον ἴστω ἴστω.) ἰστίων συγ-
 κρησσο ἴστω, ὡς πορτοκαίνο κατῶν τῶ ἀρ-
 ῶν· ἀπῶ τῶν τῶν. B & L.
 Κατιπλησσομεν, φησὶν, Ἀλεξάνδρῳ μαχίμων
 πητυσσο ἴστω, καὶ Μινηλων τῶν τῶν ἴστω·
 ἀπῶ ὁ μῶν ἴστω μῶν, ἢ ἴστω δὲ· μαχίμων δὲ
 ἴστω ἴστω γινῶντο· ὅ δὲ, ἴστω τῶν ἴστω κρησσο·
 καὶ ὁ μῶν, ἴστω τῶν τῶν ἐλάθησαν· ὅ δὲ,
 ἴστω το πορτοκαίνο ἀπῶν. B & L.
 V. 100. Ἰστίον ἴστω ἴστω, καὶ Ἀλε-
 ξάνδρῳ ἴστω ἴστω.) ἢ διπλῆ τελεμαχίμων,
 ὅτι Ζηνοδοτος γράφει, ἴστω ἴστω. ἴστω δὲ ἀπο-
 λογησσο· Μινηλων, ὅτι ἀπῶ τελεμαχίμων ὁ Ἀ-
 λεξάνδρῳ· δια μῶν τῶ ἴστω ἴστω ἴστω ἴστω.
 V. 102. Ἀλλῶν δὲ διακρησσομεν τῶν.) ἢ
 τῶν πορτοκαίνο δικασίμων ἴστω γὰρ ἴστω
 κατῶ κατῶ γινῶντο ἢ τῶ διακρησσομεν,
 ὅμοιος το κατῶ ἢ τῶν ἀλλῶ ἴστω. ὡς τῶ
 τῶν πορτοκαίνο διακρησσομεν, καὶ διακρησσομεν,
 ὡς τῶ κατῶ ἢ τῶν ἴστω ἴστω ἴστω ἴστω ἴστω
 μῶν Ἀχαιῶν.
 V. 102. Ἀλλῶν δὲ διακρησσομεν τῶν.) δια τῶ
 ὑποδομοῦ Διοῦ τῶ ἀλλῶν ἴστω, σπυρῶν τῶν
 τῶ πορτοκαίνο τῶν, ἴστω ἴστω, ὅ δὲ
 πιστῶν τῶ ὄρατος· κατῶ δὲ τῶν, ὅπ ἴστω δι-
 φησὶ καὶ ἴστω μῶν κρησσο. ἄλλῶν πῶ ὄρατος
 τῶν αὐτῶ κατῶ τῶν τῶν, ἢ μαχίμων
 τῶ. B & L.
 V. 103. Ἰστίον ἴστω.) ἢ διπλῆ, πορτο-
 καίνο ὄρατος, ὅτι ἢ μῶν ἴστω ἴστω, ἀπῶ
 τῶ φησὶν, ἀπὸ τῶ ὄρατος, ὅ ἴστω φησὶ.
 V. 103. Οἶστω δ' ἀπῶ, ἴστω ἴστω, ἴστω
 δὲ μῶν.) ἴστω σπυρῶν εἰς τῶ ἀπῶ, δικῶν
 ἴστω· ἴστω δὲ σπυρῶν, τῶν τῶ ἀπῶ, ἴστω
 ἀπὸ κοινῶ πορτοκαίνο. τῶν τῶ ἴστω, ἴστω κρη-
 πορτοκαίνο τῶ τῶν καὶ ἴστω δὲ, καὶ γῶ, ἀπῶ

Figure 5. Villoison 1788:91, with the corresponding scholia.

greater in future editions, such as that of Erbse (1969–1988), in which the scholia are a text unto themselves. Villoison’s edition removed the scholia from their context on the physical folios of the manuscript; Erbse’s format takes even further steps in removing the scholia from their connection to the manuscript’s own text. In Erbse’s edition, scholia from one manuscript, such as the Venetus A, but even more often from the Venetus B, are even combined with scholia from other manuscripts to the point where it can be difficult to know what each manuscript actually contains. Some effects of these changes include: the variation becomes less obvious, the text of the epic looks more uniform, and the transmission of the scholia themselves is obscured.

Was Villoison’s separation of the scholia from the text a return to the form that they had in separate rolls? Or did the codex format allow for the collation and even abbreviation seen in the scholia, since a spatial connection was ever-present for the reader of the Venetus A? In other words, did that change in format lead to alterations in the form of the commentary itself that we cannot reconstruct? Reading two rolls, both open and side-by-side, might have been more analogous to moving the eye between text and margin than flipping between pages in different sections of the same book. How do our perceptions of the scholia change if they are read separately, as their own text, either in the back of a book or in their own volume? The transfer of the scholia from one format to another has implications for our perception, our interpretation, and, ultimately, our evaluation of them. The technological advance of the printing press helped to bring the scholia into the limelight, but it also altered their connection to the text of the epic.

A NEW KIND OF COPY: COMPARETTI’S FACSIMILE OF THE VENETUS A

In the eighteenth century the rediscovery of the Venetus A led to different ways of reading and interpreting the *Iliad*. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, another new technology would be lauded as a way to give even greater and more direct access to old and fragile manuscripts than had been achieved by earlier copies. Film photography was used to make a facsimile of the Venetus A, and it was published in 1901. For each manuscript in the series in which it was published, an introduction was included that explains “the history, the value and the writing of the original, written by an expert at the library which possesses the *preciosum*” (Sijthoff 1908:23). The editor of the Venetus A facsimile was the Italian classicist Domenico Comparetti, who wrote the introduction describing the manuscript, its contents, and its history (Comparetti 1901).

A. W. Sijthoff, the publisher of this facsimile, wrote an account of the series to which it belongs, the *Codices Graeci et Latini* (Sijthoff 1908). Part history, part advertisement, and part apologia for the high prices of these facsimiles, this book collected correspondence about the origins and progress of the idea to produce and gain a wide distribution for these photographic reproductions. The original plan by Dr. O. Hartwig and Dr. W. N. du Rieu, who was the librarian at Leiden and became the editor of the series as a whole, was to form a consortium of libraries which would subscribe for ten years to the series, paying an annual subscription fee in return for which each would receive one copy of each facsimile. When too few libraries were willing or able to join, the Leiden-based publisher Sijthoff offered to undertake a series of twelve photographic reproductions of six Greek manuscripts and six Latin, and to sell each individually so that no subscription was necessary (Sijthoff 1908:5–21).

The selection of codices for the series, according to Dr. du Rieu, was to include the “most celebrated” manuscripts of classical writers as well as the Old Testament, only those which contained illustrations, and preferably the oldest codex or the best one of each (Sijthoff 1908:21–22). The *Iliad* manuscript originally planned as part of the series was not the Venetus A, however. Instead, the Codex Ambrosianus F. 205 in Milan was the first choice of publisher (Sijthoff) and series editor (du Rieu). This manuscript is older than the Venetus A—it is dated to the fifth or sixth century—but it is not a complete text of the epic. So why is the Venetus A part of the series and not this codex? When the publishers approached the Biblioteca Ambrosiana about photographing the Codex Ambrosianus F. 205, the library decided to photograph the manuscript on its own (Sijthoff 1908:34, 47). The benefits offered by photographing the manuscripts thus even created competition over who would control the process.

How the technology of photography used in these reproductions would be beneficial is well argued by the proponents of the project, and these benefits will apply again in the use of digital photography. Two of the primary advantages cited then, which are still true today, were access and preservation (Sijthoff 1908:4–5, 15, 34, 45–46). That these manuscripts are fragile and irreplaceable makes both of these concerns paramount. The opportunity for readers to see a photographic copy instead of the original manuscript means that more people can read the contents without further damaging the original. The existence of multiple copies in multiple places protects against complete loss in case of disaster. As those involved in the production of these facsimiles noted, the photograph removes the possibility of human error present in hand-made copies, and the eye of the camera can pick up

details that the naked human eye misses (Sijthoff, 1908:1, 5). Scholars, then as now, also recognize the need to consult the manuscripts themselves rather than depend on the apparatus of a critical text (see Sijthoff 1908:13–14, 24). Photography makes that opportunity available to many more scholars much more readily, allowing such consultation to happen on multiple occasions rather than the limited amount of time the manuscripts themselves can be exposed. That is, the facsimile of the Venetus A allows for both reading and *re-reading* by many more people than would otherwise have that chance.

Mr. Sijthoff was thus disappointed that the sales of these reproductions were not better, and he expressed particular dismay that more American libraries had not acquired them (Sijthoff 1908:54–62). As we saw with the early days of the codex, technological opportunities are not always immediately embraced, as much promise as they may hold for those who do use them. Yet the 1901 facsimile of the Venetus A has been central to textual study of the manuscript and especially its scholia in the twentieth century: for example, Hartmut Erbse, editor of the current standard edition of the *Iliad* scholia, relied on a copy of Comparetti's facsimile for the bulk of his work in compiling the scholia from the Venetus A, while he was able to consult the manuscript itself on one occasion (Erbse 1969:xvi).

THE HOMER MULTITEXT AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

The goals of accessibility and preservation are also behind the latest application of photography to the manuscript: this time, digital photography was used by a team from the Center for Hellenic Studies, of which I was a member. The photographs, acquired in May 2007, have been made available in an initial publication on the Center for Hellenic Studies website (http://chs.harvard.edu/chs/manuscript_images). As this publication of the images and those to follow allow significantly greater access to the manuscript, they will also lead to a new kind of preservation of the manuscript. The Venetus A has an already impressive lifespan of over a thousand years; it is our hope that the digital photographs will extend that for further centuries—at least until a newer technology supersedes them.

These photographs also “return” the scholia to their physical place on the page, allowing the reader a spatial understanding of the relationship between text and commentary. Three-dimensional scans of the pages were also captured, and a virtual three-dimensional model of the entire codex will eventually allow readers to manipulate the pages on screen as they would a book. The reader also has direct access to both the text of the epic and the commentary. The digital nature and

quality of the images create the opportunity for another rediscovery of the manuscript and its contents, since even the smallest marginal notes can be read in detail. Digital technologies give us the opportunity to zoom in on the marginal notes, and color correction and other technologies such as ultraviolet photography allow for the greatest contrast to be brought out on faded or damaged text. Compare these advances to the single (albeit quite large) size of Comparetti's facsimile, where the size and clarity of the text is unchangeable. Within the digital medium, readers can also search not just for a folio number, but for a line number of the text, and the search will bring them to the correct page. Even as the digital photographs were being captured and reviewed, they proved to show details that escape the naked eye looking at the manuscript itself: for one example, a marginal note that had been smudged to the extent that it was not at all visible to the naked eye was visible on the digital photograph, and with ultraviolet photography it was readily legible.

Digital photography is not the only digital technology to be applied to the Venetus A, however, and digital technologies present yet further possibilities for methods of reading the *Iliad*. These photographs are part of the Homer Multitext project (http://chs.harvard.edu/chs/homer_multitext), which seeks to use the advantages of digital technologies to construct a truly different type of critical edition, one that gives a more accurate visual representation of the textual tradition of Homeric epic. Offering readers multiple ways of seeing the textual transmission is possible within a digital medium. To once again use the simple example of *Iliad* 3.100: when readers are looking at that particular line within the Multitext, they will have an indication that a variation exists in the textual record. The Multitext will provide ways to investigate further what that variation is and what our witnesses to it are, along with a way to make textual and historical comparisons by accessing multiple witnesses. A multitextual approach can be explicit about the many different channels of transmission, placing each witness to the epic in its historical and cultural framework and allowing the reader to understand better their relationships to one another. A digital edition, then, will eliminate the false impression, given by a typical apparatus, that these variations are all of the same kind and of the same time. Digital technologies will allow readers to see in various, interconnected ways what the printed page cannot show them: connections and patterns that lead us ultimately all the way back to the system of oral composition in performance.

Those are the possibilities offered by a digital medium. But just as we have seen in the technological changes surveyed here, making the profound shift from one medium to another does not always come easily, or without cost. A mindset based in a print culture finds it difficult to believe that a poem with the scope

and splendor of the *Iliad* could be composed without writing. That same mindset also makes imagining a digitally conceived multitextual edition more of a challenge. Breaking away from a print model for our scholarly editions is not easy, as others have observed (Dahlström 2000, Robinson 2004), and digital editions have generally not succeeded yet in doing so.

Thus we find ourselves in a transition period between two technologies. The shift from print to digital media has been compared to some of the earlier technological changes we have examined here: the move from the roll to the codex, and from manuscripts to printed books. We have seen certain reactions and results attending those transitions. Using a new technology to preserve the product of an older one, for example, occurred even with the first major shift, when our oral poem was written down, and preservation of one kind or another has occurred at each stage since then. But as we have seen, the new format also changes the way the poem is perceived and read. There are particular changes in perception that we hope and plan for in the digital medium, but there will undoubtedly be unforeseen transformations as well.

A significant length of time in which the two technologies coexist also occurs. During that time, each can influence the other, and adaptations of techniques developed for one format or technology might be translated to the other. We saw an example of this adaptation in the use of Aristarchus' signs, which were designed for a roll, in the codex Venetus A. Yet new techniques, such as the numbered commentary in the Venetus B, are also either created or adapted even further for the new format. Similarly, we are still dependent on techniques created in earlier stages of publishing the *Iliad*. One example is the book and line numbers we use as references. It was Wolf's influential edition that assigned these canonical line numbers, and in a digital medium we still use those line numbers to have a common way to refer to lines of the poem, even if variations from other witnesses include lines not found in that edition or exclude lines that are. There cannot be a complete reinvention of the ways in which we deal with and communicate about the text.

The conservative impulse that carries over reading techniques developed for one format to another is also seen time and again during transitions to new technologies. Although we may think of ourselves as making these transitions to new technologies more rapidly and easily than earlier generations, the replication of print modes within digital media reveals that this conservatism still persists. Yet we can also recognize the benefits of that conservatism in the preservation of the vividness and multiformity of the oral traditional language of the epic. Technologies have had the power to affect how we perceive the origins, transmission, and interpreta-

tion of the *Iliad*, but the beauty of the poetry has been a constant and a driving force behind the applications of new technologies to this very old story. The history of various technologies and the *Iliad* as explored through the Venetus A shows as much evolution as revolution at each stage. The next millennium of evolution, starting with digital technologies, will in some ways complete the circle, as it aids in reconnection to each stage of the past.

An Initial Codicological and Palaeographical Investigation of the Venetus A Manuscript of the *Iliad*

MYRIAM HECQUET

The Venetus A, gathering the oral tradition of high Antiquity and the erudition of the Alexandrian school, provides a wealth of information from diachronic as well as synchronic points of view. Thanks to the careful collection of its scholia, we not only better understand the source of the variations in the Homeric text, but have also been able to go back to the oral tradition of Homer and to lay the groundwork for a multi-textual edition of the Homeric poems. But this diachronic contribution of the Venetus A to our knowledge is not its singular virtue. The manuscript also bears witness to the high level of scholarly activity of its scribe and of his environment. In the ninth and tenth centuries, Byzantine scribes developed practices of textual criticism considerably more advanced than we usually attribute to them, but they often worked anonymously without leaving theoretical treatises about their work on the text. Nevertheless, we can find traces of hesitation in their copying, analyze the nature of their corrections, and attempt to answer the following questions: What was the quality of the exemplar(s)? What were the abilities of the scribe? Did the scribe's corrections follow a new "recension"? In order to lay the foundations for such an analysis, I will here describe the Venetus A through the lenses of the palaeographer and codicologist.

After a brief explanation of the manuscript's "identity card," I will begin by describing the book's material characteristics. The details of its creation, which allow for its comparison to other manuscripts, can open new avenues to our understanding, perhaps even suggesting a hypothesis concerning its origin. These descriptions also allow us to follow the work of the scribe. Upon examination of his writing, the details could provide clues as to the school of the scribe, perhaps contributing to the revelation of his identity. If we find other manuscripts copied by this same scribe, we can also gather new data that can improve our knowledge of the scholars and the scribes responsible for the transmission of ancient culture. With the description of the transcription of the text and of the scholia, we will approach the question of the making of this "edition," both the way in which the scribe gathered his source material and the way in which he composed his book—the text, its "apparatus criticus," and its commentary.



FOUR

I do not offer here a conclusive study, and I beg the indulgence of the reader. Nevertheless, if I can make more tangible the birth of this treasure of Greek and Byzantine culture, I will have achieved my goal.¹

Identification card: preliminary data

In 1740, the official identity bestowed upon the Venetus A was *Marcianus graecus Z* 454, given because Zanetti (Z) registered the manuscript under the number 454 in his catalogue of the ancient Greek manuscripts of the Venetian library of St. Mark.² In 1904, an additional call number was attached in brackets: Z 454 [822], indicating the location that was attributed to the Venetus A in the shelves of the library. However, Mioni eventually returned to the simple designation “*Marc. gr. 454*.”³ The manuscript was probably brought from Constantinople to Italy by Giovanni Aurispa during one of his two travels, in 1416 or between 1421 and 1423. It was then bought by the Cardinal Bessarion, who later bequeathed it, among a thousand other manuscripts, to the Republic of Venice in 1468. In 1473, after the Cardinal’s death, the Venetus A would have been bundled with some 250 manuscripts to be included with the original 750 manuscripts of the donation.⁴ In 1797, after Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the Republic of Venice, it was brought with 499 other manuscripts to Paris, but all of them were restored to Venice by 1816.

The Venetus A is a grand manuscript of 327 folios. Its external dimensions are 402 mm high, 295 mm wide, and 105 mm thick.⁵ Unfortunately, the covering is not the original. The binding in brown leather was made in the eighteenth century, in the librarian Tiepolo’s days (1736–1742), when the covers of the manuscripts from the ancient collection received new bindings with the emblem of St. Mark’s lion.⁶

From a codicological point of view, the dimensions of the folios are much more important because they can give clues as to the book’s origin.⁷ The Venetus A’s folios are about 390 mm high and 285 mm wide. This format is approximately the same dimensions as Plato’s ancient manuscripts, roughly 350 x 250, and more particularly the same as those of the *Marcianus app. gr. IV 1* [= T], 372 x 294, a very important manuscript from the tenth century.⁸ We may also compare the dimensions with two contemporary manuscripts, the *Parisinus gr. 1853* of Aristotle, 350 x 260, an anomalous format among Aristotle’s manuscripts (the others are clearly smaller), and the *Vaticanus gr. 124* of Polybius, 350 x 255, copied by the monk Ephrem.

The sheets of the Venetus A are made of a fairly thick, but beautiful vellum. Like the format of the folios, the characteristics of their preparation are very important because they show the practices of the manuscript’s scriptorium that could aid in

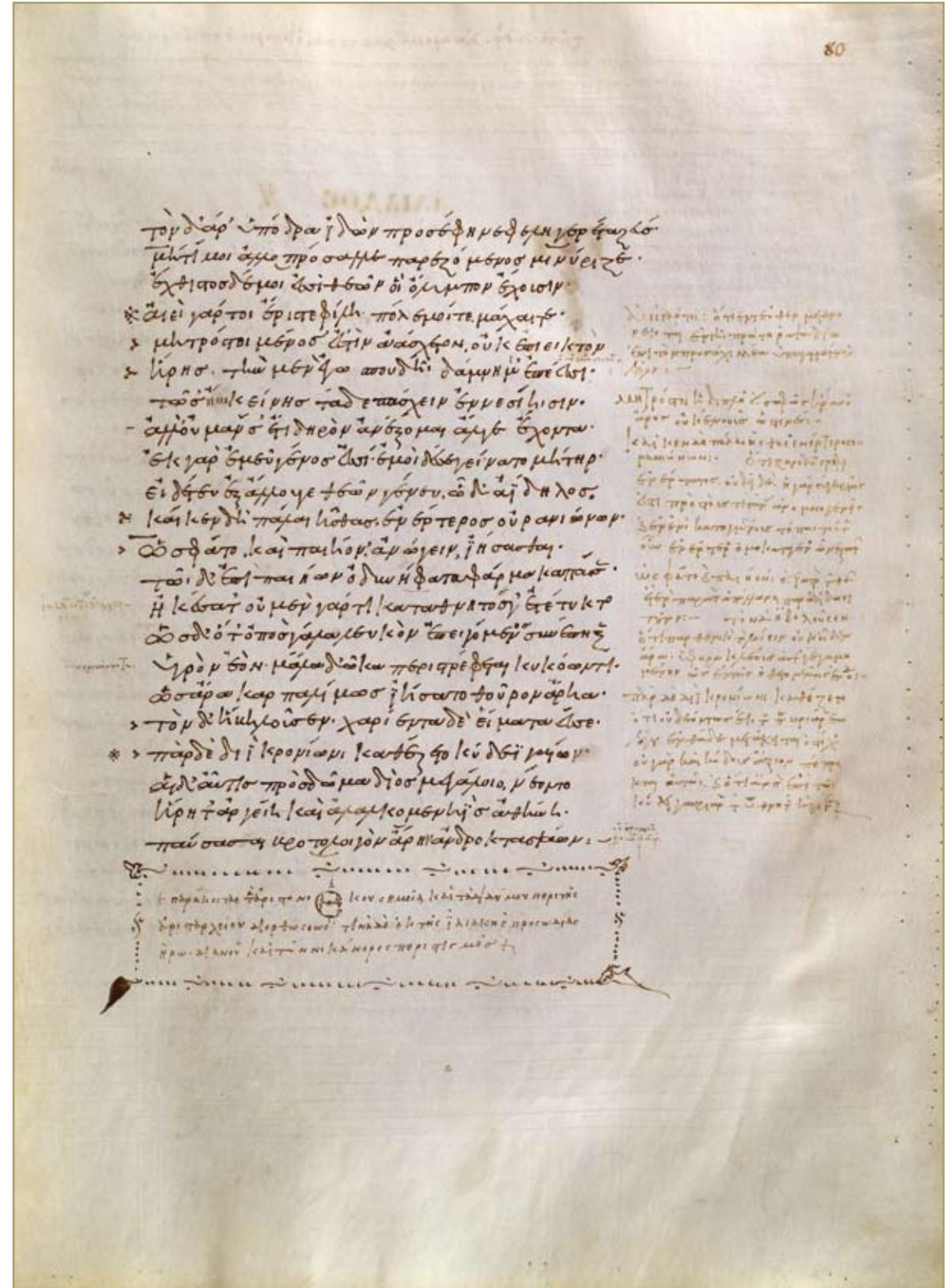


Figure 1 (opposite). Folio 80r (entire) of the Venetus A.

¹ I deeply thank Paul Canart for his reading and his very useful remarks, which I signal in my paper.

² Zanetti, A. M., and Bongiovanni, A. 1740.

³ Mioni, E. 1967–1985.

⁴ Mioni, E. 1976:188–189, 192.

⁵ This paper is based on an inquiry using the digital photographs of the Homer Multitext Library together with a direct examination of the manuscript at the Marciana. I thank here the Director of the manuscripts department, Susy Marcon, for having allowed me to make some necessary verifications.

⁶ It is a binding “à l’occidentale” (that is, without Greek headcaps). We can observe five raised bands. The decoration of the leather was made by *impression à froid*. The only gilding is the title, *Homeri Ilias*, on the spine of the manuscript.

⁷ See Irigoin, J. 1958 and 1959.

⁸ Irigoin, J. 1997:168–169. Marilena Maniaci relativizes the importance of this piece of data: these dimensions are simply the biggest ones used in the Byzantine world, where the biggest skins are used *in quarto* or *in sexto*. This information would rather concern the book’s level of quality. (See also Maniaci, M. 1999:83–122).

identifying it. According to Eastern practice, in order to address aesthetic concerns, each quire begins with the clearer, smoother flesh-side. Thereafter, similar sides always face each other: hair-sides for the second and the third pages, flesh-sides for the fourth and fifth, and so on, following what specialists call “Gregory’s rule.”⁹

The preparation of the sheets

On the external inferior of folio 12 recto (f. 12r), we can observe the pricking.¹⁰ The pricking that appears on the right side was made to guide the ruler for marking lines in order to guide the writing of the *Iliad’s* text; that at the bottom of the page was intended for the drawing of the frame lines. (See Chapter 1, Figure 1.) A set of closely spaced lines was also drawn for the scholia, i. e. the commentary notes that accompany the text. This second set of lines is positioned at the head and foot of the page and in the external area for a “mise en page en couronne ouverte,” a crowning of the text body with commentary. This required a second pricking, in addition to that of the main text, and we can observe it on the right side of f. 80r. (See Figure 1.) The ruling was marked on the hair-side with a dry point, apparently sheet by sheet. Thus, according to Eastern practice, the furrows appear on the hair-side and the ridges on the flesh-side.

Still, the complexity of the Venetus A’s ruling does not end with the double set of lines. We find two main types of rulings in the codex. The ruling found in the first pages is decidedly different from that used for the *Iliad’s* text. On f. 1r, the schema is reasonably simple, insofar as there are no scholia to the text, which consists of excerpts from Plutarch’s *Chrestomathia*. In this case we can observe two pairs of vertical lines that limit the textual presentation on the left and on the right (see the schema of f. 1r, Figure 2). On the left side, after a margin about 33 mm wide, a first pair of vertical lines 6 mm apart from each other delimits the text’s left side. A space of 140 mm is specified for the text, which is delimited on the right side by a second pair of lines 6 mm apart. This second set of lines leaves a margin of about 92 mm on the right side.

Thirty-eight horizontal lines are drawn between the second and the third vertical lines. The first horizontal line is 16 mm from the one following it; the 37 other lines are separated from each other by 6 or 7 mm. In the codicological lexicon, this ruling corresponds to Leroy’s type D 21D1a—in this case, it is possible to specify it, but Leroy does not list such a ruling.¹¹

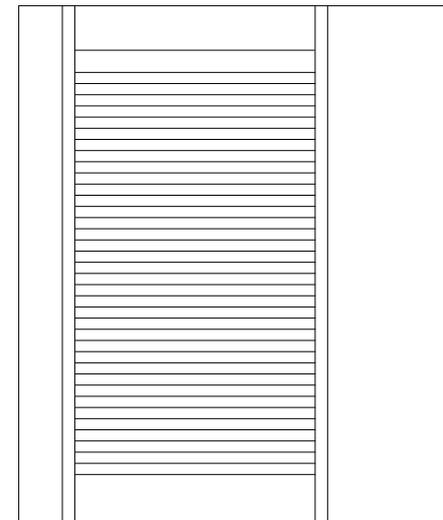


Figure 2. Schema of the ruling of f. 1r.

⁹Gregory, G. R. 1885. Repr. Gilissen, L. 1977.

¹⁰At the bottom of f. 308r, we can more easily observe the pricking made for drawing these frame lines.

¹¹Leroy, J. 1976. See now the database made from Leroy’s file and recent catalogs: Sautel J.-L. 1995.

I find a slightly different ruling on f. 9r. Here, four pairs of vertical lines delimit three spaces. (See the schema of f. 9r, Figure 3.) Again 38 lines cross these three spaces, from the first frame line to the seventh one, though the first one seems to stop at the fifth vertical line.

The distances between the horizontal lines are the same as in the previous ruling. After an internal margin of about 30 mm, two vertical lines 6 mm apart delimit a first 25 mm space. The second space is 110 mm wide, the third space 40 mm, each space delimited by a pair of frame lines that are 5, 6, and 4 mm apart, respectively. This leaves an external margin that is about 55 mm wide. But this page was never written upon. We find only a list of 35 names on the verso (f. 9v), in the external (40 mm wide) column.¹² The rest remained unused until the twelfth century. Was this folio originally intended for another text? It will remain impossible to tell.

What about the ruling of the *Iliad’s* text? The preparation of the folios, with a double lineation in order to display the scholia surrounding the text, is too complex to be described with the principles of Leroy. There are slight variations in the number of vertical lines (or frame lines), but they do not change the general appearance of the page. On f. 12r, seven frame lines have been drawn. (See Chapter 1, Figure 1, and the schema in Figure 4.) At about 40 mm from the interior, a first pair of lines 7 mm apart delimits the left side of the text body. This text body occupies a space of 105 mm and is delimited on its right side by a second pair of lines 6 mm apart from each other. An intermediate margin of 22 mm is placed before a fifth frame line, which delimits the left side of the scholia’s text. This text is written in a space 64 mm wide and is delimited on the right by a third pair of frame lines 5 mm apart from each other. These leave an external margin of about 35 mm. We can visualize the ruling as it appears on a recto in this way:

|| || | || (Homer 1).

In the space meant for the main text, 25 horizontal lines are drawn from the second frame line to the third (and the scribe regularly copied 25 lines of the *Iliad* per page). These horizontal lines are 8 mm apart from each other. This part of the ruling creates three large spaces, at the head of the page, on the external margin, and at the foot, allowing the scholia to form a “mise en page en couronne ouverte” (without planning the use of the internal margin). For this “secondary text,” 67 horizontal lines are drawn, which the scribe also follows regularly in copying the scholia: 8 lines at the head, 45 in the external area, and 10 under the space kept for the *Iliad’s* text, at the foot. Scholia lines are 5 mm apart, with a shorter line height than that of the *Iliad’s* text. Above and below the text of the *Iliad*, a 15 mm space

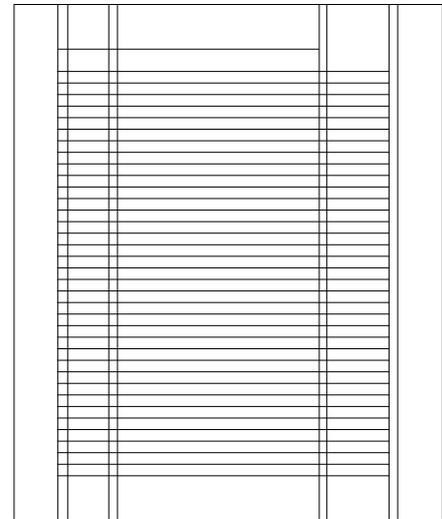


Figure 3. Schema of the ruling of f. 9r.

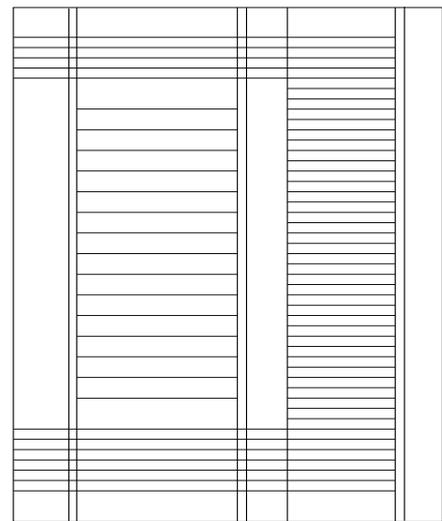


Figure 4. Schema of the ruling of f. 12r.

¹²See below, p. 71.

separates the ruling for the Homeric text from the ruling for the scholia. On this folio, furthermore, four shorter vertical lines are drawn in the external margin in order to present scholia, formed by two columns with bases and capitals on f. 12v.¹³

I observed the following variations in the ruling of the main portion of the codex:

- On f. 28r the ruling corresponds to Irigoín's description:¹⁴ to the schema (Homer 1) that I described for f. 12r, one vertical line is added at the internal margin, which makes eight frame lines in total. After an internal margin of about 21 mm, the resulting delimited space is 19 mm wide. The space designated for the writing of the *Iliad's* text is 104 mm wide, the third column 22 mm wide, the column for the scholia in minuscule 62 mm wide, and the external margin 38 mm wide. This seems to be the more frequent rule used in the Venetus A. We can describe it as follows:

||| ||| || (Homer 2).

- But on f. 60r (and this is not an isolated case), there are nine frame lines: instead of a single line delimiting additional space for some short scholia in the inner space, we find here a pair of lines. After an internal margin of about 17 mm, the first column is again 19 mm wide, the second one 111 mm wide, the third again 22 mm, the fourth 64 mm, and the external margin 34 mm. This ruling, described by Mioni,¹⁵ does not change the general configuration of the page:

||| ||| || (Homer 3).

- On f. 116r, there are 10 vertical lines (and this is also not an isolated case). The system is comparable to the two previous (Homer 2 and 3), but there are no isolated lines: all vertical lines are paired. After an internal margin of about 17 mm, the first column is again 19 mm wide, the second (again) 112 mm, the third 17, the fourth (again) 65, and the external margin 32 mm wide:

||| ||| || (Homer 4).

No radical change is made in the ruling of the sheets prepared for the text of the *Iliad*; there are only slight adjustments. These adjustments show that all of the sheets were not ruled at once, before the copying of the text. From f. 28r, it seems that the scribe felt the need to delimit an additional space for the writing of very short scholia in the internal space, and he respects this delimitation: on this folio the scholia that begin in the internal margin seem to be due to a contemporary corrector, whose ink is slightly brighter and more orange (see Figure 5)—we will come back to this corrector later. Technically the delimitation of a fourth area for scholia characterizes a "mise en page en couronne fermée" (closed), but the

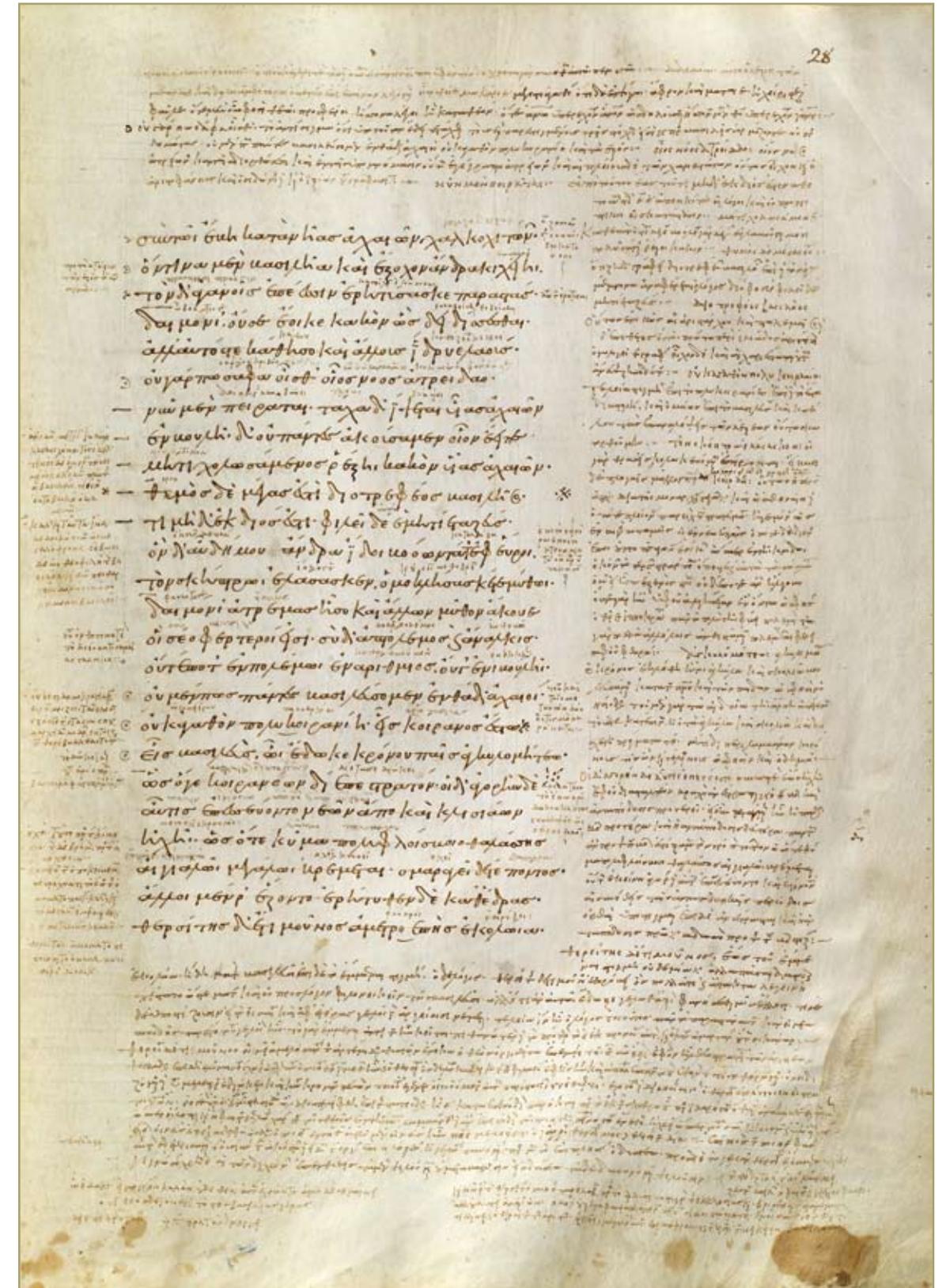


Figure 5 (opposite). Folio 28r.

¹³ Irigoín, J. 1990.

¹⁴ Irigoín, J. 1990.

¹⁵ Mioni, E. 1976:185.

scribe uses this internal area much less frequently than the others, and only with the intention of economical reading through the optimizing of distance between the concerned text and the gloss. The pair of frame lines delimiting the left side of the space for the *Iliad's* text is also positioned to allow a distinctive initial letter at the beginning of a text and, above all, critical signs. On the verso of the folio this function is transferred to the pair of frame lines delimiting the right side of the body text on the recto.

The composition of the book

The Venetus A is essentially made of quaternions, that is, quires of four bifolios. We will return later to the beginning of the codex, which was damaged.

The *Iliad* occupies 39 quaternions (folios 12–323) and a binion, i. e. a quire of two bifolios, which ends the codex (folios 324–327). Some folios have fallen out and have been replaced by other, more recent sheets. These are folios 69–74 (= *Iliad* E 336–636), 229–234 (*Iliad* P 277–577), 238 (*Iliad* P 729–761), 254–257 (*Iliad* T 126–326), and 319–320 (*Iliad* Ω 405–504). Mioni has shown these restorations to be due to Bessarion. Not only does he identify the cursive writing of Bessarion at the bottom of f. 237v, where the cardinal notes, “One page is missing” (λείπει φύλλον ἓν), but he also recognizes the peculiar characters of his calligraphic writing in the *Iliad* text rewritten on the recent folios.¹⁶ (See Figures 6 and 7.) Bessarion uses ink of a similar color, and it is fairly difficult to recognize his interventions on the codex when they are very brief, as we will see regarding the foliation.

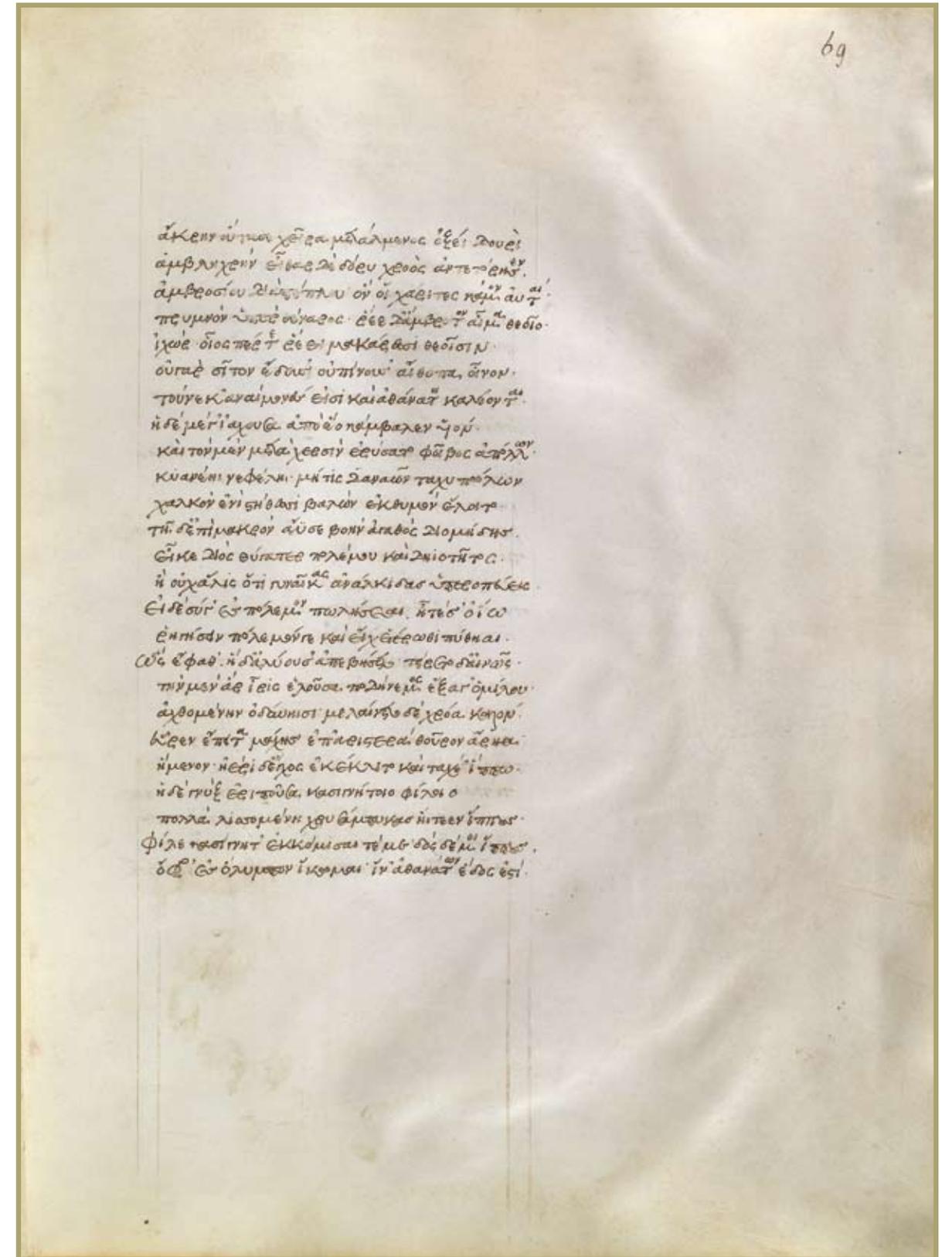


Figure 6. Detail, bottom of f. 237v.

The foliation, which we find in Arabic numerals in the external superior corner, is recent (perhaps, like the binding, from the eighteenth century)—used with recto ‘r’ and verso ‘v’ for precision. Originally the scribe numbered only the quires, in Greek majuscule, following the ancient usage. We can still observe the “signature” of the nineteenth quaternion of the *Iliad's* text: IΘ, in the external inferior corner of f. 156r, the first folio of this gathering (see also f. 180r, KΒ: it is the 22nd quire, or f. 196r, KΔ: the 24th quire). This signature of quires only begins with the text of the *Iliad* at f. 12r, which leaves unresolved the question of the overall plan followed by the scribe as to the adding of the introductory portion. We also find at the right inferior of some folios another numbering of the quires in the Latin alphabet,

Figure 7 (opposite). Folio 69r.

¹⁶ Mioni, E. 1976:192–193.



followed by the numbering of the quire's folios in Arabic numbers. On f. 316r, for example, we can read nn1, and on f. 323r (the eighth of this quire) nn8. In the same way, we find on f. 326r: oo3. Here again, Mioni recognizes an approach to numbering the folios indicative of Bessarion: the quires are given signature marks corresponding to letters of the Latin alphabet, incorporating some signs (a, b, c, . . . t, u, x, y, ç, &, j, z), followed by repeated letters (aa, bb, cc, . . . nn, oo), and, in order to number the folios of each quire, adding to these letters the Arabic numbers from 1 to 8.¹⁷ (See Figure 8, where you can observe together the original signature: K $\tilde{\text{B}}$ and the rest of this one by Bessarion: χ 1.)

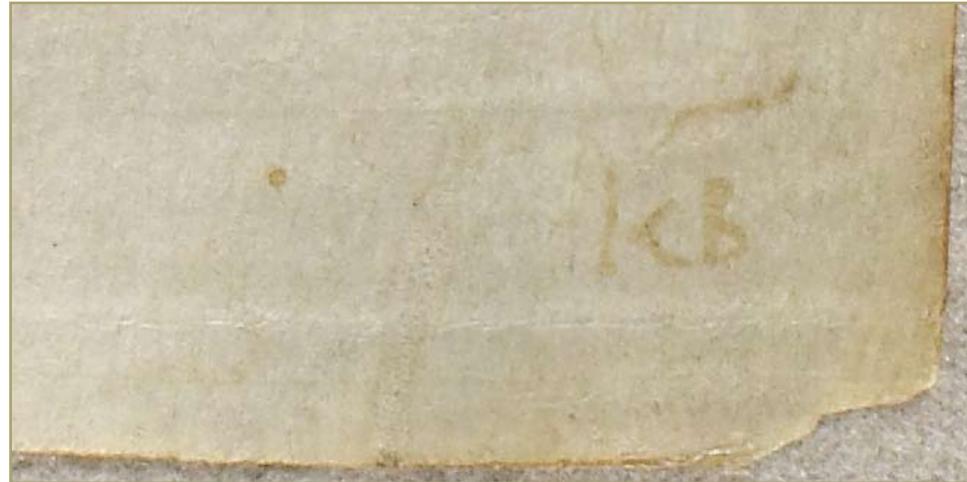


Figure 8. Detail, right lower corner of f. 180r.

The following displays the foliation of *Iliad's* books:

BOOK	FOLIATION	BOOK	FOLIATION
A	f. 12r–24r	N	f. 164r–180r
B	f. 24r–41v	Ξ	f. 180v–190v
Γ	f. 42r–51r	O	f. 191r–205v
Δ	f. 51r–62r	Π	f. 206r–223r
E	f. 62r–80r	P	f. 223v–238v
Z	f. 80v–90v	Σ	f. 239r–251r
H	f. 91r–100v	T	f. 251v–259v
Θ	f. 100v–111v	Υ	f. 260r–269v
I	f. 111v–125v	Φ	f. 270r–282r
K	f. 126r–137r	X	f. 282r–292v
Λ	f. 137v–154r	Ψ	f. 292v–310v
M	f. 154v–163v	Ω	f. 310v–326v.

¹⁷Mioni, E. 1976:193.

The content of each quire is more precisely:

- f. 12–19: *Iliad* A 1–401.
- f. 20–27: *Iliad* A 402–B 186.
- f. 28–35: *Iliad* B 187–592.
- f. 36–43: *Iliad* B 593–Γ 101.
- f. 44–51: *Iliad* Γ 102–Δ 33.
- f. 52–59: *Iliad* Δ 34–434.
- f. 60–67: *Iliad* Δ 435–E 285.
- f. 68–75: *Iliad* E 286–685. The original three middle sheets (E 336–636) have fallen out, and the present ones are those restored by Bessarion.
- f. 76–83: *Iliad* E 686–Z 179.
- f. 84–91: *Iliad* Z 180–H 50.
- f. 92–99: *Iliad* H 51–455. According to Allen,¹⁸ the signature of this eleventh quaternion of the Homeric text did not entirely disappear, and he was able to read the traces of the upper part of I $\tilde{\text{A}}$, the corresponding number in Greek characters, but I did not recognize them on the photograph.
- f. 100–107: *Iliad* H 456–Θ 373.
- f. 108–115: *Iliad* Θ 374–I 209.
- f. 116–123: *Iliad* I 210–613.
- f. 124–131: *Iliad* I 614–K 301.
- f. 132–139: *Iliad* K 302–Λ 125.
- f. 140–147: *Iliad* Λ 126–525.
- f. 148–155: *Iliad* Λ 526–M 75. Allen identified some vestiges of I $\tilde{\text{H}}$, the signature of this eighteenth quire, but I did not recognize them on the photograph.
- f. 156–163: *Iliad* M 76–471. Without difficulty we can read I $\tilde{\text{Θ}}$ in the external inferior corner of f. 156r for this nineteenth quire.

¹⁸Allen, T.W. 1899:162.

- f. 164–171: *Iliad* N 1–406.
- f. 172–179: *Iliad* N 407–813. Again, Allen found some slight traces of KĀ, the signature of this 21st quire, but I did not recognize them on the photograph.
- f. 180–187: *Iliad* N 814–Ξ 378. On the photograph of the Homer Multitext Library, we can easily read KĀ in the external inferior corner of f. 180r for this 22nd quire, but it is very faded on the manuscript, which I examined afterwards.
- f. 188–195: *Iliad* Ξ 379–O 250. In the external inferior corner of f. 188r: KĪ.
- f. 196–203: *Iliad* O 251–651. For the 24th gathering: KĀ.
- f. 204–211: *Iliad* O 652–Π 300.
- f. 212–219: *Iliad* Π 301–705.
- f. 220–227: *Iliad* Π 706–P 226.
- f. 228–235: *Iliad* P 227–628. The three inner bifolios (P 277–577) have fallen out. The present ones are those restored by Bessarion.
- f. 236–243: *Iliad* P 629–Σ 252. F. 238, the former leaf of the third sheet (P 729–761), has been restored by Bessarion. According to Allen, the whole quire has been recomposed; he has observed that the string-holes in the hinge of the middle sheet (f. 239–240) are empty.
- f. 244–251: *Iliad* Σ 253–T 25.
- f. 252–259: *Iliad* T 26–424. Allen identified some slight traces of ΛĀ, the signature of this 31st quire, but I did not recognize them. The two inner bifolios, f. 254–257 (T 126–326) have fallen out, and the present ones are those restored by Bessarion.
- f. 260–267: *Iliad* Y 1–405. In the external inferior corner of f. 260r: ΛĔ for this 32nd quire.
- f. 268–275: *Iliad* Y 406–Φ 300.
- f. 276–283: *Iliad* Φ 301–X 82. In the external inferior corner of f. 276r: ΛĀ, with a Δ partly cut away, for this 34th gathering.

- f. 284–291: *Iliad* X 83–485. In the external inferior corner of f. 284r: ΛĔ, 35th gathering.
- f. 292–299: *Iliad* X 486–Ψ 359.
- f. 300–307: *Iliad* Ψ 360–758.
- f. 308–315: *Iliad* Ψ 759–Ω 279. In the external inferior corner of f. 308r: ΛĔ, 38th quire.
- f. 316–323: *Iliad* Ω 280–654. In the bottom right corner of f. 316r we still can read Λ, but -Θ is cut away (it was originally ΛΘ, for the 39th quire). The middle sheet, f. 319–320 (Ω 405–504), has fallen out, and the present one is that supplied by Bessarion.
- f. 324–327: *Iliad* Ω 655–804. Consists of only two bifolios.

The text of the *Iliad* ends on f. 326v, and, unfortunately, the scribe does not add a subscription: we know neither his name nor that of the backer, neither the date nor the place of the book's realization. On f. 327r the scribe copies an epigram on Hector that is attributed to Hadrian (contained in *Anthologia Palatina* IX 387),¹⁹ and he leaves the verso blank. Also notable is the fact that, at the end of each book, he notes the four main sources for the scholia that surround the text of the *Iliad*: "In the margins are transcribed Aristonicus' signs, Didymus' notes on Aristarchus' recension, excerpts from Herodian's prosody of the *Iliad*, and Nicanor's remarks on the punctuation." (See Figure 1, above.)

The problem of the introductory portion

It is difficult to reconstitute how the introductory portion of the codex was conceived. We do not know what kind of quire was used because it is now mutilated, and the folios remain disheveled. After two guard-leaves, the first eleven folios are comprised partially of what is left of the original quire (folios 1, 4, 6, 8, and 9) and partially of what was added in order to replace missing sheets (folios 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, and 11).

Folios 1 and 8 form a bifolio. The first quaternion has been reconstructed within this bifolio in the following way: f. 6 has been affixed to the stub bound to the added f. 3; f. 4 has been affixed to the stub bound to the added f. 5; and the bifolio 2-7 has been added. After this rebuilt quaternion comes a reconstructed bifolio: f. 9 has been affixed to the stub bound to f. 10. According to Wissowa, the leaf preceding f. 1 also forms a bifolio with f. 11, which gathers the quaternion

¹⁹ Comparetti, D. 1901:II.

formed by folios 1–8 and the reconstructed bifolio 9–10.²⁰ Someone has written the number ‘10’ at the bottom of folio 8r, in the external corner, and ‘11’ at the same place on f. 9r.²¹ He seems to have taken into account the two guard-leaves in his numbering. Was it Bessarion? Because the writing is too brief, I cannot identify it. As Mioni observes,²² f. 8r and 9r are both hair-sides. Therefore, because of the Eastern conventions of quire preparation, one could not follow the other—unless we suppose that the customary composition of the quire had been neglected in the preparation of this preface, but this supposition seems improbable for such a codex. It is more likely that this foliation (the numbers 10 and 11 on f. 8r and 9r) gives a clue as to the state of the Venetus A at another stage in its history, perhaps in the fifteenth century.

Let us look at the content of this “preface.” The scribe copies seven fragments from Proclus’ *Chrestomathy: a Life of Homer*, followed by summaries of the six other poems of the Epic Cycle that narrate the Trojan War from its distant origins to the “returns.” The *Cypria* opens the cycle with the judgment of Paris; the *Aithiopsis* continues the story after Hector’s death, beginning with the Amazon Penthesileia’s arrival; the *Little Iliad* opens with the judgment of Achilles’ arms; the *Sack of Ilium* begins with the Trojans discussing the wooden horse left in front of Troy; the *Nostoi* relates the return of the Greek heroes after the Trojan War; and the *Telegony* opens with the burial of Penelope’s suitors.

In the Venetus A, the folio of the *Cyprian* summary has fallen out, but we know it exists from other Iliadic manuscripts. On the other hand, the Venetus A alone transmits the last five fragments. These absences from the other Iliadic manuscripts could be due to a lack of necessity for their audiences to know the whole of the epic cycle, because these manuscripts were various schools’ exemplars. Undoubtedly, the Venetus A is an outstanding manuscript both in the quality of its form (the vellum’s quality, the sheets’ ruling, and the copying) and that of its content.

Probably just as it originally did, the first *Chrestomathy* fragment occupies the present folio 1 recto (a flesh-side sheet, as required for beginning a quire) and verso (fr. a1–45 and a46–77), indicating that it opens the preface. Fragment b has disappeared, and to find the next one we must go to folio 6, which presents the fragments c and d205–219 on the recto, d219–223 and e238–267 on the verso. The rest of fragment e and the last fragments are on f. 4 (e268–274, f, and g305–319 on the recto, and g319–330 on the verso). On f. 8r we find the end of a text about the signs, in fact the preface to Aristonicus’ *Concerning Aristarchus’ Signs of the Iliad*, which is mentioned by the scribe with three other works as a source of the scholia.²³

²⁰ Wissowa, G. 1884:200.

²¹ Comparetti (Praefatio, p. I) reports some other traces of numbers that I did not see, maybe because they disappeared: 3 on f. 1, 5 on f. 3, 6 on f. 4, 7 on f. 5, 8 on f. 6, and 9 on f. 7.

²² Mioni, E. 1976:190. I confirm that f. 1r is a flesh-side, as is suitable for beginning a quire, f. 4r is a hair-side, and f. 6r a flesh-side (there is here a mistake in Comparetti 1901:II).

²³ See Graeme Bird’s contribution on critical signs in this volume.

Finally, on f. 9v the scribe copies the names of 35 grammarians, one name per line. Comparetti has shown that these names are mentioned as they appear in the scholia of the first book of the *Iliad*, though with some omissions.²⁴ Here is the list, which begins and ends with a cross:

+ Aristarchus, Zenodotus, (S)tasinus, Theopompus, Polemon, Apollodorus, Erodianus, Nicanor, Porphyrius, Apollonius, Sosigenes, Aristophanes, Dictus, Euripides, Ptolemaius (and in front of Ptolemaius, on its left: “the son of Oroandes”), Turannion, Zoilus, Chrysippus, Hesiodus, Seleucus, Alcman (next to Alcman, in the left margin at the pair of frame lines is written: “the lyric”), Philoxenus, Callimachus, Pindarus, Aristonicus, Pamphilus, Theagenes, Didymus, Sophocles, Callistratus, Sidonius, Ixion, Theophrastus, Arus (which Comparetti corrects as Horus), Rhianus +

On some of these first folios of the manuscript, we can see pictures, miniatures fairly rare in manuscripts of pagan literature, which are more recent than the copying of the text and illustrate the poem by presenting scenes of the epic cycle. Ioli Kalavrezou dates these illustrations “most likely in the twelfth century.”²⁵ At the external inferior of folio 1r we can still distinguish a couple on a boat, their names identified as Aphrodite and Paris (Mioni²⁶ sees here Helena’s abduction). At the external margin of the verso, we see Helen (her name is written) between two other figures (two servants according to Mioni) in a window; below this the same figures appear full-length: the figure on the left seems to advise Helen, the one on the right to invite her. Here, with red ink in semi-uncial script, the tenth-century scribe writes a note, which, just below the figure on the right, strangely seems to comment on the earlier miniature: Οἱ Δε λέγουσι τῆ (sic) γοητος (first γρητος) τοῦ καρός ‘they tell her of the Carian charlatan.’ Could the scribe have referred to illustrations that would only be added two centuries later? (See Figure 9, next page.) At the bottom of the folio a third miniature shows, on the left, four or five figures on a boat and, on the right, a castle; above the figures are written the names Paris and Aphrodite, above the castle, Troia. In the external margin of f. 4r, Apollo sends two arrows toward a group standing in prayer. In the external margin of f. 4v, wild animals (dogs, lions, a strange winged animal, and two birds of prey) devour the corpses of six warriors; in the middle of the page, four warriors surround an armed Achilles (we can read his name). In the external margin of f. 6r, Mioni recognizes Achilles, Agamemnon, Briseis, and Chryseis in the first illustration, but this remains an uncertain contention; below this we see an armored warrior riding a horse (Is the armor made by Hephaistos? Is the warrior Achilles?); still below, perhaps Achilles and Briseis (Chryseis or Iphigenia, according to Furlan), though perhaps again

²⁴ Comparetti, D. 1901:IX. The omitted names are Glaucon, Andron, Alexander, Plato, and Antimachus.

²⁵ See her analysis in this volume.

²⁶ Mioni, E. 1976:190.

Preparing to write

We are now ready to come to the writing of the Venetus A.³² But before reexamining the manuscript in minute detail, we should turn first to its scribe, who has also prepared for the writing. The sheets of two quires have been carefully ruled and are ready for the transcription. The scribe has thought at length about the best way of presenting both the text of Homer and its numerous commentaries; their simultaneous presentation on the same page has called for a sophisticated frame. Copying this book will put at scholars' disposal the text of the best commentaries that have survived to his day. It is an immense work connecting future generations with the scholars of antiquity. Not wanting to misrepresent the thought of these authors, he knows that he will have to work very conscientiously, to read with acuity the partially faded texts, to keep his mind always on the alert in order not to omit a word, not to skip a line, not to misread or confuse one word with another.

He turns to the *kalamoi* 'reed pens' that he has prepared, and chooses a thick one for writing the text of the *Iliad* at the center of the page. He directs the finest reed to the main body of scholia, which he will copy in a smaller, more cursive writing. A third kind of reed, of intermediate size, will be reserved for the other set of scholia, much less extensive, which he plans to copy in the free spaces between the text and the main scholia or in the internal margin, in semi-uncial in order to distinguish it from the other texts' bodies. He does not guess that ten centuries later, palaeographers will lean over the codex with magnifying glasses; they will carefully examine the ink in the three bodies of writing, the subtle variations in ink color resulting from different reeds and thicknesses of line stroke, and they will compare the writings at length before discerning a constant hand.

For whom was this scribe working? Where did he find his exemplars? Were these exemplars written in majuscule, a previous form of writing used exclusively until the eighth century for the copying of great texts: entirely in capital letters, without spaces between the words (in *scriptio continua* 'continuous writing')? Were these exemplars on rolls or in codex, or were they already written in minuscule—in which case they would be quite recent? Did they already contain the *Iliad* together with commentaries, or did one exemplar contain only the text of Homer, and another—or others—the commentaries? Were these commentaries already arranged together, or did the scribe excerpt and arrange them together himself for this manuscript? Scholars are reduced to hypotheses, to conjectures based on observations of the copy. But up to now, there has been no certainty.

³²In this contribution I will not speak about a recent hand that added an interlinear paraphrase to Homer's text. These interlinear notes, from the fourteenth century according to Mioni, are particularly dense up to the top of f. 15v, but they still continue until the beginning of the second book.

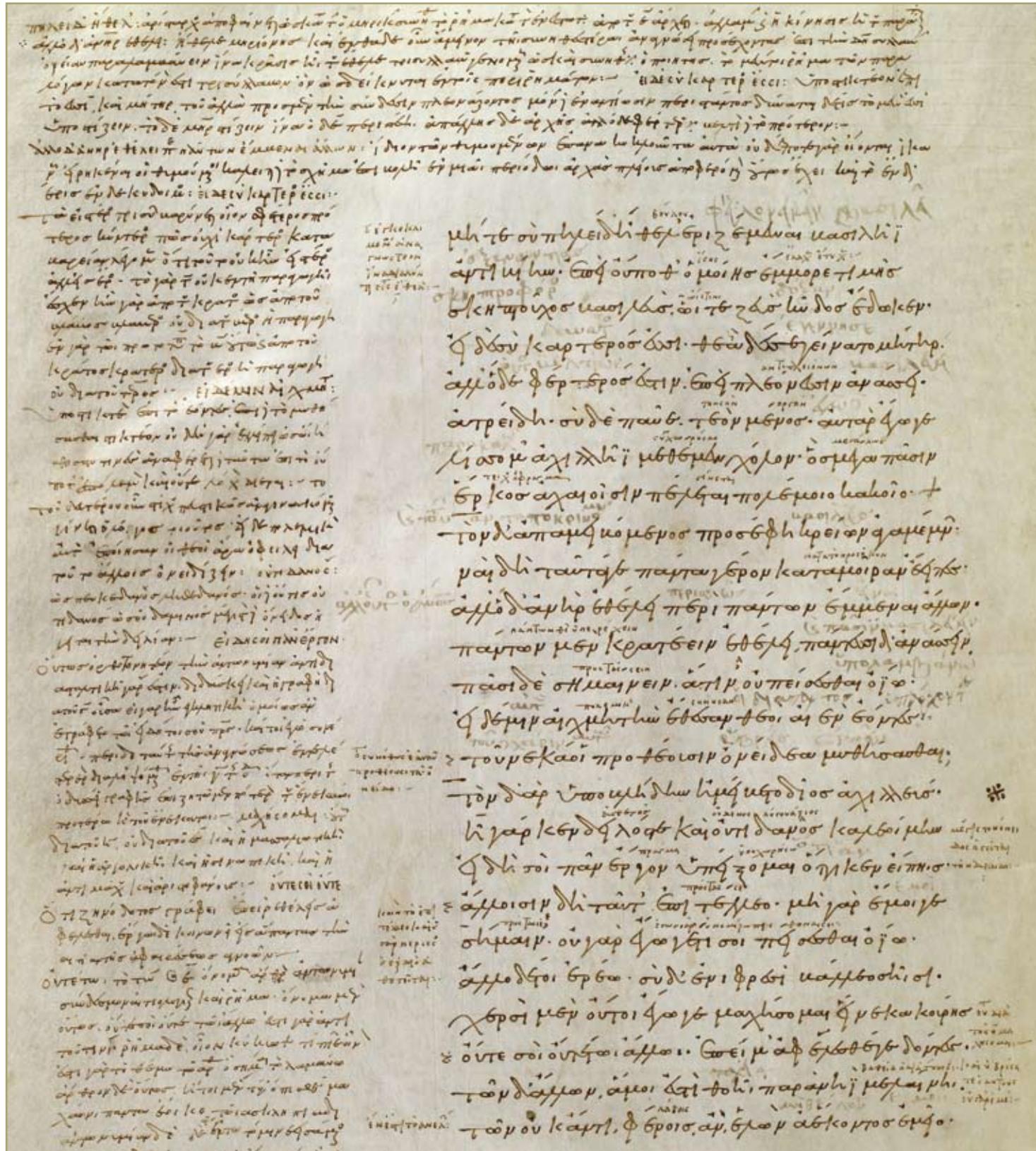
The color of the ink

Let us come back to some easily observable facts, beginning with the ink. Its color changes from dark to rusty brown. Dark brown on f. 12r becomes slightly clearer on f. 14r, dulled on f. 15v, continuing to f. 17r where it appears rusty-brown. On f. 17v the ink recovers its stronger hue, probably because the scribe refills his ink well after having shaken the ink container. Examining the scholia on f. 17r or 17v, one can also easily spot when the scribe has refilled his reed. (See Figure 11, next page.) Observing the ink's color allows us to reach an important conclusion about the scribe's process: because all the writing of f. 17r is the same rusty-brown color, we know that in the beginning of his work, the scribe completely finished each page at one time. He most likely began by writing the 25 verses of the *Iliad's* text, went on with the main body of scholia, and finished with the scholia added between Homer's text and the main body of scholia or in the internal margin.

This can be verified in some measure on f. 17v, where the first short scholium in semi-uncial appears in a somewhat clearer ink than the text's and that of at least the first part of the main body of scholia. The hue of the first short scholium in semi-uncial is similar to that of the last part of the main body of scholia, therefore this short scholium must have been added after the writing of the text and the main body of scholia.

We observe the same thing until f. 24r. We can fairly surely attribute the substantial differences between the shades of ink in the text and in the scholia to the use of different reeds, thicker for the text, finer for the scholia. We must also take into account the difference related to the skin: the ink's hue may appear differently on the hair side than on the flesh-side, these two sides themselves having different shades. Even on the same page the ink's hue may seem a little different because of the skin. But what happens starting at f. 24r? On this folio the differences in the ink's hues seem to indicate that the scribe copied the scholia later, not just after the text. Some pages seem to indicate that he left his work for some time between the copying of the text and that of the scholia, as on f. 24v, 36r, 40v, and 42v. But if we consider other pages, for example f. 43r, we observe that the scholia's ink appears as it does in the Homeric text when the large reed's ink is almost completely discharged. Inversely, when the scribe has just refilled the fine reed for the scholia, we observe the same intensity of color in the Homeric text.

Thus the scribe does not seem to have approached a folio more than once, for example first copying the text on a quire or an entire book of the *Iliad* and afterwards adding the scholia in one or more additional passes. This approach may seem



more natural if we assume that the scribe had at his disposal several exemplars, one with the *Iliad's* text, another with one set of commentaries, and a third with another set. Nevertheless, can we conclude for this reason that his exemplar initially offered the *Iliad's* text surrounded by commentaries? The evidence is too thin, which leaves unanswered the following question: did the scribe excerpt himself what comprises the scholia from a larger corpus of commentaries?

Because of the sureness of the scribe in his well-balanced use of the page for placing the scholia in relation to the text, Marilena Maniaci suggests that he had at his disposal a model with a similar layout.³³ I too was struck by his mastery of the layout of the scholia. Nevertheless, there are counter-examples. For instance f. 51r seems out of balance, with only 5 lines of scholia at the top, followed by a short free space on right hand, then 15 lines of scholia at the bottom. This is caused by the ending of Book *Gamma* and beginning of Book *Delta* on the same page; the scribe had to clearly separate the scholia relative to each book. A solution here would have been to copy fewer lines from Book *Delta* onto the folio.

The writing

Now let us focus on an examination of the scribe's writing. It can be linked to the cursive writing of documents that permeated books at least from the middle of the tenth century, particularly frequent in pagan manuscripts.³⁴ An effort is made for regularity, more or less marked according to the folios, but the letters' bodies are not always uniform. The minuscule is slightly slanted to the right, but neither is this tendency especially uniform. Paul Canart notes that the *phi* (always minuscule) is mostly vertical, in contrast to the surrounding letters. The minuscule *delta* is also fairly remarkable because of its very elongated ascender, which largely eclipses its body on the left. However, this scribe is skillful, and the execution of his writing is agile, rapid, and sure.

He leads a line by writing just underneath it (but, again, not strictly). As a result, his writing seems to hang from the line, which is common since the end of the ninth century.³⁵ The breathing marks are angular (in the form of a half *eta* or simple angle), and they have a fairly reduced size; accents are of medium size; and both are regularly present. Pauses are marked by the down point, the middle point, and the point at the top. The end of each scholium is marked by two points followed by a dash that is often slightly wavy (:~), or, more rarely, by a leaf. (See Figure 12, next page.) At the beginning of a scholium the scribe often draws a cross. Dative iota is adscript.

Figure 11 (opposite page). Folio 17v, detail.

³³ Maniaci, M. 2006:221. In another paper, she characterizes the strategy followed by the scribe in this way: for the comfort of the reading, all the commentary relative to the text written on one page had to appear on that page. Because a decrease in the number of *Iliad's* lines per page was out of question, the scribe had to make use of the available space for the scholia as best as he could. Every time the quantity of the scholia was too great, he tried to make the best use of the top area, using more abbreviations, forgoing the impulse to start a new line for the following scholium. As a consequence, the bottom area of the folios is less exploited in these cases. See Maniaci, M. 2000:65-76 and 2002: 21-22. See also Mary Ebbott's chapter in this book.

³⁴ I am indebted to Paul Canart for these precisions. He gives as a precursor the *Vindobonensis phil. gr.* 314, dated from 924. In this kind of writing, the letters' bodies are less uniform, the line is followed less rigorously, more uncial letters are introduced in the minuscule, and more deforming ligatures are used.

³⁵ See Gardthausen, V. 1911:189. In the most ancient manuscripts written in minuscule, Gardthausen observes that the writing is put on the line (as in the parchment manuscripts written in uncial). This habit ends in the tenth century.

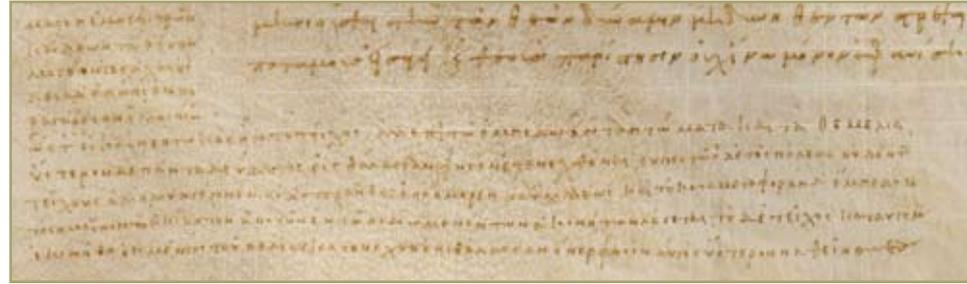


Figure 12. Folio 154v, detail.

The height of the bodies of the letters represents about a fourth of the interlinear space, leaving a well-spaced impression overall. The letters are well-spaced with an average of 32 letters per line when the verse is written into the area initially designated for the text, that is to say between the inner frame lines (within 105 mm on folio 12r). Often the scribe goes beyond the text area's right frame line, far beyond when the verse contains as many as forty letters. He does not compress his writing in order to respect the justification of the text. Letters' strokes are well developed. Generally ascenders reach a height of a little more than twice that of the letters' bodies, and accents appear at more or less this same height. The ascenders frequently end with a thickening of line, the downstrokes with a hook, often pointed.

The duct changes somewhat as the pages progress, which is natural. If we compare f. 12r and f. 80r, the writing of the *Iliad's* text becomes larger and more slanted. The body of the letters is 1.5 mm high at f. 12r, while it is between 2 and 2.5 mm high at f. 80r. At the same time, we observe at f. 80r that a greater number of majuscule letters have been reintroduced in the minuscule writing. The scribe is less vigilant than when he began his copy. On the first page of the *Iliad* (f. 12r), his writing tends toward a nearly pure minuscule because he reintroduces very few majuscule letters: occasionally *epsilon*, *kappa*, *nu*, and *pi*. We can note that the two strokes that form the majuscule *kappa* are clearly separate. On folio 80r (and also on f. 1, which was probably written after the Homeric text), we find moreover the majuscules *eta*, *zeta*, *lambda*, and *xi*. (See f. 12r in Chapter 1, Figure 1 and f. 80r in Figure 1, above.)

There are many instances of ligatures. As is usual in book writing practice up to the middle of the tenth century, *rho* is not bound to the letter following it on the first page of the *Iliad*, but exceptions exist in the first part of the book in which the writing is less controlled: on f. 1r we can see a ligature of *rho-omega*, and on f. 1v the ligatures of *rho-iota* and *rho-alpha*, three forms which Paul Canart has noted as common in cursive writing in the ninth century.³⁶ On f. 80r, we also find *rho-omicron*. (See Figure 1 above, with *rho-iota* at the second line and *rho-omicron* at the last line.) Regarding the book minuscule, Enrica Follieri specifies that, to her knowledge, the

³⁶ Canart, P. 1990:310–311.

only more ancient manuscripts in which *rho* appears bound to its following letter are the *Vaticanus gr.* 124, and the *Vatopedi* 949 from 948, both written by Ephrem.³⁷

Now let us observe the main set of scholia, written also in minuscule. The writing hangs from the line as the *Iliadic* text does, without following it strictly. It has the same (relative) slant, but appears more cursive. For example, there is a remarkable *epsilon*, in two parts, that conforms to one in Ephrem's writing described by Lydia Perria:³⁸ the first curve of the stroke, the lower one, is bound to the previous letter, the second, upper one, is separated from the first and bound to the following letter. Usually, this kind of *epsilon* is completely avoided in the book minuscule. (See Figure 13 of f. 292v, on the left side of the ornamented initial.) Moreover, we find many abbreviations (several for *ἔστι*, *mu* with a wavy descending stroke for *-μεν-*, the round circumflex accent for *-ων*, and the other signs above the line for *-ην*, *-ον*, *-ου*, *-ας*, etc.), some superposed letters (*omicron* for *-ος*), some audacious ligatures (*epsilon-phi*, *rho* with a vowel). The scribe also reintroduces a few more majuscule letters than are in the *Iliadic* text: in addition to *epsilon*, *zeta*, *eta*, *kappa*, *lambda*, *xi*, and *pi*, we also find a few high *iotas* and high *taus*. But in general the scribe keeps remarkable control over his script, both in minuscule for the commentary and in semi-uncial for the lemmata. Indeed, the connection between these scholia and the *Iliad's* text is of a "verbal type": the scholium is introduced by a lemma in semi-uncial that repeats the first words of the passage that is commented upon.

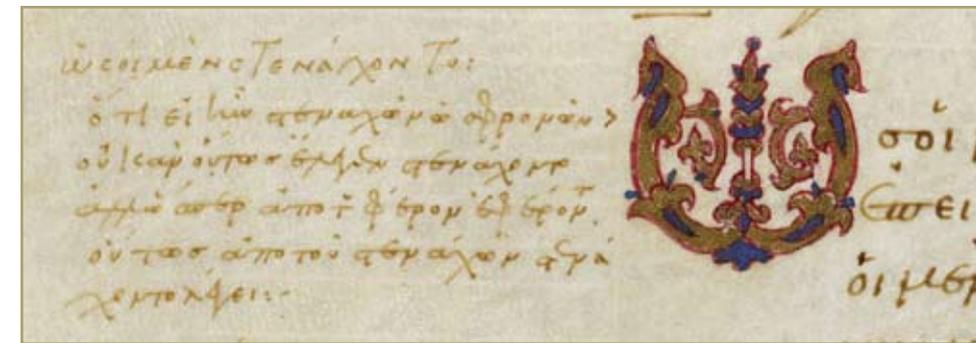


Figure 13. Folio 292v, detail.

Majuscule (i. e. uncial) letters usually come between two virtual lines that uniformly delimit their height, minuscule between four virtual lines (the body of the letters appears between the two central lines, and the ascenders and descenders to the upper and lower lines). In the semi-uncial, we have a combination of both systems: some letters go beyond the virtual lines of the majuscule writing, as in the four-line system of the minuscule. The *beta*, *gamma*, *kappa*, and *tau* often come to the ascender line, and the *zeta*, *xi*, *rho*, *chi*, and *psi* come down to the descender line, as does the *tau* on occasion. The *phi* goes up to the upper and lower lines.³⁹

³⁷ Perria, L. 1977–1979:67.

³⁸ Perria, L. 1977–1979:56.

³⁹ Paul Canart points out that the terminological use of "uncial" is problematic, but that the mixture of many minuscule forms with the small majuscule form may justify here the use of the term "semi-uncial." He also notes that in the majuscule the appendages of *rho*, *psi*, and *phi* go beyond the theoretical bilinear system.

Concerning the lemmata, I highly recommend the contribution to this volume made by Gregory Nagy, who explores the function of their unusual accentuation.

The second set of scholia is written in a semi-uncial script resembling the lemmata of the previous set of scholia. The scribe uses what Hunger has called Alexandrian distinctive majuscule (“Alexandrinische Auszeichnungsmajuskel”),⁴⁰ but here too the *kappa* is drawn in two clearly separate strokes, and is therefore nearer the Constantinopolitan distinctive majuscule. Other characteristics include the *upsilon* forming a ‘V’, and the obliquely stroked *alpha* going a little farther down to the right. There are some abbreviations formed by superposing letters or signs. We also find the abbreviation for γάρ and for ἄνθρωπος.

The presentation of some of these scholia is particularly noteworthy. On folio 12r (located in the external superior corner) there are scholia presented inside a border framed like a lyre. (See Chapter 1, Figures 3-5.) The outlines of this lyre are carmine, surrounding a golden band that includes touches of cobalt blue. Here the scholium ends with three crosses, followed by superposed hyphens of decreasing size. On f. 12v, in the outer margin, we also find scholia in the form of two high, narrow columns that include bases and capitals, always with the same technique⁴¹ (see also f. 24r, adjacent to the beginning of the second book of the poem). On f. 46r, on each side of the text of the *Iliad*, there is a scholium written in the form of a small cross with symbols for the sun at its extremities (round forms that trail off into elongated cones). The cross scholium on the interior side also features a base drawn between sun symbols (reduced to a mere line in the other cross scholium). These types of figures are similar to those found in some manuscripts of Arethas, as Albert Severyns has noted.⁴² We will return later to these features.

At the end of each book, in the same semi-uncial script, the scribe lists the four sources for the majority of the scholia. (See f. 80r in Figure 1, above.) He also adds brief notes, in a smaller semi-uncial script of the same style, for giving another reading between the lines of the *Iliad*.⁴³ Furthermore, each book is briefly summarized in the head margin with a few words written in carmine, in the same semi-uncial script of Alexandrian distinctive majuscule type. The scribe places crosses at the beginning and end of the first summary (f. 12r) and at the beginning of the second summary (f. 24r). Also written in carmine and the same semi-uncial are the titles of Proclus’ *Chrestomathy* fragments and the list of grammarians on f. 9v.

The title of each book of the poem is in another type of majuscule, which Hunger calls Constantinopolitan distinctive majuscule. Here the writing is much more geometrically rigid. It falls perfectly within the frame of the virtual two-line system.

⁴⁰ Hunger, H. 1977.

⁴¹ See above, p. 62.

⁴² See plate I in Severyns, A. 1951.

⁴³ See below.

The letters’ outlines are drawn in carmine red, shaded in gold. The scribe draws a small cross before and after the title **ΙΛΙΑΔΟΣ Δ** (*Iliad* 1), but he does not provide one for the titles of the books that follow.⁴⁴

Concerning Proclus’ text, the initial of the incipit of each summary is also written in carmine. Though appearing in minuscule, they are almost four times larger than the rest of the text and are outdented between the two frame lines that justify the text on the left. Only at the beginning of the first line of Proclus’ summary of the *Aithiopsis* (f. 6r) do we find a majuscule letter, and it is an ornamented initial: again a carmine red outline bordering a golden interior.

For the text of the *Iliad* the initials are much more decorated. Each first verse of a book begins with a foliate letter, illuminated in the same way as the title of the poem: outlined in carmine with golden interior, including also some touches of cobalt blue. At the end of each book we find a thin, foliate frieze, which sometimes frames the citations always made by the scribe for the sources of the commentaries. Because of these foliate initials, Kurt Weitzmann dates the Venetus A to the first half of tenth century.⁴⁵



Figure 14. Folio 106v, detail.

Traces of the “editorial” work

The scribe uses a system of critical signs culled from his exemplars. Though it has been covered elsewhere,⁴⁶ we should still allot time for observing the scribe’s interventions on the text and scholia. Some revisions were made by the scribe, others perhaps by a contemporary corrector. For the scope of this chapter I cannot thoroughly analyze

⁴⁴ Γ in the title of the third book (for *Iliad* “3”) was erased.

⁴⁵ Weitzmann, K. 1935:vol. 2, p. 83.

⁴⁶ For a more comprehensive description, see Graeme Bird’s chapter in this volume.

these instances of hesitation in the “editorial” phase of the scribe’s work. Instead I will simply mention them, with reference to the impressive study of Allen,⁴⁷ as well as giving a few examples that I have examined on the photographs myself.

At the bottom of the text on f. 106v we see that the scribe adds verse Θ 315, which he had omitted from the text. Before verse 314, he assigns the label \tilde{A} , and below the text, at the foot of the page, a large comma followed by a \tilde{B} introduces verse 315. Contrary to Allen, I am unsure of the scribe’s inclusion of this addition in the first writing of his copy because the ink’s hue seems nearer to that of the scholia; the reed used seems less thick than the one that wrote the text of the *Iliad*. Was this line missing in a first exemplar (which contained perhaps the Homeric text with a first set of scholia) and present in a second exemplar that contained the text and another set of scholia (the scholia copied in semi-uncial in the Venetus A), or was the scribe distracted? (See Figure 14.) On f. 183r he copies line Ξ 147 twice—here we could make a case for fallibility in spite of his vigilance, but for the difference at the beginning of the repeated line: $\delta\varsigma$ εἰπῶν and not $\omega\varsigma$ εἰπῶν.⁴⁸ Perhaps this repeated line was already in the exemplar. The same large comma that appeared at Θ 315 appears in front of the repeated line, which he “expuncts” by placing a set of dots above it (I am not sure about the hand that has drawn an almost reverse of the comma at the end of the line in a paler ink). (See Figure 15.)

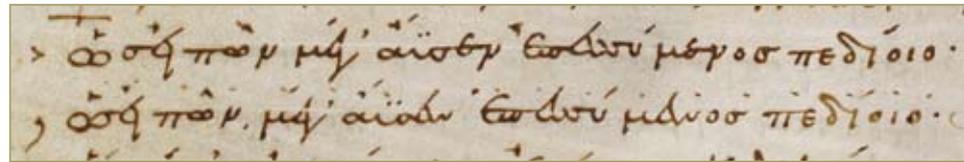


Figure 15. Folio 183r, detail.

The scribe also provides testimony as to the existence of other readings. For instance, at M 176 on f. 158r he adds εἰν above ἀγορεύσαι (i.e. “there is also the reading ἀγορεύσειν instead of ἀγορεύσαι”). Was this reading already above the line in a first exemplar, or did he find it in another? The first hypothesis could be maintained here: the scribe would have made this addition when copying the first set of scholia; he would have chosen to write it with the finer reed reserved for the minuscule scholia in order to maintain the legibility of the Homeric text. But the second hypothesis is more probable, and, furthermore, Allen has also pointed out above numerous lines the additions of other readings, which were made during the copying of the second set of scholia in semi-uncial. So on f. 135r, above δαμεις at K 452, we find $\tau\gamma\eta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. Allen gives other cases of additions that consist of only a few letters, which do not indicate whether they are written in semi-uncial or in minuscule, and therefore whether they are related to a first exemplar or to a second one.

⁴⁷ Allen, T. W. 1899:168–180.

⁴⁸ Paul Canart notes that the *omicron-sigma* at the beginning of the repeated line seems to result from the transformation of an initial *omega*.

The scribe also seems to have occasionally added critical signs that he did not find in a first exemplar—for instance on f. 36r, four dotted diples are written with the same reed as the scholia in semi-uncial, in contrast to other diples written at the same time and with the same reed as the text. Conversely, critical signs are sometimes erased—for instance at f. 27v, which is discussed by Graeme Bird in this volume.

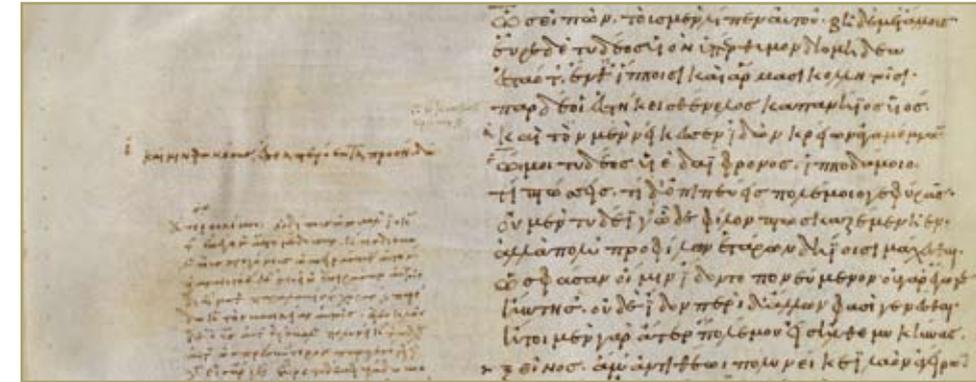


Figure 16. Folio 58v, detail.

The question of exemplars and of their content again arises when we examine the interventions on the text or the scholia that Allen attributes to a contemporary corrector. According to Allen’s description, the corrector’s writing appears in a brighter ink, in a semi-uncial script “more calligraphic” than that of the second set of scholia. For instance, this hand adds a variant preceded by the abbreviation ΓΡ (which stands for καὶ γράφεται “it is also written”) on f. 24r at A 608: ποιησ’ εἰδυηισι πρ*** (I cannot decipher further on the manuscript, but Allen reads ποιήσ’ εἰδυήισι πραπ. . .), when the text says ποιήσεν ἰδυήισι πραπίδεσσι (with an erasure above the second *iota* of ἰδυήισι and the addition of the accent afterwards). On f. 28r, this corrector also revises the scholia, and here his writing can be better observed (it is at the foot of the page, below the scholia in minuscule). (See Figure 5, above.) This is a much more cursive writing, but it clearly belongs to the same school as that of the scribe. On f. 58v, the corrector also adds an omitted verse in the external margin (Δ 369), an \tilde{A} is written in front of the verse 368, a $\tilde{\Gamma}$ in front of the verse 370, and, in the margin, a \tilde{B} in front of the restored verse, following a similar procedure to the scribe’s at f. 106v. (See Figure 16, above.) Allen also finds traces of the corrector in the outer margin of the pages, beyond the scholia, closer to the folio’s edge. So on f. 30r, this hand writes: εἰλεωσιν, when the text says ἰλέωσιν at B 294 (with a dieresis on the first *iota*); and below in the outer margin: εἰ ἔτεδόν, when the text says ἦ ἔτεδόν at B 300 (with εἰ added by the scribe above ἦ to report another reading: εἰ ἔτεδόν). (See Figure 17, below.) Allen raises here what he calls the problem of “double corrections.” What is written at the edge of the

page is intended to call attention to an unresolved query. On f. 64r, the corrector writes at the edge of the page what Allen identifies as an *alpha*, and further inside this page, within the pair of frame lines on the right hand: ἀμπεδα(ιον), when the text reads ἀνπεδίων at E 96. On f. 66v, the corrector writes at the edge of the page: ὑψηρεφές, which he afterwards expuncts, when we read ὑπερεφές in the text at E 213. On f. 273r, he writes at the edge of the page: ανδρας ἄγων δολιχ***—I cannot decipher further on the manuscript, but Allen reads δολιχῆγχεας—when the text says ἄνδρας ἔχων δολιχεγχεάς at Φ 155. According to Allen, the corrector expuncts what he has written at the edge of the page and then deletes the dots above the first two words, maintaining only those above the third, which then serve as the proposition of an erroneous correction. Allen makes the hypothesis of two correctors, but is this necessarily so? We could just as easily imagine a discussion between a corrector and the learned scribe.

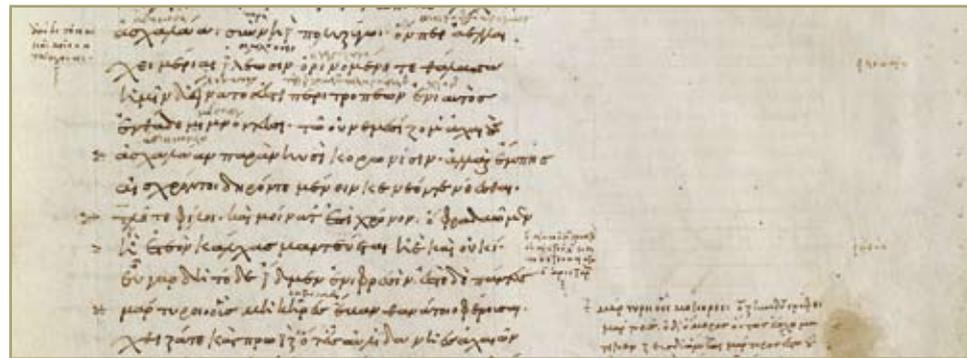


Figure 17. Folio 30r, detail.

Several times, the corrector refers to the ἀντίβολου (f. 248v)—what Allen translates as ‘archetype’, though ‘model’ would probably be more exact—or to the παλαιόν (f. 322r), the ‘old witness/book’ (read scrolls). The reviser also mentions “other books” (ἐν ἄλλοις) in which a verse is absent (see for instance f. 80r at E 901, or 268v at Y 447). At this stage of our study, we cannot describe the exemplars used by the scribe and his corrector, but because they add variants or lines after the copying of the text, sometimes referring to “other ‘books,’” it seems reasonable to assume that several of their exemplars contained the text of the *Iliad*. It also seems reasonable to assume that the second set of scholia in semi-uncial did not come from the same book as the first set of scholia. But was this first set of scholia in the same exemplar as the text of the *Iliad*? This is a difficult question to answer. A patient and thorough study devoted to this problem could provide some decisive evidence.

Before concluding, allow me to draw a few results from this initial inquiry. Jean Irigoin has dated this manuscript to the middle of the tenth century. Because the main set of scholia is written in minuscule as is the text of the *Iliad*, this manuscript has been judged no older than the second half of the tenth century. Indeed, scholia that surrounded texts are said to have been written in semi-uncial before the middle of the tenth century in order to better distinguish the two kinds of text: commented upon and commentary. But we cannot be so sure about this. First, we saw that both the text of the *Iliad* and the main set of scholia received their own complete ruling. This set of scholia was treated as a very important text in its own right, outside of the poetic text. Second, there is another set of scholia that was written in traditional semi-uncial. The abundance of the first set of scholia and the presence of the two distinct sets explain the choice to write the first one in minuscule and the second one, as was typical, in semi-uncial. While this choice may have led to the writing of scholia in minuscule instead of semi-uncial in later manuscripts, this is not necessarily the case. Let me instead suggest that perhaps the writing of the primary set of scholia in minuscule shows not a normative approach, but the deliberate, perhaps even innovative choice to provide two kinds of writings for two kinds of scholia.

Concerning the script of the scribe of the Venetus A, I was struck by a certain similarity to the writing of the main scribe of another manuscript: the *Parisinus graecus* 1853.⁴⁹ This latter manuscript is also from the tenth century, and its format (exceptional among Aristotle’s manuscripts) is near to that of the Venetus A. It was written by three hands (E I, E II, and E III), though the entire project seems to have been supervised by scribe E II. He uses two different scripts: one for copying the text (more calligraphic, and fairly vertical, like that of his colleagues, but sometimes lightly slanting to the right), one for copying the scholia (more cursive and slanted to right). As in the Venetus A, we notably find the same method of writing the *xi*, *zeta*, and the occasional *delta* with an elongated ascender, but also, more rarely, we find a similar majuscule *kappa* written in two separate strokes.⁵⁰ Furthermore, we can recognize some patterns in textual presentation. For instance, at the end of a text, the line composed of a succession of little ‘c’s, which begins, is twice interrupted, and then ends with a wave whose two troughs contain inverted little ‘c’s turned outside. These lines are more often made of the reverse signs ‘D’ in the *Venetus* A, but the “style” remains the same.

The *Parisinus gr.* 1853 is not the only text by Aristotle copied by this team of scribes. Indeed, in the *Parisinus gr.* 1741, a manuscript that contains the *Poetica*, *Rhetorica*, and other texts of Aristotle among the texts of other authors, Dieter Harlfinger and Diether Reinsch distinguished four hands (hands A, B, C, and D).⁵¹ They noticed that hands A and C are very similar, identifying hand C with that of the *Barberinus gr.*

⁴⁹ Hecquet, M. 2000; 2004; and 2005.

⁵⁰ Also the very similar majuscule *beta*, the largely opened *gamma*, sometimes the stiff majuscule *lambda*, the *alpha*, etc.—I cannot here enumerate all of the similarities. The writing of E II may seem more calligraphic in the text, but it is much more cursive where he adds glosses. Often it also more or less hangs from the line without precision.

⁵¹ Harlfinger, D. and Reinsch, D. 1970:32.

87, a manuscript of Aristotle's *Organon*. They also compared hand B of the *Parisinus gr.* 1741 with the first hand of the *Parisinus gr.* 1853 (E I), naming still other manuscripts that present a similar script.⁵² Therefore, it can be said that a few scribes worked in common on a set of manuscripts of Aristotle. Furthermore, Harlfinger and Reinsch were inclined to identify the hand of the Venetus A with hand A of the *Parisinus gr.* 1741,⁵³ and it seems probable that the scribe of the Venetus A belonged to this same team of Aristotelian scribes. This means that these same men were able to "edit" both Homer and Aristotle: both a poetic text with its own rules of metrics and notably difficult philosophical texts. Of course, the scribe of the Venetus A was not alone in charge of the choices made when the textual tradition was divided; we saw the traces of a corrector. Was this corrector the financial backer (probably a very cultured man, perhaps a wealthy scholar)? Whether this was true or not, the backer would not have entrusted such a task to just any scribe. Both the *Parisinus gr.* 1853 and the Venetus A have very important places in their respective textual transmissions, one for Aristotle, the other for the *Iliad*. In both cases, their scribes played a determining role.

These mysterious scribes worked in a no less mysterious scriptorium. As Severyns has noted, some characteristics of the Venetus A are common to manuscripts of Arethas. This is the case for scholia existing in the form of crosses featuring symbols for the sun, as well as for the writing of these scholia in semi-uncial.⁵⁴ I would also add to these the Alexandrian distinctive majuscule used for introducing each poem at the head margin of the Venetus A folios, the crosses at the beginnings and sometimes at the ends of titles, or, at the end of scholia, the use of small leaves or the superposition of decreasing hyphens. But, without furnishing a necessary demonstration of his identity in the writing, Severyns likely draws too strong a conclusion in claiming that the scholia of the Venetus A were written by Arethas. Though I think that the writings present some differences, I would need more time to analyze them to say so definitively. Regardless, Severyns errs in denying that the Iliadic text and the scholia in the Venetus A were written by the same hand. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suggest that the scribe of the Venetus A worked in the same environment, in the same scriptorium.

Bertrand Hemmerdinger has also exhibited interest in the scribe of the Venetus A, although in a quite expeditious way.⁵⁵ In hardly more than a page, he attributes this manuscript of the *Iliad* to the monk Ephrem ("J'ajoute à la liste des manuscrits écrits par Ephrem un illustre *codex* non signé..."). Within seven lines he covers the evolution of Ephrem's writing from 947, the supposed date of his Polybius (the *Vaticanus gr.* 124), to 954, the date of his version of Aristotle's *Organon* (the *Marcianus gr.* 780):

as time passed, his writing would have lost a little of its elegance. The writing of the Venetus A would have occurred at about the same as the *Vaticanus gr.* 124 of 947 and would be prior to 947. It is not very surprising that Hemmerdinger's judgment has been rejected without a long examination,⁵⁶ considering that Lydia Perria spent more than 30 pages analyzing the characteristics of four manuscripts signed by Ephrem,⁵⁷ and that Giancarlo Prato retracted her analysis in order to correct her hypothesis concerning the evolution of Ephrem's writing.⁵⁸ More precisely, Prato corrected the date generally attributed to the *Vaticanus gr.* 124, on which Hemmerdinger had built his dating of the Venetus A. The date given in this manuscript mentions not the year, but the day and the indiction (indications followed a fifteen-year cycle of property taxes, beginning in 312 CE). Since it is more natural to assume that the writing of a young scribe would have progressed from a timid and careful rigidity to a freer, more inventive fluidity due to the acquisition of experience and maturity, Prato proposed to date the Polybius manuscript to 962 rather than 947. Whatever its date may be, Hemmerdinger is not so wrong to compare the Venetus A to the writings of Ephrem. There are many similarities. Above, we noticed the remarkable *epsilon* in two parts, similar to that described by Lydia Perria in Ephrem's writing, or the similar ligatures of *rbo*, which first appeared, according to Perria, in the *Vaticanus gr.* 124 and the *Vatopedi* 949 from 948, both written by Ephrem. We also noticed that the format of the Venetus A is very close to the *Vaticanus gr.* 124. But Hemmerdinger's hypothesis would require a long comparison of both Ephrem's manuscripts and Venetus A's writing. More generally a new examination of the manuscripts of the profane texts that were copied in this kind of cursive writing in the tenth century would be useful both for determining more precisely the date of the Venetus A and for familiarizing ourselves with certain scribes, who played a very important role in the texts' transmission and who seem to have worked in the same team. Here I have tried to lay some foundations for such an analysis.

The Venetus A traverses ten centuries to reach us, but, as I have detailed above—and though it is terrible to acknowledge—some of the writing's traces seem to have since disappeared, though Allen was still able to decipher them in 1899. As we have seen, these traces are imperative to the analysis of the scribe's hesitations when facing two different texts as his exemplars. With this in mind, there is an urgency to this kind of research, and, in order to allow for its pursuit, there is an urgency to save the content of these manuscripts through the process of digitization. The Homer Multitext Library acts as one of the pioneers in this respect. We can only be increasingly encouraged by the growing awareness of the need for such work.

⁵² See plate IIIa in Harlfinger and Reinsch 1970:32.

⁵³ P. Canart observes that the hand A of *Parisinus gr.* 1741 does have the vertical *phi* that strikes him in the Venetus A.

⁵⁴ See the plate I in Severyns 1951.

⁵⁵ Hemmerdinger, B. 1956:433-434.

⁵⁶ See notably Irigoien, J. 1959:183n3 and Mioni, E. 1976:187.

⁵⁷ Perria, L. 1977-1979:39-70.

⁵⁸ Prato, G. 1982.

Critical signs — drawing attention to “special” lines of Homer’s *Iliad* in the manuscript Venetus A

GRAEME BIRD

A first glance at a typical page of the manuscript Venetus A shows a beautifully arranged, coherent structure, with the larger, darker main Homeric text in the central prominent position, and the smaller and lighter *scholia* (plural of *scholion*) or marginal comments, fitted around this main text, above, below, to the sides, and even between lines. A good number of pages also have decorative capital letters for the beginning of a book (e.g. 12r, the first page of the *Iliad*), some have diagrams (e.g. page 100v, which has a schematic representation of heaven, earth, and Hades) and still have others schematic arrangements of scholia (again see 12r¹).

In addition, such a typical page will most likely have a variety of symbols to the left of one or more of the lines of text—symbols of various shapes, sometimes next to single lines, sometimes with groups of lines; and some lines have more than one of these symbols next to them.

These symbols, called “critical signs,” serve a function that is not immediately obvious to the first-time reader of Venetus A. They provide information about the views of early Homeric scholars, in particular Aristarchus (the greatest of the Hellenistic scholars of the Homeric text, chief librarian at Alexandria from 153–145 BCE), on certain aspects of the text, such as whether a given line should be removed or “athetized,” a comment on some interesting or unusual feature of a word in the line, or if a group of lines has, in Aristarchus’ opinion, been written in the wrong place. More specifically, the critical signs link the marginal notes or scholia with the specific lines of text to which they refer. These scholia provide explanations as to why the signs are present, by expounding on the relevant textual, linguistic, or interpretive issue. The term “critical” comes from the Latin word *criticus*, itself derived from the Greek verb κρίνω (*krino*) meaning “I separate, distinguish, judge”; and accordingly these signs are used to distinguish and make judgments about certain lines of text, and single them out for particular attention.

Almost every page of Venetus A possesses both critical signs and scholia. The exceptions are a few pages which were somehow lost or destroyed, and were then



FIVE

¹ In the page (or folio) reference “12r,” the “r” stands for the word “recto,” indicating the right hand page, whereas “v” stands for “verso,” meaning the left hand page, after the page has been turned (from Latin *verto*, “I turn”).

replaced by more recently written pages containing neither scholia nor critical signs (see Allen 1931b [vol. 1]:11).

The German scholar Wilhelm Dindorf (1802–1883) published four volumes of *Iliad* scholia beginning in 1875, with a further two volumes added by E. Maass after Dindorf’s death. These six volumes contain the scholia to Venetus A and B, as well as those to the “Townley Homer” manuscript known as “T.” Although much of Dindorf’s work has been superseded by Erbse’s seven-volume series on the scholia to the *Iliad* (see Erbse 1969–1988), there is some still useful material in the introductory sections of Dindorf’s books (in Latin) dealing with the scholia in general and the critical signs in particular. In the preface to his first volume, Dindorf discusses the use of the critical signs in Venetus A and elsewhere. It is clear that these critical signs were in fact used by Aristarchus, both in his “editions” of Homer, and in his “commentaries,” which were originally separate documents. When Aristarchus wished to draw the reader’s attention to a particular line in his edition of the text, he would put a sign next to the line. Then, in his commentary, he would have a scholion describing an issue relating to that line. Aristarchus first repeated the critical sign, and then repeated the first few words of the text (known as a *lemma*, plural *lemmata*)—both of these placed before the scholion in the commentary, and this method allowed the reader to easily locate the specific scholion corresponding to the line in the text. This helped ensure the reader would correctly match scholion with text, not an easy task when a reader was using two separate scrolls (see Dindorf 1875:xviii–xx).

A group of four scholars dedicated to preserving the work of Aristarchus made excerpts of his commentaries, with each of the four focusing on a specific aspect. We are given the details in a subscript written at the end of nearly every book of the *Iliad* in Venetus A:

ΠΑΡΑΚΕΙΤΑΙ Τὰ Ἀριστονίκου σημεῖα καὶ τὰ Διδύμου Περὶ τῆς
Ἀρισταρχείου διορθώσεως, τινὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς Ἰλιακῆς προσωδίας
Ἡρωδιανοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Νικάνορος Περὶ στιγμῆς

placed in the margins are *the signs of Aristonicus* and the work of Didymus entitled “On the Aristarchean edition,” and some material also from the “Iliadic prosody” of Herodian and from the work of Nicanor entitled “On punctuation.”

(translation from Nagy 2004:6–7)

This combined work is usually known by its German name *Viermännerkommentar* (abbreviated as VMK) or “four-man commentary.”

As mentioned, Aristonicus was the scholar who concentrated on the preservation and explanation of the signs of Aristarchus. Since Aristonicus (roughly contemporaneous with the Roman emperor Augustus) and the other three scholars lived some time after the death of Aristarchus, they were working from his written commentaries rather than having direct access to the man himself.

There is in addition on page 8r of Venetus A, what appears to be a portion of the preface to Aristonicus’ work “Concerning Aristarchus’ Signs of the *Iliad*.”² In it we get mention of some of the signs themselves: the unpointed *diple*, the pointed *diple*, and the *obelos*, before the document breaks off. Interestingly, Aristonicus describes the use of the *obelos* by Aristarchus (who took it from Zenodotus, the first to use it) in this way: *παρετίθει δὲ αὐτὸν τοῖς ἐκβαλλομένοις ἐκ τῆς ποιήσεως στίχοις ὡς τοῖς νεκροῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων* “he (Aristarchus) placed it next to the lines being removed from the poem, as (one does) with the dead bodies of humans.” The point of this unusual analogy seems to be that, just as one does not immediately dispose of a dead body but rather allows time for eulogies and final respects before getting rid of it, so these lines are permitted to remain for a certain amount of time—for reflection?—before presumably being completely excised.³ Aristarchus’ use of critical signs depends to some degree on that of his two predecessors at the library at Alexandria, Zenodotus of Ephesus and Aristophanes of Byzantium. As mentioned, Zenodotus first used the *obelos*, while Aristophanes added some signs, and Aristarchus further modified the system by adding some signs, and removing at least one sign used by Aristophanes (the *κεραύνιον* “*keramion*,” resembling a modern capital “T,” apparently used by Aristophanes singly next to a group of lines considered spurious; see Dindorf 1875:xlix).

By the time Venetus A was created in the early to mid tenth century CE, text and commentary had already, perhaps for the preceding several centuries, been incorporated into a single document, at least partly for convenience and ease of access.⁴ This had allowed the scholia, excerpted chiefly by Aristonicus and his contemporary Didymus, to be written on the same page as the text to which they were referring. In addition, the scroll had been superseded by the codex (see Chapter 3 by Mary Ebbott in this volume), making for much easier reading and matching of specific passages to their relevant lines of text. Although the lemmata were in general preserved along with their scholia in their new location (at least the lemmata of the primary marginal scholia), the critical signs, while kept in their places to the left of the lines of text, were presumably felt to be redundant next to the scholia and were mostly omitted; only about one hundred and fifty of the critical signs survive in

²Printed by Dindorf 1875:1–2; Dindorf emphasizes that this preface is of equal importance with the scholia themselves by numbering its pages with Arabic instead of Roman numerals: the preface is on pages 1 and 2, and then the scholia themselves begin on page 3.

³On the differences between “athetesis” and deletion, see below.

⁴See McNamee 1995, who argues that the transition from separate commentary to scholia began in the 5th century CE.

this location⁵ whereas there are approximately twenty-eight hundred of them next to lines of the Homeric text. Thus well over ninety percent of the critical signs that used to accompany the lemmata had “fallen away,” to use an English translation of the Latin word *excidere*, so often used by Dindorf and other eighteenth and nineteenth (and some twentieth) century scholars writing in Latin.

A further indication that the critical signs used to be with the lemmata is the fact that many if not most scholia begin with a Greek word such as ὅτι ‘*hoti*’ (“because”), the sense being (for example): “(the *obelos* is placed here) *because...*” with the scholion following (Dindorf 1875:xviii–xx). Thus the original commentary would have had the critical sign, followed by the lemma, followed by the scholion itself. Conversely, there are several places where a critical sign survives, but the scholion appears to have dropped out. In many of such cases, knowing the significance of the sign can help to “recreate” the gist of the missing scholion (e.g. *Iliad* I 5, discussed in Dindorf 1875:xviii).

Below is a list of the critical signs found next to lines of Homeric text in Venetus A, along with their frequencies and a description of their primary functions. I first give the Greek term(s), then a transliteration and an English translation, followed by the frequency of each sign in Venetus A.⁶ Accompanying these is a diagram of the sign, followed by one or more examples of the sign as it actually appears in the manuscript. We recall that these signs were used by Aristarchus to signal that he had an opinion or comment on the line in question.

1. διπλή ἀπερίστικτος, *diple aperistiktos*, plain (i.e. unpointed) *diple* (1875)



Examples:



The *diple* draws attention to some significant use of language in the line, such as a word only used here in all of the *Iliad* (and perhaps the *Odyssey*), an interesting use of diction, or a word of disputed meaning.

2. ὀβελός, *obelos*, obelus (440)



Example:



The *obelos* indicates that Aristarchus “athetized” the line. In other words, he judged it as being “not worthy of Homer.” This could be for various reasons, the most frequent ones being that the line was ἀπρεπές “inappropriate,” ἀνάρμοστον “not suited,” or περισσόν “redundant.”

⁵ Listed in Dindorf 1875:xx–xxiii.

⁶ Thanks to Neel Smith for organizing the numerical data, which are taken from Allen 1931a, itself based on Venetus A.

3. διπλή περιεστιγμένη, *diple periestigmene*, dotted *diple* (292)



Examples:



The dotted (or pointed) *diple* indicates that Zenodotus’ text of the line in question differed from that of Aristarchus. In this case the scholion will generally provide a justification for preferring Aristarchus’ text over that of Zenodotus.

4. ἀστερίσκος (καθ’ ἑαυτόν), *asteriskos (kath’ heauton)*, asterisk (alone) (73)



Example:



The asterisk indicates that the same line occurs elsewhere (maybe with minute variations), but that Aristarchus considers it also belongs in this location.

5. ἀντίσιγμα, *antisigma*, plain *antisigma* (i.e. reverse *sigma*) (5)



Example:



The *antisigma* is used to mark lines that Aristarchus feels are in the wrong place and should be moved to a different location in the text.

6. ἀντίσιγμα περιεστιγμένον, *antisigma periestigmenon*, pointed *antisigma* (2)



Example:



The pointed *antisigma* is used to indicate that a line or group of lines is repeating something already said, and therefore is judged by Aristarchus to be redundant.

7. σίγμα περιεστιγμένον, *sigma periestigmenon*, pointed *sigma* (3)

Example:



The purpose of the pointed *sigma* (plural *sigmata*) is not entirely clear; we will be looking at the one passage in which it occurs. Suffice it to say that there was felt to be a problem with the lines in question. Some scholars think the point was written first, correctly, and then the *sigma* mistakenly written around it.

8. στιγμή, *stigma*, point (3)

Example:



The point, in the one passage in which it occurs, appears to indicate that Aristarchus felt “uneasy” about the lines in question, but was not prepared to athetize them with the *obelos*. There is another passage in the *Iliad* (X 397–399) in which the scholia seem to indicate that there were originally three points next to the lines, because Aristarchus had qualms about them but was not ready to athetize them. Subsequently he came back and wrote the *obelos* next to each one, signifying that he had at last decided that they did not belong (see Montanari 1998:16–18).

In addition, these critical signs occur in combination, indicating that each function applies to the line in question.

For example, the asterisk plus *obelos*:  (occurring 52 times in this combination, and 14 times with the signs in the opposite order, apparently with the same meaning) next to a line indicates both that the line occurs elsewhere, and that Aristarchus believes it does not belong in this location.

There is even one case of three signs in combination, *diple* plus asterisk plus *obelos*:



We note that the line occurs elsewhere (where it “belongs”) but should be athetized here, according to Aristarchus; and also that he had a comment relating to the language of the line. This brings up the point that often a line could both be athetized and also be commented on for some linguistic issue; we see also that athe-

tizing was not the same as the outright deletion of a line (on this important distinction see e.g. Nagy 2004:34–36, 63–64).

There a few other combinations of critical signs, none of them frequent, but all easily recognizable as to their functions in their respective lines.

In summary, when we see a critical sign next to a line of text in Venetus A, we know that a) Aristarchus had commented on something about the line, b) Aristonicus had copied, or more accurately, “excerpted” Aristarchus’ comment(s) in his own work, and c) these excerpts and the critical signs keying them to the text had eventually made their way (over the centuries, after many copyings) onto our page of Venetus A, where we may read them today. Thus the presence of a critical sign tells the reader to look for a comment somewhere on that page of Venetus A. As we will see, the comment could be in one of several locations: above, below, or to the side of the main text (the side furthest from the binding).

Yet, as one might expect, throughout the process mistakes occurred: sometimes the wrong critical sign appears to have been written (most often a plain *diple* for a pointed *diple*), or else the right sign was placed next to the wrong line; sometimes (as noted above) the scholion has dropped out; sometimes perhaps the sign itself has been lost. But in general each page presents a unified whole—a portion of text with explanatory notes, and devices (critical signs and lemmata) which link the two together.

Critical signs are not unique to Venetus A, although they are more fully used in it than in any other surviving Greek manuscript. And not every Greek manuscript of the *Iliad* uses this system: the manuscript Venetus B uses a numeric system of signs, evidently dispensing with Aristonicus’ system based on that of Aristarchus. Several Homeric papyri preserve critical signs as well: the earliest, known as P37 (dating to the late 2nd century BCE), which contains portions of *Iliad* II, has examples of the *diple* and *obelos*; also P51 (1st century BCE, portions of *Iliad* XX), has the *diple*, *obelos*, point, and what appears to be a combination of *diple* and *obelos*.⁷ Papyri of other Greek authors, both poetry and prose, survive with critical signs, including the works of Archilochus, Pindar, Sophocles, Hippocrates, and Plato. The two most frequent critical signs in Greek literary papyri are the Greek letter “chi” and the *diple*, whose functions seem to overlap.⁸ Origen in his Hexapla edition of the Hebrew text and Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible also used critical signs, particularly the *obelos* and asterisk.⁹

⁷P51 is also an example of the so-called “wild” papyri, with several “additional lines”; see S. West, 1967:132–133; and for a list of Homeric papyri, see M. L. West 2001:88–129.

⁸See Turner 1968:113–117 as well as Fowler 1979:25–28, who gives a list of critical signs occurring in the papyri of Hesiod and the lyric poets.

⁹See Allen 1924:315–320, referenced in Nagy 2004:21.

One might also note for comparison early manuscripts (and some printed copies) of the Hebrew Bible itself, where signs in the text lead the reader to the margin or bottom of the page where a textual variant was often recorded. Like Venetus A, such manuscripts leave the text intact while relegating alterations to the margins; in a similar respect, even reverence for the text is apparent.¹⁰

We'll look at a selection of four pages from Venetus A, which together contain examples of all the signs listed above. Each page has a different collection of critical signs, some appearing alone and some in combination. I choose these particular pages to show both the variety of signs used, and also the different ways in which they are employed to highlight some significant view of Aristarchus about the respective lines of Homeric text.

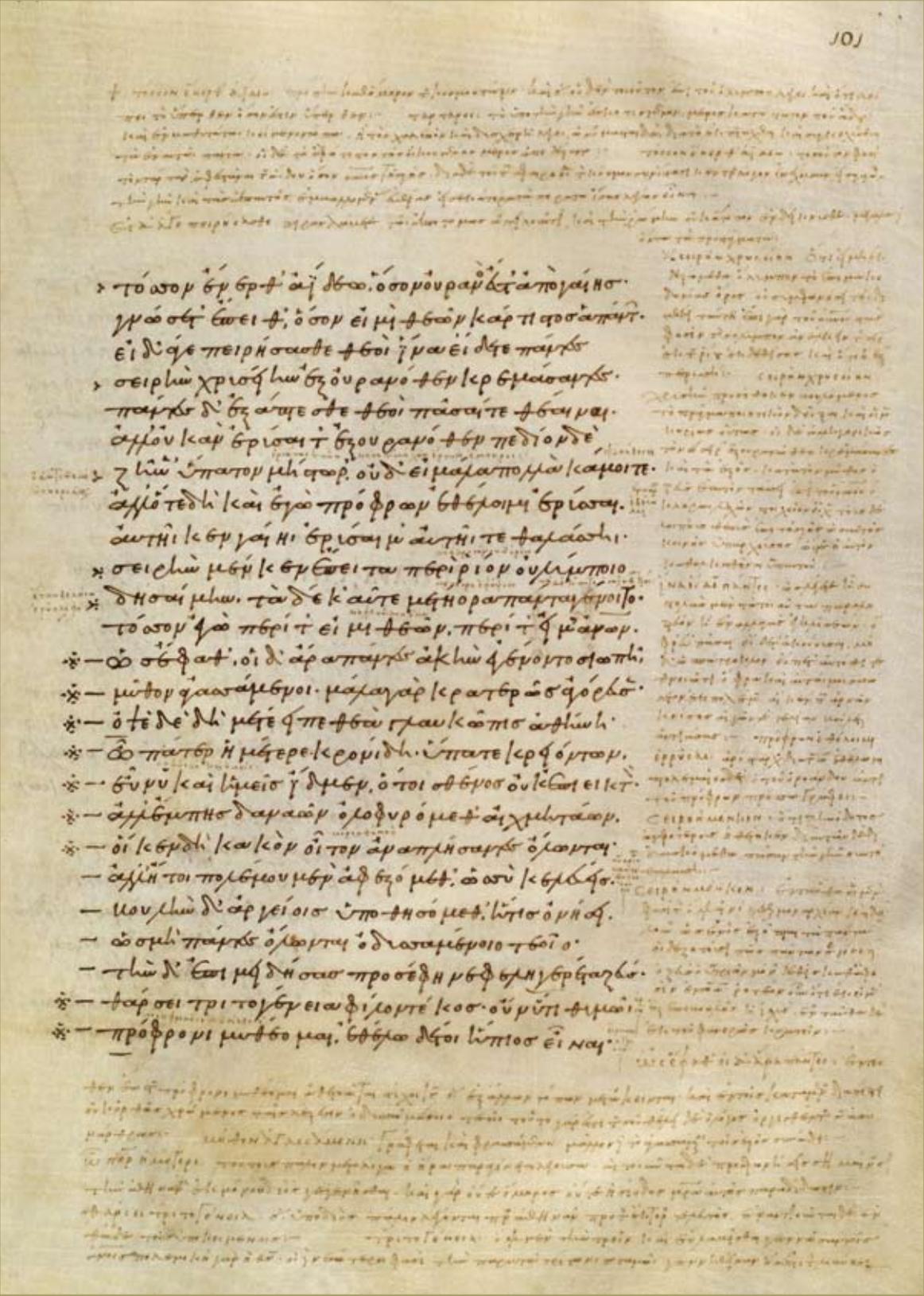
I.

Let's begin by looking at folio 101r (opposite). An initial look at this page shows scholia generally filling the top, bottom, and right hand margins; in addition most lines have at least one critical sign next to them. Folio 101r contains lines 16–40 of *Iliad* VIII (in general there are 25 lines to the page).

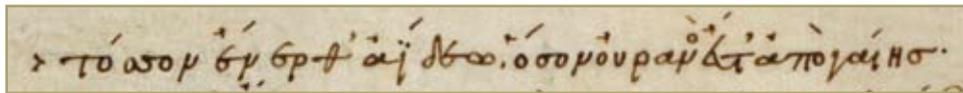
First, some context. In the previous book of the *Iliad*, the Trojan warrior Hector has engaged in a duel with the Greek Ajax, and after agreeing to cease fighting, a truce has been agreed on so that each side can gather and bury their dead. Book VIII begins with Zeus summoning the other gods and goddesses, and warning them not to interfere in the coming battle between the Greeks and Trojans by giving assistance to either side. He threatens violence upon any one of them who dares to try; then he goes further and taunts them into using a golden cable for a tug-of-war contest with him, a contest, he boasts, he would easily win. Here is a fairly literal translation of lines 16 to 27 (this and all subsequent translations of the *Iliad* are partially based on that of Wyatt 1999), with a lead-in from the previous few lines. Zeus is evidently seeking to drive home the point that he is far superior to all other divinities, even if they collectively fight against him. I include representations of each of the signs as they occur on the original page (but excluding the “*paragraphoi*,” for which see below).

- (10–15 “Whoever disobeys me ... I will hurl down to Tartarus ...)
- 16 > “As far below Hades as heaven is from the earth;
- 17 Then you will know how much I am the strongest of all gods.

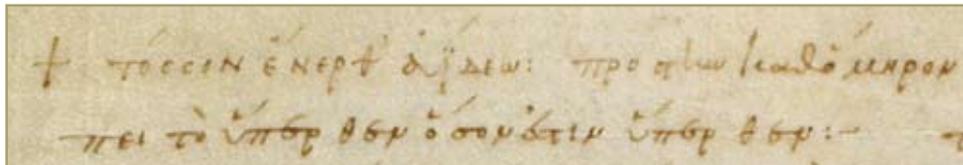
¹⁰ Lieberman 1962:38–43 discusses similarities between the use—and the appearance—of the Hebrew “inverted Nun” and the Greek *antisigma* to indicate dislocated lines. Thanks to Jon Levenson of Harvard Divinity School for this reference.



- 18 But come now, try, gods, so that you all may know.
 19 > Hang a golden cord from heaven
 20 And all you gods and goddesses take hold of it;
 21 But you would not drag from heaven to earth
 22 > Zeus the highest counselor, not even if you toiled greatly.
 23 But whenever I myself earnestly wished to pull it,
 24 I could drag it together with the land itself and the sea itself;
 25 > And then I would tie the cord around a peak of Olympus,
 26 > And all these things would become suspended in mid-air.
 27 So far am I above gods and above men.”



Next to the first line on the page, line 16, we see the *diple* (see above). As mentioned earlier, the *diple* is used to indicate something significant about the line, such as a word or expression used only at that particular point in all of the *Iliad* (known in Greek as a ἄπαξ λεγόμενον “*hapax legomenon*”), an unusual use of words, a figure of speech, an example of contradictory language, or some other interesting issue. So we expect some comment of this sort on line 16.



At the very top of the page of Venetus A (above) is a *lemma*, or a repetition of the first few words of the line in question: ΤΟCCON ἔΝΕΡΘ' ΔΙΔΕΩ “as far below Hades.” Notice also that the lemma is written in a different script from the rest of the scholia, called “semi-uncial” (see the chapter by Gregory Nagy in this volume). This draws the reader from the line itself to the comment on the line. Note too that there is a “+” sign at the start of the scholion, and a “:-” at the end; these are fairly frequent in Venetus A, making it easier to separate different scholia from one another. In this case the scholion reads as follows: “concerning the arrange-

ment of the world according to Homer; and because he says nothing similar about Olympus; and because he leaves out the word ‘above’—i.e. (he should say) as far as heaven is *above* the earth.” Thus there are three reasons to draw attention to the line, two of them important for interpretation, the third a matter of one word.

We conclude that the *scholiast* (the writer of the scholion, here Aristonicus, based on the commentary of Aristarchus) felt the need to explain the structure of heaven, earth, and the underworld and relate it to the Homeric text. The previous page of Venetus A actually contains a diagram purporting to illustrate this structure (as Kirk 1990:297–298 points out, this diagram actually does not correspond exactly to the text). The main problem seems to be that Mount Olympus is not mentioned here (as it is further down in line 25), leaving some uncertainty about where precisely Zeus is located. The third reason for the scholion seems less significant—that Homer says “from” instead of “above.”

As sometimes happens, there is a lemma and scholion for line 18, but no critical sign next to the line itself. In cases like this, the reader could miss the scholion altogether if not paying close attention.

Next to line 19 is another *diple*. This time the scholion is to the right of the line of text, and again is introduced by a lemma. The scholion reads: “Because if we will not accept Olympus as the mountain in Macedonia, it will not agree with this arrangement. For while standing in heaven he (i.e. Zeus) says he draws Olympus up, the golden cord having been bound from the peak. And because the (Greek word) ἔξ ‘ex’ (meaning “out of”) is redundant.” This last refers to the Greek phrase which says ἔξ οὐρανόθεν “out of from heaven.” However, as above, the main issue seems to be that it is unclear whether Olympus is on earth or in heaven.

Next, we see a *diple* next to line 22. This time the scholion is very brief, and is to the left of the line. It reads: “Because (it says ‘him’) instead of ‘me,’ as if concerning someone else.” In other words, Zeus is talking about himself in the third person instead of the first; a more natural way to say this would be “... you could not drag me...”

Next to lines 25 and 26 we see examples of the *diple periestigmene*. This sign indicates that Zenodotus (one of the earliest commentators on the Homeric text) had expressed an opinion about these lines which differed from that of Aristarchus. In this case the scholion reads: “Because Zenodotus *athetized* both lines,” i.e. did not think they should be included in the “genuine” text of Homer. “But,” the scholion goes on to say (disagreeing with Zenodotus), “through them (these two lines)

we learn that he (Zeus) draws up all the earth with the sea.” This last part of the scholion has a textual uncertainty. But it is clear that Zenodotus did not think these two lines should be part of the text whereas the scholiast, reflecting the view of Aristarchus, defended the lines because they give us important information about precisely what Zeus draws up with the golden cord.

Here is a translation of the rest of the page:

- 28 ✖ — Thus he spoke, and they all were hushed in silence
 29 ✖ — amazed at his word; for he had spoken very strongly.
 30 ✖ — But at last indeed spoke the goddess bright-eyed Athena:
 31 ✖ — “O our father, son of Kronus, highest of rulers,
 32 ✖ — Indeed we well know that your might is irresistible;
 33 ✖ — But nevertheless we pity the Danaan spearmen,
 34 ✖ — Who will perish, fulfilling an evil fate.
 35 — However we shall stay away from the battle, if you command,
 36 — But we shall suggest counsel to the Argives, which will help them,
 37 — So that they may not all perish because of your wrath.”
 38 — And smiling, cloud-gathering Zeus said to her:
 39 ✖ — “Have courage, Tritogeneia, my dear child; not at all
 40 ✖ Earnestly do I speak my will, but I wish to be kind to you.”

Every one of these lines has one or more critical signs next to it. First they all have the *obelos*, meaning that Aristarchus thought them all worthy to be athetized, or removed from the text. In addition to this, nine of the lines (the first seven and the last two) have an asterisk to the left of the *obelos*. We recall that the asterisk means that the line occurs elsewhere; hence the combination of the two signs indicates that those nine lines are felt by Aristarchus to belong in their other location, but not here. The four with the *obelos* alone should just be eliminated, according to Aristarchus—although he still includes them in his text (see above, page 96).

The *obelos* (the term comes from the Greek word for ‘a spit’ for cooking; it is frequent with this meaning in Homer, and still has this signification in modern Greek) was

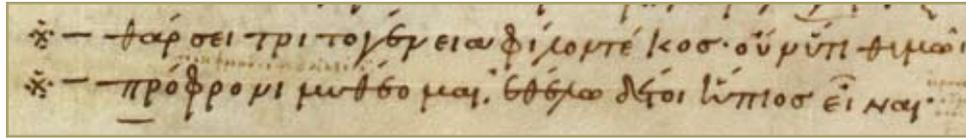
the most “drastic” of the critical signs, and it is worth exploring why ‘obelized’ lines were thought unworthy of Homer. One reason given is that they had been “interpolated” from another part of the epic poem, where they really belonged; another is that because of some perceived “inappropriateness” they were thought to be un-Homeric. Those lines with the asterisk as well as the *obelos* occur somewhere else in Homer (*Iliad* or *Odyssey*), and are considered to properly belong there instead of here (they may have minor textual differences in their other locations).

In this passage too there must be reasons for such drastic action on the part of Aristarchus. And indeed there is a scholion referring to these thirteen lines, right underneath the last line of text, starting at the right hand end: “Thus he (Aristarchus) said, and all (the rest), from here up to line 40, thirteen (ΙΓ in Greek) lines are athetized, because they have been moved from other locations ...”

I note here that Aristarchus was evidently unaware of the fact that the *Iliad* was originally “composed,” performed, and transmitted orally, and that so called “repeated lines” are a typical feature of such poetry (as well as “formulas” in general; on which see Lord 1960 and Parry 1971). He (naturally) assumed that he was dealing with a poem that had always existed in written form, whose poet would have been unlikely to repeat lines (see Nagy 2004 Chapter 5).

As far as the scholiast is concerned, the main point here is that the lines in question do not seem to belong. Indeed, some of them do occur elsewhere, and are deemed more appropriate there: a scholion next to lines 32–34 points out that “Hera says these words again a little later (i.e. in lines 463–465 of this book).” There is also a scholion on lines 39 and 40: “For these words are said by Zeus to Athena before Hector’s death (i.e. book XXII, lines 183–184); and here they are in opposition to the context.” In other words, Zeus has just scolded and threatened all the gods and goddesses, and now he appears to be contradicting himself, completely changing his tone and his intention as well. It is fairly clear that if the lines remain, Zeus “undermines his whole position” (Kirk 1990:300).

Below see lines 39 and 40, with their combination of asterisk and *obelos*. Note also under line 40 the *obelos*-like sign or “*paragraphos*” that indicates the beginning or end of someone’s speech, in this case the end of Zeus’ words to Athena.



Interestingly, at the very end of line 40, on the right, is a short scholion: “Because he (Zeus) is either deceiving her or being sarcastic with her (i.e. Athena).” This is a less drastic way (than athetesis) of trying to avoid the apparent sudden change of heart of Zeus toward Athena.

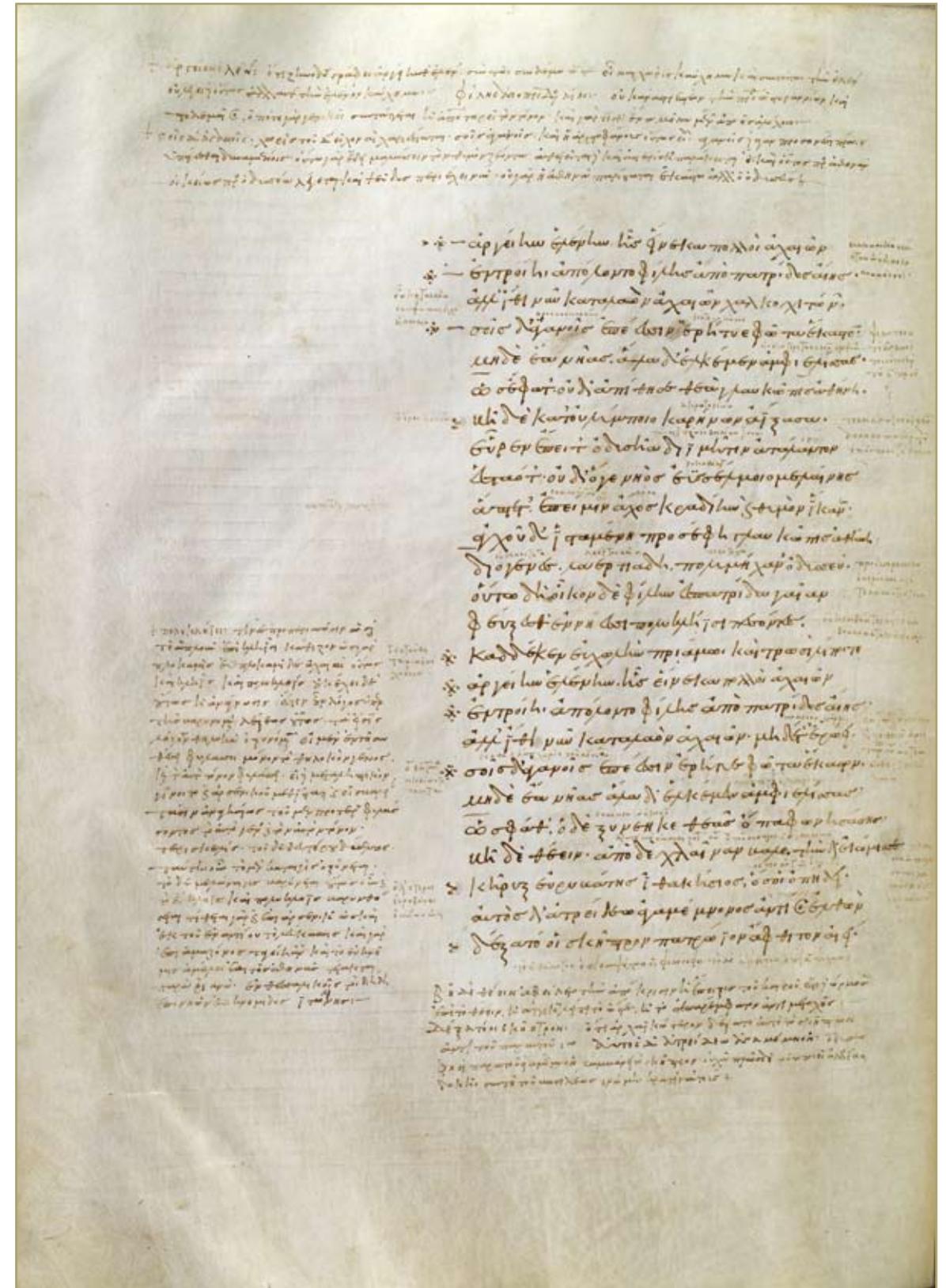
So our first page contains a large number of lines which Aristarchus wanted “athetized,” along with comments justifying his decisions, and additionally further notes on various lines. The critical signs allow the reader to immediately get an overview of these important features, which he or she can subsequently follow up on by means of a more detailed examination of the scholia.

II.

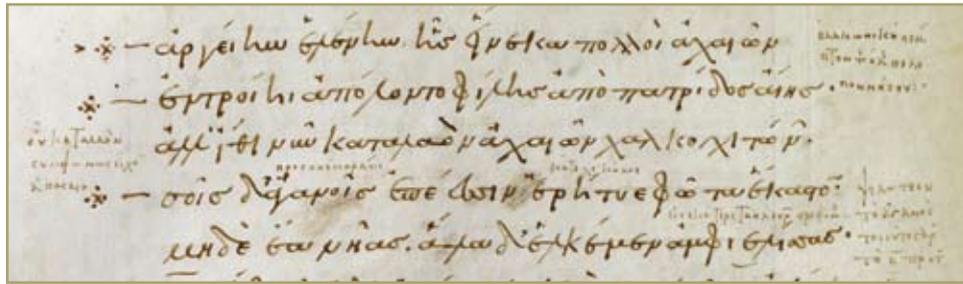
Next we look at folio 27v (opposite), which contains *Iliad* II 161–186 (line 168 is not in Venetus A). Note that there are fewer scholia, with some empty space to the left of the text; also a different set of critical signs than on 101r.

The book opens with Agamemnon receiving a destructive and false dream from Zeus, in which he is told he can defeat Troy this very day if he fights now. He foolishly decides to test his men by telling them that, on the contrary, they are all going back to Greece. They respond very enthusiastically to this, and immediately start preparing the ships for departure. The goddess Hera, who hates Troy and the Trojans, is naturally very distressed, and complains to Athena; page 27v begins (with lead-in):

- (157–160): “... child of Zeus...will the Argives flee thus...? And leave behind a cause for boasting for Priam and the Trojans
- 161 > ✱ — (namely) Argive Helen, on behalf of whom many Achaeans
- 162 ✱ — have perished at Troy, far from their dear native land?
- 163 But go now, among the army of the Achaeans of the bronze tunics;
- 164 ✱ — with gentle words hold back every man,



Below are lines 161–165. Note the *paragraphos* just below line 165 to indicate the end of Hera's speech to Athena.



We notice that lines 161, 162, and 164 all have both the asterisk and the *obelos* next to them, indicating that the lines occur somewhere else and are judged to belong there rather than here. In this case, their “proper” place is further down on this same page, namely lines 177, 178, and 180. Line 160, from the previous page (27r), is also supposed to belong in line 176. Notice too that line 163 is felt to belong in *both* places, i.e. 163 and 179, hence no critical sign (although we might have expected a plain asterisk).

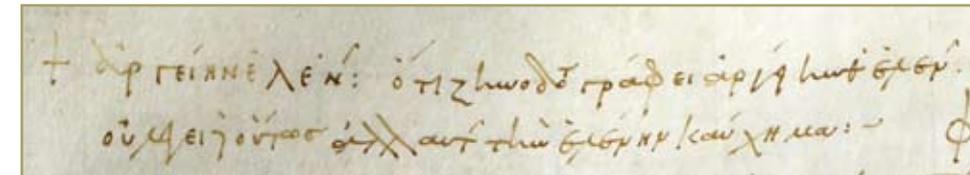
The previous page (27r) has a scholion saying “(these three lines) are athetized, and asterisks placed (next to them), because they are more appropriately arranged together in the speech of Athena (i.e. lines 176–178); but now they are spoken more inappropriately.” The point seems to be, according to Aristarchus, that in particular line 164 with its “gentle words” doesn’t suit Athena, but rather Odysseus in line 178, when he is speaking to the high-class men (see also lines 188–189); when he talks to the commoners in lines 198ff., he shouts and cajoles, and even uses his staff. We note again that Aristarchus is not only seeking a “consistent” text, but that the concept of repeated lines seems distasteful to him: he feels that a line really has only one place where it belongs, with any repetitions of that line most likely being the result of careless or even willful scribal activity—“interpolation”—as it is frequently labeled by both ancient and modern commentators.¹¹

Note further that the first line of the page has three signs together, the only time in all of Venetus A that more than two signs occur next to one line. As well as the asterisk and *obelos* already discussed, there is a plain *diple*. It turns out that the related scholion, which is at the very top of the page, concerns a reading of Zenodotus (therefore the *diple* should presumably have been pointed). The reading of Zenodotus in question involves inserting one letter before “Helen”—it now

¹¹ The asterisk alone occurs 73 times in Venetus A, the combination of asterisk plus *obelos* (in either order) occurs 66 times, suggesting that Aristarchus was at best ambivalent about repeated lines in his text.

would read “*and* Argive Helen.” The reason given is that “with the connective word Helen is separate from the cause for boasting and in addition to it”; however (the scholiast says, disagreeing with Zenodotus’ reading): “he (i.e. Aristarchus) does not read it this way, but (he makes) Helen herself the cause of boasting.” The line is singled out for a seemingly minor issue dealing with the text but it has significant ramifications for its interpretation, and in addition it is deemed by Aristarchus as not properly belonging here anyway. We notice again that even though a line may be athetized, it is still written rather than being actually excised.

Below is the scholion from the top of the page (notice the signs at the beginning and end of the scholion, as we saw above): first comes the lemma (in “semi-uncial” script) ἈΡΓΕΙΗΝ ἙΛΕΝΗΝ “Argive Helen,” then the scholion ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος γράφει ἄργειήν θ’ Ἑλένην “because Zenodotus reads *and* Argive Helen.” The word ‘and’ in Greek here is represented by the single letter θ ‘*theta*’ (fifth letter from the right in the top line; the word ‘Helen’ is abbreviated here) with its following ε ‘*epsilon*’ elided (and the theta resulting from an original ‘*tau*’).



Here is a translation of the remaining lines of page 27v:

- 166 Thus she spoke, nor did the goddess bright-eyed Athena
 disobey,
- 167 > And she went down rushing from the peaks of Olympus.
- [168 *And quickly she reached the swift ships of the Achaeans.*] Not in
 Venetus A
- 169 Then she found Odysseus, equal to Zeus in cunning,
- 170 Standing; and he was not grasping his black well-benched
- 171 Ship, since grief had come upon his heart and mind.
- 172 And standing near bright-eyed Athena spoke to him:
- 173 “God-born son of Laertes, Odysseus of many devices,
- 174 Will you thus flee to your dear home and fatherland,

- 175 Throwing yourselves into your many-benched ships?
- 176 ✘ And would you leave a source of boasting for Priam and the Trojans
- 177 ✘ Argive Helen, for whose sake many Achaeans have perished
- 178 ✘ In Troy, far from their dear native land?
- 179 But go now among the Achaean troops, and do not hold back any more;
- 180 ✘ Urge each man on with your gentle words,
- 181 And do not let them drag their curved ships to the sea.”
- 182 Thus she spoke, and he recognized the voice of the goddess speaking,
- 183 And he went running, and threw off his cloak; and the Ithacan herald
- 184 > Eurybates, who attended him, picked it up.
- 185 And he coming right up to Agamemnon son of Atreus,
- 186 > Took from him his father’s staff, always imperishable.

As noted above, this page is not as packed with scholia as some pages are, and for that reason there is plenty of room to arrange them. Allen (193 1a [vol. 2]:38–39) thinks the *diple* next to lines 167, 184, and 186 has been “corrected” in each case—they do each seem to have a smudge just to the right of the sign, which may possibly indicate 2 points that have been erased. This would then indicate a reference to a reading of Zenodotus.

Line 167 has a *diple* and two different scholia: i) on the left, a small scholion: “Because the mountain is Olympus”; ii) “A period after the (last word) ἀΐξασα ‘aixasa’; for the next (line) is not connected to the previous one.” This would not be the case if line 168 were on the page; but since it is missing, line 169 is the next line, and it has no connecting word. This second scholion is to the far right, known as “inter-marginal” (or *A^{im}*).

Between 172 and 173 is another example of a *paragraphos*, as can be deduced from its placement between two lines as opposed to being next to a single line: it is here

being used to mark the beginning of Athena’s speech to Odysseus. A similar sign is visible between lines 181 and 182, there indicating the end of Athena’s speech.

There are a few remaining signs with scholia on the page:

To the left of the asterisk in line 176 is the scholion “because here they (i.e. lines 176–178) belong.” Similarly to the left of line 180 and its asterisk we read “Because here it is placed appropriately.”

184: *diple*; scholion to the left of the sign: “Because (there is) also another Eurybates of the same name (see *Iliad* I 320).”

186: *diple*; scholion is at the bottom of the page, third line down: “Because he received the staff rather archaically, ‘to him’ rather than ‘from him.’”

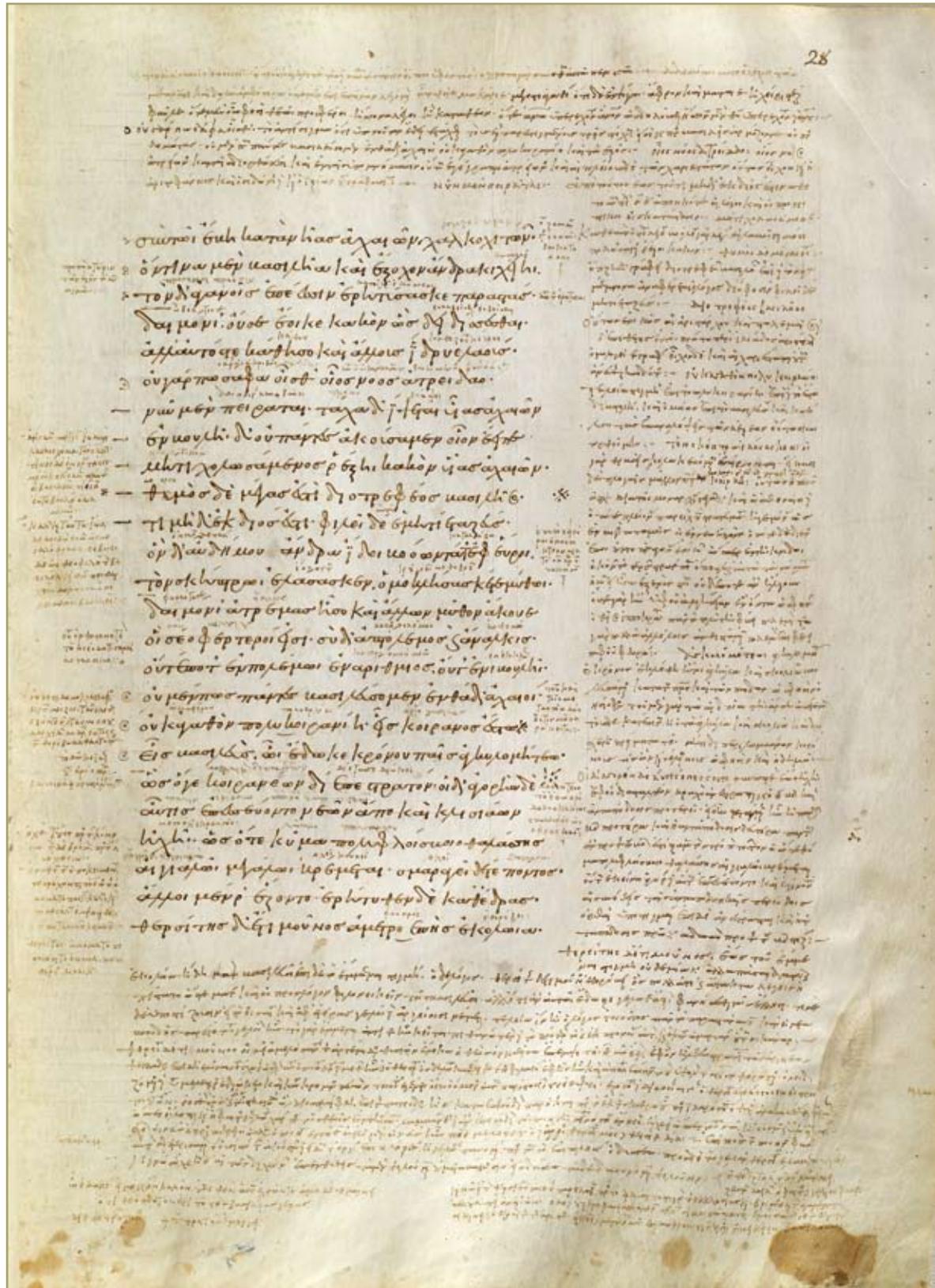
III.

We proceed to the immediately following page, 28r (next page), containing *Iliad* II 187–212 (line 206 does not appear). This page is fairly crowded with scholia, and there are some critical signs we haven’t seen as yet.

Following on from 27v; Athena has just urged Odysseus to round up the Achaeans and stop them from preparing to leave Troy for home.

Here are the 25 lines (note that line 206 is not in Venetus A; note too on the original page itself the *paragraphoi*, not reproduced below, after lines 189, 199, and 205, to indicate the beginning and end of a speech):

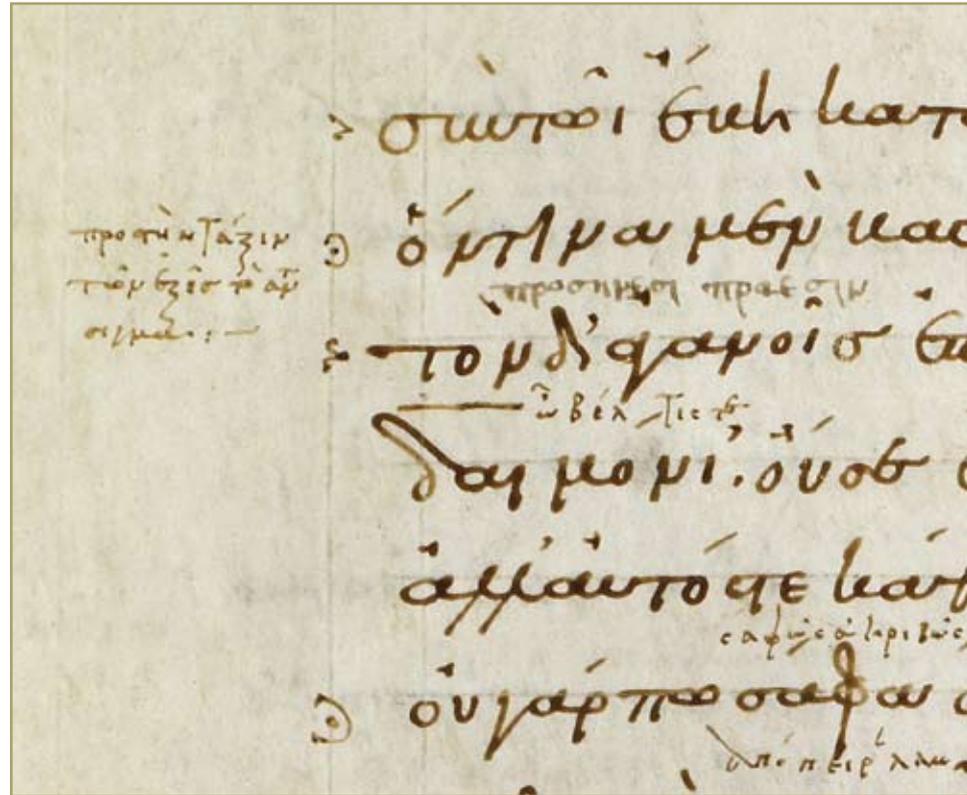
- 187 > With it he went among the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans.
- 188 ☉ Whichever king or noble man he encountered,
- 189 > Standing next to him, he restrained him with kind words:
- 190 “My good man, it is not fitting for you to be afraid thus like a coward,
- 191 But sit yourself down and make the other people sit.
- 192 ☉ For you do not yet know clearly what is the mind of the son of Atreus.
- 193 — Now he is testing, but soon he will strike the sons of the Achaeans.



- 194 — Did we not all hear what he said in the council?
- 195 — Lest in his anger he do harm to the sons of the Achaeans.
- 196 ☞ — Great is the heart of a god-born king,
- 197 — His honor is from Zeus, and wise-counseling Zeus loves him.”
- 198 But whichever commoner he saw and found shouting,
- 199 Him he would strike with his staff and rebuke saying:
- 200 “Foolish man, sit there quietly and hear the word of others
- 201 Who are better than you; you are unwarlike and cowardly,
- 202 Nor are you to be counted in war or in counsel.
- 203 ☉ We Achaeans will not all be kings here;
- 204 ☉ The rule of many is not a good thing; let there be one ruler,
- 205 ☉ One king, to whom the son of Kronos of the crooked counsel has given
- [206 *The staff and the laws, so that he may take counsel for them.*] Not in Venetus A
- 207 Thus he went through the host acting as leader, and they rushed
- 208 Back to the place of assembly from their ships and tents
- 209 Noisily, as when a wave of the loud sounding sea
- 210 Crashes on the long shore, and the ocean roars.
- 211 The others sat down, and settled in their seats;
- 212 But Thersites, out of control, alone kept on gabbling...

Next to line 187 we see a *diple*, indicating some sort of literary or grammatical comment. In this case the scholion, which is in between the text and the right hand marginal scholia (and is thus smaller than the other scholia; named “inter-marginal”

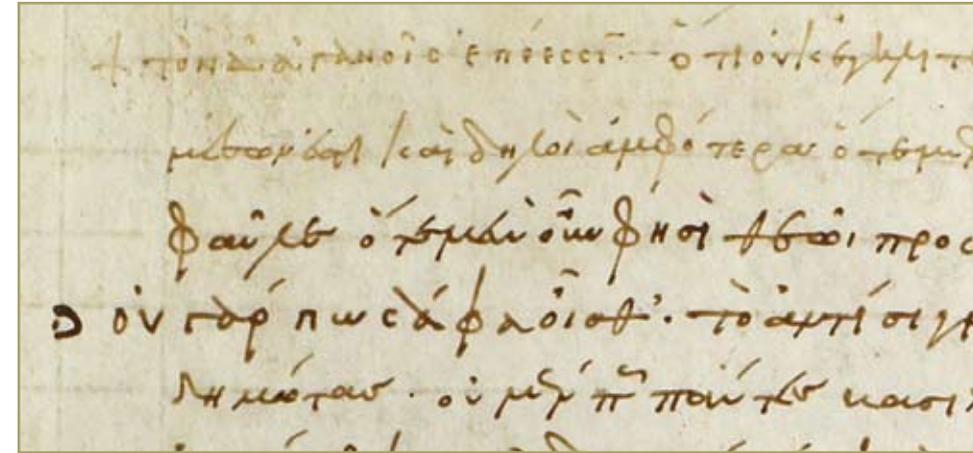
scholia), says “because Zenodotus writes βᾶς ‘bas’”; i.e. a participle instead of a finite verb. We might have expected a pointed *diple* here, since it is a comment referring to a reading of Zenodotus.



Next to lines 188 and 192 (see above) we see the only two occurrences of the pointed *antisigma*; the scholion for line 188, to the left of the sign, and smaller in size, states: πρὸς τὴν τάξιν τῶν ἐξῆς τὸ ἀντίσιγμα “the *antisigma* (is) for the arrangement of the sequence of lines.” The scholion for line 192 (this time at the top of the page, fourth line down; see below), reads “the *antisigma*, because under this (line) should have been arranged the three consecutive pointed lines (i.e. lines 203–205); for they are appropriate to kings, not to commoners.” Then, just to be sure the meaning is clear, the scholiast quotes line 203 and the first half of line 204, “and the rest.” This scholion is unusual in that there is a critical sign placed next to it, not just next to the line of text (see below). And this sign, the dotted *antisigma*, differs in its appearance, and in the position of the point, from the two dotted *antisigmata* below next to the lines of text. Perhaps it was added at a later date, by a scribe using a different reed and ink.¹²

Note the lemma to the right of the sign, words repeated from the text of line 192: οὐ γάρ πω κάφα οἶσθ’ “for you do not yet know clearly...”

¹² Thanks to Myriam Hecquet for this observation.



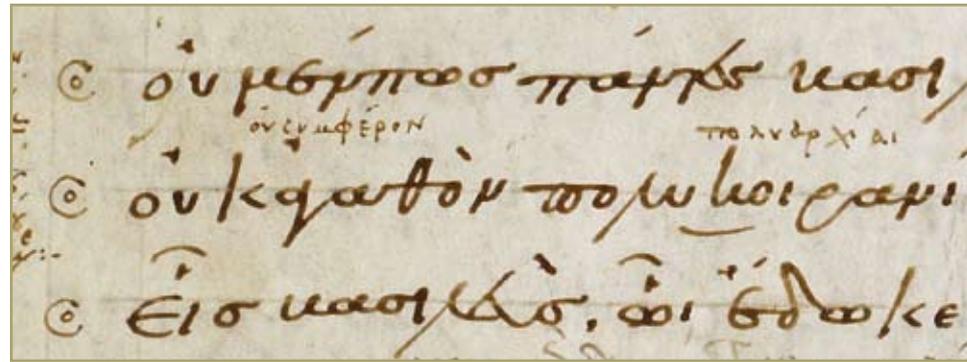
Line 189 has a *diple*, drawing attention to a scholion discussing a whether τὸν ‘ton’ and δὲ ‘de’ should be written separately or as one word.

Next to each of the five consecutive lines 193–197 we find an *obelos*, indicating that these lines were deemed by Aristarchus worthy of athetesis. The scholion continues: “because the words are inappropriate, and not suitable for a sense of decorum”; in other words, Agamemnon as leader is demeaned by these lines.

In the midst of these five lines, we find line 196 with a pointed *diple*, indicating a comment of Zenodotus. Interestingly, in this line Venetus A reads “of a Zeus-nurtured king,” whereas most manuscripts, and our usual printed texts, read the plural “of Zeus-nurtured kings.” The scholion tells us that (unlike the text of Venetus A), “Zenodotus writes the plural. But (the scholiast, Aristonicus, says, disagreeing with Zenodotus) the expression refers to Agamemnon, because he (Homer) says (in the next line) ‘... Zeus loves *him*.’” An additional scholion adds that “Aristarchus’ copies, and everyone else’s except that of Zenodotus, have the singular.”

To the left of each of the lines 203–205 (see below) we see a most unusual sign (only these three times in Venetus A)—a pointed *sigma*. The scholion, in this case in the right intermarginal area, says “The point (*stigma*) is placed next to this line and to the following two lines (although these “points” look rather like tiny circles).” As there are not only points but *sigmata*, it appears that the *sigmata* were added later, perhaps to show where the lines were coming from that were to be transferred to where the second *antisigma* was. However, here the *sigmata* and their “points” have the same ink shade (unlike the example above on this page), indicating that the scribe of Venetus A wrote both at the same time, having found both in his exemplar. Alternatively, the scribe may have found only the “points” and himself added the *sigmata*.¹³ There is also an asterisk to the right of line 204, just below the scholion.

Presumably this is included to draw attention to the significant change in line ordering that is being indicated (rather than its “regular” use).

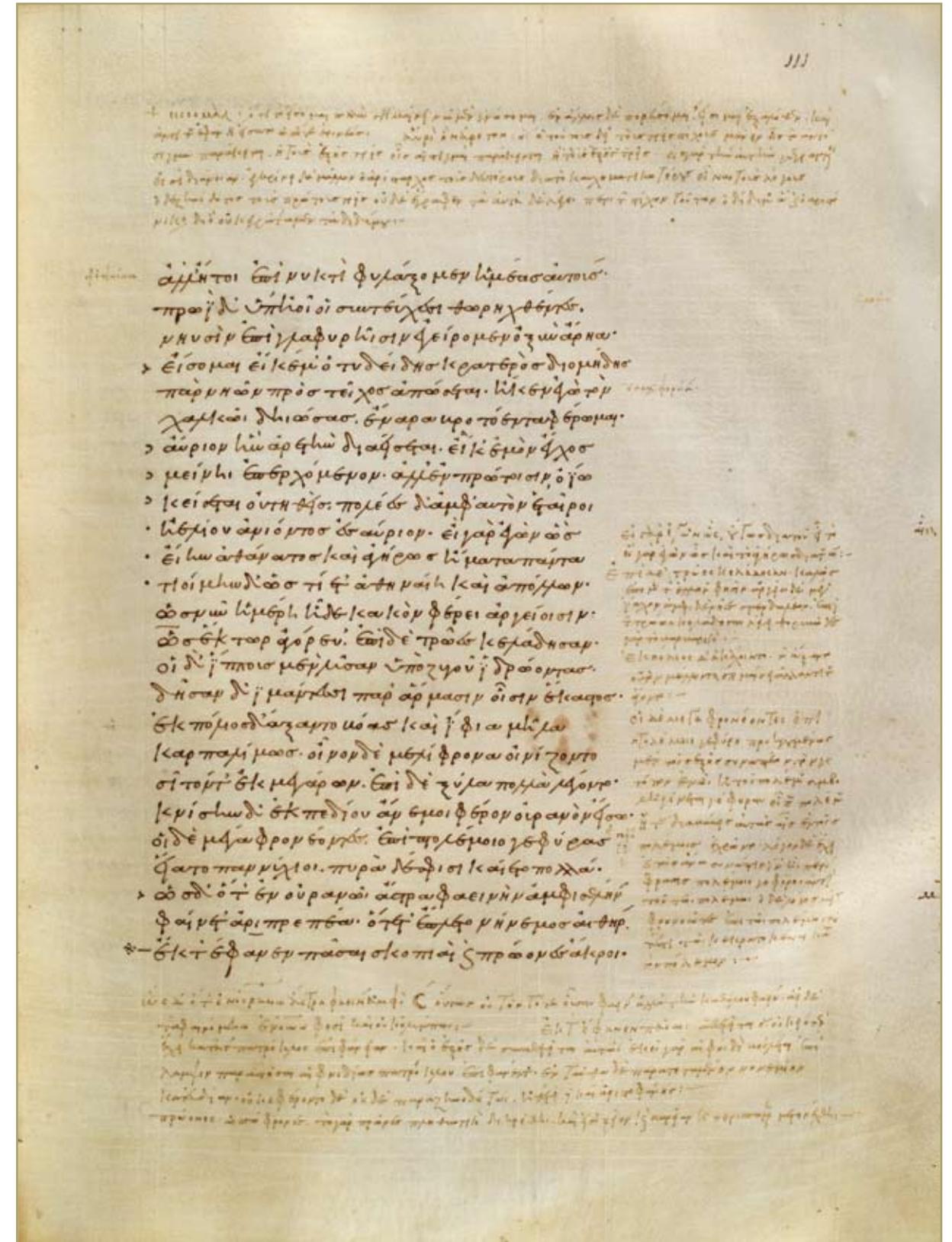


IV.

Finally, we look briefly at page 111r (opposite), containing *Iliad* VIII 529–557 (lines 548 and 550–552 are not in Venetus A, nor any other manuscripts; they occur in a dialogue of Plato). This page, like 27v, is less crowded with scholia than some pages, and it has fewer critical signs; however once again we find signs we haven’t seen before, and in fact one that only occurs on this page.

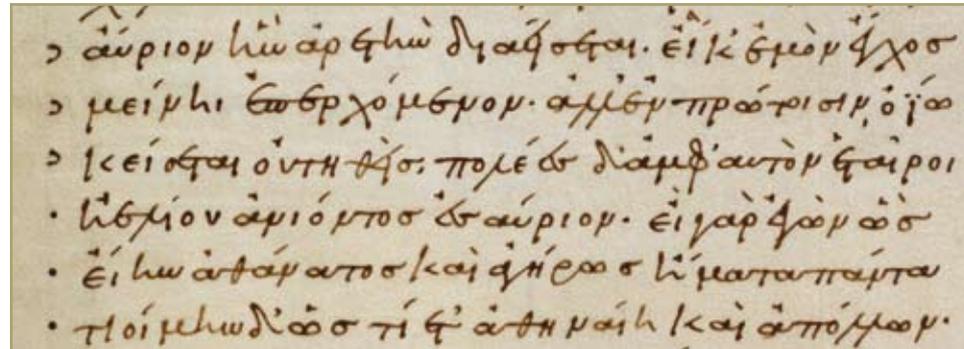
Here is a translation of the first few lines. Hector is making a speech to the Trojans, as night is falling; he is encouraging them for battle the next day.

- 529 “However for the night we will protect ourselves;
- 530 But in the morning with the dawn, girded with our armor,
- 531 Let us raise sharp battle at the hollow ships.
- 532 > I will know whether the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes,
- 533 Will thrust me away from the ships to the wall, or whether I
- 534 Will kill him with bronze and carry off his blood-soaked spoils.
- 535 ⊃ Tomorrow he will know his valor, whether he can
- 536 ⊃ Endure my approaching spear. But among the foremost, I think,
- 537 ⊃ He will lie pierced by a spear, and many comrades around



¹³ Thanks again to Myriam Hecquet for these observations.

- him,
- 538 • When the sun rises tomorrow. I myself wish
- 539 • That I might be immortal and ageless all my days,
- 540 • And that I might be honored just as Athena and Apollo,
- 541 As now this day brings evil upon the Argives.”



Next to lines 535–537 (see above) are three of the five examples of the plain *anti-sigma*, and below that, in lines 538–540, the only three occurrences of the plain *stigma* or point (this time looking more like real points). The sense seems to be that some of these lines don’t belong here, for one reason or another, but the scholiast is unclear as to precisely why.

The scholia report that Aristarchus, unusually, is unable to decide which of the two groups of three lines should be kept and which dispensed with, since both say the same sort of thing. The scholion goes on to say that Aristarchus judged the second set of lines (538–541: it appears that Aristarchus may not have read line 540) to be “excessively boastful.” Kirk (1990:338–339) believes that the three points have been mistakenly moved from lines 532–534; those lines certainly are more similar to 535–537; however this would make 535–537 the “excessively boastful” lines, which seems less convincing. M. L. West (2001:204) takes a different position, believing that lines 535–537 should be excised. At any rate, this is not only a page with an extremely unusual collection of critical signs, but a page with lines that even Aristarchus himself seemed unable to make up his mind about.

As we have seen, the critical signs are an integral part of each page of Venetus A. They are not unnecessarily obtrusive, but nevertheless convey a good deal of significant information to the careful reader. One could imagine the pages not looking remarkably different without the critical signs, and yet they serve such an important

purpose—helping to link the Homeric text with the mass of scholia that otherwise might prove overwhelming. At a glance one can see which lines occur in other locations, which were deemed “dispensable,” and which had comments that one could choose to stop and examine.

The reader of Venetus A, no doubt a careful and learned reader, would have had the choice of reading quickly through a passage for enjoyment, or else of engaging in a “close reading,” studying each line carefully, examining (and judging) the reasons for the athetized lines, stopping and reading every comment, every note, as he or she savored the richness of the commentary on virtually every page—something now possible for us modern readers as well, thanks to the intersection of the latest technology with the best of ancient scholarship.

The Twelfth-Century Byzantine Illustrations in the Venetus A

IOLI KALAVREZOU

The Venetus A codex is famous because it contains the most complete of the *Iliad* texts that have survived to this day, and its importance is enhanced by the scholia that accompany this rare text. The manuscript is Byzantine, produced in Constantinople in the tenth century, and consists today of about 327 folios.¹ Because of the large size of its folios (39 x 29 cm) and its beautiful script, it is considered a luxury codex. Originally it was not illustrated.² The text and the commentaries on the *Iliad* of the various scholars from the ancient to the late antique world were the focus and essential goal of the producer. It had, however, twenty-four enlarged initials that marked the beginning of each book.³ Not only do they serve to ornament the codex, they also aid the reader by indicating the division of the text into books whose beginnings can be found more easily when leafing through it. These initials are composed of vegetal motifs, which shape the letters with their form. The body of the letter is mainly gilded, and a blue color has been added as a contrast to highlight the turning and twisting of the stems. The whole letter is outlined by a thin red line, as for example the large Zeta on folio 164r from the beginning of Book 13, which starts with the word 'Zeus' (Figure 1). In addition to the colored initials, here and there among the folios are some playful, almost personal features. The text of some of the marginal scholia has been written in the shape of architectural units, such as columns with bases and capitals, or other small diagrams or fanciful arrangements.⁴ Such nicely shaped scholion-columns can be found on folio 24r and 12v (Figures 2 and 3, next page). The idea of 'text columns' must have inspired the scribes to create representations of actual architectural columns. This arrangement of secondary texts seems to have become a trend, since it is found in other tenth-century manuscripts in even more elaborate and inventive ways. The most famous of these, now found in the Vatican and Copenhagen libraries, is the splendid Niketas Bible, which also has a number of full-page illustrations.⁵

We know that the Venetus A codex was owned by the Greek Cardinal Bessarion, who, by donating his own library to the Venetian Republic in the year 1468, founded the Marciana Library, where the Venetus A codex has also been housed since it was bequeathed in 1473. The provenance of this extraordinary *Iliad* before Bessarion is not so clear, though he seems to have bought it from Giovanni Aurispa, who probably brought it from Constantinople to Italy during one of his two trips,



SIX



Figure 1. Folio 164r, detail of initial zeta.

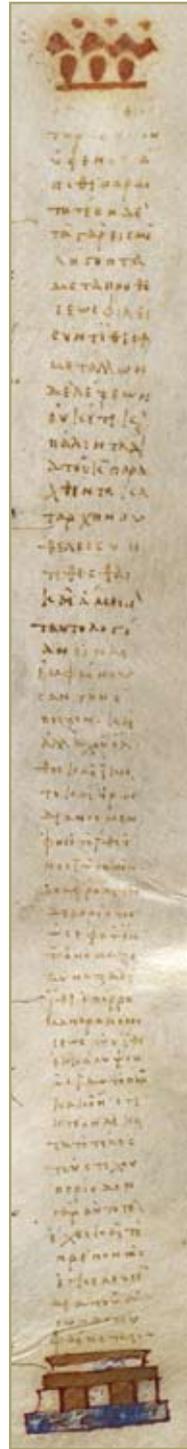
in either 1416 or between 1421 and 1423.⁶ Nor is anything known about the original patron or creator of this edition.⁷ It is also very difficult to find out who had illustrations introduced in the beginning folios of the manuscript at a later date, most likely in the twelfth century.

In this period the then-owner of the manuscript decided to add illustrations to the pages that contained the introductory texts, establishing visually the causes that brought a decade-long war to the city of Troy. Unfortunately, today these illustrated folios are no longer in their original position. Clearly the codex was at some point rebound. This restoration, during which several blank folios were inserted and missing text sections at the end of the manuscript rewritten, seems to have been undertaken by Bessarion himself.

The enhancement of a codex with illustrations on its beginning folios is not rare and could easily have been accomplished during the manuscript's production. It is more difficult, however, to add illustrations after the manuscript is finished and bound. Anyone wanting to introduce images to an already-completed manuscript had to find free space. Free surface areas could possibly be found at the beginning of a codex, where one or two folios were often left blank, and in the margins. This is the case with the Venetus A. Images were painted around the introductory text of Proklos, since it is the only text section not accompanied by scholia in the margins. I will discuss the images not in the sequence in which they are found in the manuscript today, but in the order of a proposed original placement in the codex based on the historical and chronological development of the narrative in the illustrations.

Except for folio 1 and folio 8, which are still connected and so form a bifolio, all other folios had become loose leaves and were re-bound in the manuscript at a later restoration. However, they were re-bound out of order. After much counting and shifting in consideration of where the text should continue, taking also into account flesh-side and hair-side in the sequence of the folios, I have come to the following reconstruction.⁸

The images, as mentioned above, are placed at the beginning of the manuscript, many set in the margins of the introductory text of Proklos on the *Vita Homeri* and the *Chrestomathia*.⁹ Proklos, a grammarian of the second century AD, wrote summaries of what were known as the poems of the 'Epic Cycle', which described the two legendary wars of the heroic age, those against Thebes and Troy. The Theban epics are now lost, but those for the Trojan War did survive in this summary form in six poems: the *Cypria*, *Aethiopis*, *Little Iliad*, *Sack of Troy (Ilioupersis)*, *Returns (Nostoi)*,



Figures 2 & 3. Folio 24r & 12v, detail.

Figure 4 (opposite). Folio 9r.



and *Telegony* (*Telegonia*). These summaries were used as a kind of introduction and are found in some manuscripts of the *Iliad*.¹⁰ They tell the story in very general terms in an abbreviated narrative. Probably because of their simplicity, they became rather popular in antiquity and continued in various forms until the Middle Ages. It is in the Epic Cycle that we find the preliminaries of the war and its outcome, so it becomes a fitting introductory text to the *Iliad*. This role was also given to the images that were added to the manuscript. Although not illustrating Proklos' text, they have a similar introductory function: they begin with the dispute over the golden apple and the Judgment of Paris and end with the outbreak of war.¹¹

The sequence of the illustrated folios is no longer in the correct order. It is difficult to determine their exact arrangement, since part of Proklos' text, which also helps determine the progression, has been lost as well. We must also assume that those folios might have contained additional images. It has to be pointed out here that, except for folio 1 and 8, all other folios with illustrations were no longer bifolios. That is, they were single leaves, most probably separated because of damage at the folds where the bifolios were originally sewn together. However, since many of the illustrations have been added next to Proklos' text, by following his text and the visual sequence of the narrative we can ascertain the order.¹²

The first image, which opens the cycle and is meant to look almost like a frontispiece to the manuscript, now f. 9r, is painted on a blank sheet, originally covering its whole surface (39 x 29 cm).¹³ This full-page composition is divided into two scenes (Figure 4). The upper, which takes two-thirds of the page, depicts the moment when, at the banquet held by Zeus in celebration of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (the parents of Achilles), Eris, the goddess of discord, throws onto the table a golden apple inscribed "to the fairest one."¹⁴ This comes about because Eris, in her anger at not having been invited, seeks revenge. In the scene we see Zeus (*ΖΕΥΣ*) sitting at the table on the left. Dressed like a Byzantine emperor, he wears a gold-embroidered long porphyry tunic with a wide collar and a belt.¹⁵ He has a diadem and red shoes, a privilege of the emperor, and he also holds a scepter. His figure is placed in a distinct space covered by an arch with globular extensions, probably hinting at a baldachin, with his seat raised on a platform and a pillow for his feet. All of these insignia identify him as the most important figure in the scene. The other figures at the table are three women. All three are similarly dressed, with prominent, tall hats that flare to the sides and are decorated with gold-embroidered bands. Their garments also have similar decorations and are of red and blue-green material of a different tonality. Inscriptions identify these figures as Hera (*ΗΡΑ*) with the red dress, then Athena (*ΑΘΗΝΑ*) in the middle and toward the back,

and Aphrodite (*ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ*) seated all the way to the right in a similar pose and opposite to Zeus. These three goddesses claim the apple placed on the table in the foreground by extending their hands toward it. The inscription on the apple says: "the fairest may receive the apple" (*Η ΚΑΛΗ ΛΑΒΕΤΩ ΤΟ ΜΗΛ[Ο]*). The apple has been thrown by Eris, who is depicted still holding the apple within a window or balcony. Unfortunately, she is no longer recognizable—except for her arm—since the paint has flaked considerably in the upper part of the scene. The composition is set against a blue background, identifying the event as taking place in the celestial world upon Mt. Olympus. This kind of solid blue background is also found in the twelfth-century manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus, in the monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos. Here Zeus is depicted giving birth to Dionysos out of his thigh. Here too Zeus is dressed like a Byzantine emperor.¹⁶ The scene just below this banquet is also damaged, which makes it difficult to be precisely identified. The three goddesses are depicted again standing or turning toward the right, where a seated figure, probably Zeus (from some remains of his garment), instructs them that Paris will judge who is fairest.

What is extraordinary about this image and those following is the fact that the heroes of the story, in this case the gods, are depicted as if they were Byzantines. Their setting, the table, the food and its utensils, and, more specifically, their dress display contemporary—that is, twelfth-century—fashion, and the image becomes anachronistic. This is interesting because the Byzantines are quite familiar with ancient dress, but in choosing not to represent them in ancient garb, they often intend to suggest a parallel with their own society.¹⁷ From the second half of the eleventh century we do occasionally find the use of contemporary imagery to depict a past event, although it is still most difficult to identify the specific contemporary historical incident to which they refer.¹⁸

The next two scenes cover the vertical two-thirds of folio 9v. On the left are the names of the ancient scholiasts, listed as a vertical index. This is the first surviving page with text. The lack of text on the right section seems to have made it easy to use this surface to place the later image. The painted area is divided into two registers. In the upper one we see a mountainous landscape that represents Mt. Ida, where the judgment is to take place (Figure 5a). The god Hermes is chosen to lead the three goddesses to the shepherd-prince Paris, who awaits them. Hermes leads and is followed by the three goddesses, Hera in the purple dress in front. Hermes is dressed like a Byzantine high official in a tall bulbous hat, possibly the type mentioned in Ptochoprodromos' poem, the *skararikon*.¹⁹ He holds prominently the apple that he is about to give to Paris, who is no longer visible.²⁰



Figure 5a. Folio 9v, detail.



Figure 5b. Folio 9v, detail.



Figure 6. Folio 1r, detail.

The scene in the lower register represents the actual ‘Judgment of Paris,’ but the painting is somewhat damaged (Figure 5b). The three goddesses are still recognizable, Hera now as the last one, with Aphrodite at the front of the line about to receive the apple, which is clearly visible in the hand of Paris. Paris himself is seated on the far right side, and on his face his eye and nose are still recognizable, as is his tall, brownish *skaranikon*. This is the decisive moment for the unfolding of the story of the Trojan War. The scenes that follow begin the sequence of events that lead to the war. Once Aphrodite receives the apple, as ‘fairest of all’ she has to hold to her promise to give Paris the most beautiful woman, Helen. This narrative forms part of the Epic Cycle, and more specifically part of the beginning of the *Cypria*. Unfortunately, the summary of this epic by Proklos is missing in the Venetus A. At the time of Bessarion’s restoration of the manuscript this text seems to have been either damaged or already missing, since a blank folio has been inserted at this point.

The next image in the sequence of events is found on folio 1r, where the image is placed in the margin at the beginning of Proklos’ text of the *Chrestomathia* (Figure 6).²¹ In the lower exterior margin a badly damaged image of a sailing boat can be recognized. Inside the boat on the left side of the mast Paris is seated together with Aphrodite, both identifiable by labels. A very faint mark of one or possibly two figures can be detected on the right side of the mast. These are sailors rowing the vessel toward the right. Above them a triangular sail hangs from the mast. This arrangement of figures within this type of boat is typical of the mid-Byzantine period and can be seen in a number of illustrations, for example in the twelfth-century manuscript of the Chronicle of Skylitzes in Madrid.²²

The exterior margin of folio 1v contains three separate scenes. On the top, a section of a building with three arched decorated tops and a large window are visible (Figure 7a). Within this window Helen, shown frontally, is flanked by two attendants. The image is not well preserved, but still Helen is recognizable dressed in a red gown with a gold-embroidered collar and cuffs.²³ Her arms are held close to her body with her hands covered inside the sleeves. Her face is well preserved. She has large, black eyes, red-colored cheeks, and finely outlined lips.²⁴ She looks to the right. Below, the second image shows Helen frontal in full length, flanked by her two attendants (Figure 7b). Dressed in the same red garment with her hands covered, she stands rather formally, in contrast to the two women on either side, who are much more agitated. Their hands are in motion as if both are speaking to her. Helen is distinguished by the gold leaf decoration applied on her hat and on her garment. The women wear blue, undecorated garments, and their striped head



Figure 7a. Folio 1v, detail.



Figure 7b. Folio 1v, detail.



Figure 7c. Folio 1v, detail.

coverings are simpler and smaller. It is not clear what exactly this scene is meant to convey; perhaps they are warning her against her decision to go away with Paris, which will have dire consequences.²⁵ The bottom scene extends over the exterior and foot margins of the folio (Figure 7c). The same small boat appears with its sail now navigating toward Troy. Two oarsmen sit on the right of the mast, and on the left are Aphrodite, Paris, and Helen. Helen would barely be recognizable except for the name in large black letters far above her head ([Η] ΕΛΕΝΗ). Both Paris and Aphrodite are also labeled with their names placed above their heads (Ο ΠΑΡΙΣ, Η ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ). The blue sea reaches the “well-walled city of Troy” on the right side of the composition, where the city is depicted as a tall stone tower with crenellations, a heavy double door at the gate, and possibly with some figures inside the fortification.²⁶ Tall black letters identify it (Η ΤΡΟΙΑ). This illustration, which meant to communicate the arrival of Paris with Helen at Troy, brings the story of the Judgment of Paris to an end.

The following folio with the text of the *Cypria*, which most likely would have also had illustrations on its margins, is no longer present. The images pick up again on folio 6r, with the beginning of the *Aithiopsis*.²⁷ Here, the images are on the right and bottom margins. Because none of these illustrations have identifying inscriptions, it has been difficult to reconstruct the events depicted. The top scene consists of two parts (Figure 8a). Two soldiers with helmets and long spears lead two women by the hand toward the left. Taking a woman by the wrist is a gesture of submission also shown when taking a woman in marriage.²⁸ The two women are not servants,



Figure 8a. Folio 6r, detail.

but are of some social standing, indicated by their wearing of the tall, wide hats worn also by the three goddesses and Helen. Both also wear long dresses, one red, the other blue. This scene must be interpreted as the taking captive of the two young women Chryseis and Briseis, who were then given as booty to Agamemnon and Achilles, respectively.²⁹ The one in red being the first of the two women in the scene, I assume her to be Chryseis, who was given to Agamemnon, the king. The group is being led by a mounted soldier, who wears a cuirass and carries a long spear, on a white horse. Chryseis is the daughter of Chryses, the priest of Apollo at Chryse. She is initially taken prisoner by Achilles, but in the distribution of booty she is given to Agamemnon. Achilles receives Briseis. The scene at the lower right margin shows the presentation of Chryseis to Agamemnon (Figure 8b). The rider, now standing behind her, with a hand gesture presents her to the enthroned Agamemnon. Agamemnon is seated in profile. Although the figure is quite flaked, it can be identified as Agamemnon because it reappears on the recto of this folio, clearly identifiable by the event depicted there. He is dressed with the porphyry, *loros*-like garment and has a diadem on his head. He also holds a tall standard of a type seen sometimes in the hands of Byzantine emperors. With his left hand he welcomes the young woman.

On the bottom left margin is an additional scene that is much more difficult to identify (Figure 8c). However, the previous two representations limit our options. Most likely it is Achilles slightly reclined with Briseis standing next to him.³⁰ She is dressed with the blue dress and hat that the second female figure is wearing at the top of the page. If we identify the two women in the first scene as Chryseis and Briseis, then she has to be Briseis, since the painter would not use the same iconographic type for a third person on the same folio. This scene is possibly a shorthand image depicting the second couple, Achilles and Briseis, which alerts the viewer to the anger and wrath that Achilles will exercise when Agamemnon decides to take her away from him.

The story continues on the verso of the folio, with two scenes placed on the left margin. On the upper left, Agamemnon is seated on a stool-like throne in a position similar to the previous illustration in which he was presented with Chryseis (Figure 9a, next page). He is seen from the side, and the priest Chryses stands before him holding a scepter in his right hand and a wreath in his left. Chryses has a full beard, is dressed in a long brown garment with a decorative band on the upper sleeve, and wears a turban with one end flowing down his back. As the father of Chryseis and a priest of Apollo, Chryses has come to the camp of the Greeks and to Agamemnon to ask for the return of his daughter. He brings with him many treasures as ransom,

particularly the wreath and the golden scepter of Apollo, but Agamemnon refuses. This scene depicts the moment when the elderly priest offers his gifts when asking for the return of Chryseis.

The second scene further down on the left margin again shows Chryses, before a statue of Apollo set in a shrine-like arch (Figure 9b). Apollo is depicted here as a naked youth, in an almost dancing pose, balancing himself on a tall base made of stone while holding a long staff. The arch over him is quite unusual, having an ogival upper ending with two horn-like extensions. Chryses has been given a censer to hold, clearly a Byzantine—and thus anachronistic—object, although a necessary one, if his identity and function as a priest is to be made visually clear. In this scene he also wears a short, lighter-colored mantle over his brown garment. Having failed to persuade Agamemnon to return his daughter, Chryses goes to the temple and prays to Apollo to send a pestilence to the camp of the Greeks.³¹

The next illustration, on folio 4r, depicts the consequence of Chryses' prayer (Figure 10).³² Apollo, having heard Chryses, becomes furious at Agamemnon's treatment of his priest and comes down from Olympus with his bow and quiver full of arrows. Enraged, with "a face as dark as night," he begins to shower the Greeks with arrows. At a right angle to the Proklos text, Apollo is shown shooting his arrows. He is dressed in a long garment with a pattern reminiscent of the one worn by Zeus or Agamemnon. This is the type of garment worn by a leading figure, in this case a god. Its pattern recalls the diagonal, diamond-shaped designs of the Byzantine *loros*. Apollo is bearded, and both his beard and hair are quite dark, which possibly makes reference to his face being dark as night. His quiver, strapped across his body and beautifully decorated with a pseudo-kufic design, is also displayed quite prominently. He is shown aiming his bow at a group of standing men. An arrow is already in the air about to reach them, with another ready to be released. The Greeks opposite him are grouped tightly together awaiting their imminent death. They wear robes of alternating blue and red. For nine days, he shoots his arrows, but on the tenth Achilles decides to assemble the Greeks to find out the reason for Apollo's rage. The scene has been placed sideways along the external margin of the folio, most likely to provide the painter with a longer blank surface to depict the flying arrows of Apollo.

On the verso of folio 4 there are two representations. In the left margin, from top to bottom, lions, dogs, vultures, and even imaginary animals attack and devour naked figures, probably the cadavers of the dead (Figure 11a, page 127). This scene is described in the opening verses of the *Iliad* (Book 1.1–5) as the result of the wrath of Achilles, which brings countless sorrows upon the Achaeans and sends them



Figure 8b. Folio 6r, detail.



Figure 8c. Folio 6r, detail.



Figure 9a. Folio 6v, detail.



Figure 9b. Folio 6v, detail.



Figure 10. Folio 4r, detail.

unto death. This is the outcome of Apollo's wrath against Agamemnon, who had dishonored his priest Chryses. Agamemnon is forced by Achilles and the assembly of leaders to return Chryseis to her father in order to stop further Greek deaths. In revenge for his loss, Agamemnon in his anger takes Briseis from Achilles, starting the feud between the two men. Achilles decides to withdraw with his men from the war, resulting in great losses for the Greeks in the next few days of fighting. It is possible that the second scene on this folio represents Achilles with his men, the Myrmidons (Figure 11b, next page). The large figure of Achilles in full military dress stands at the center of the composition. He is identified by a large, white inscription at the top of the image (Ο ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ). Four much smaller soldiers with spears and shields surround him within a rectangular, blue background, the same blue as that used for the first scenes of the wedding banquet and competition for the golden apple (Figures 3 and 4, above). The prominence of the figure of Achilles in full military garb clearly makes reference to the importance of his famous armor made by the god Hephaestus. This is the same armor won by Odysseus in a contest with Ajax after Achilles' death. The cuirass is emphasized by its detail and golden color, and his shield is impressive in its size and shape, which is of the type often found in Byzantine representations after the eleventh century.

The interesting aspect of this illustration is that it is painted over a text. At one point the bottom section of the image was scratched away to reveal this text, which has been identified as a paraphrase from Heliodoros' *Aethiopika* 8.13/14.³³ The question that remains is when this text was written on the folio and why, since it has nothing to do with the *Iliad* or Homer. From the palaeography it can be dated within the twelfth century, and it could be close in date to the paintings, obviously before but possibly closer to the time that these additions were being made. I believe that it can be simply explained in the following way. The Proklos text of the *Telegonia* on fol. 4v ends at approximately one third of that folio's surface. In this empty surface someone, who was soon recognized to have been wrong or recognized himself to be wrong, began to write this text, probably because of its similar title *Aethiopika*, in a mix-up with the section of Proklos' *Aethiopsis*. It was covered over very soon after with the composition of Achilles with his men. We do not know if this text continued much further onto the next folio, now missing, but the quire has to be reconstructed with three folios between this one and folio 8. On folio 8r we have a segment from the preface of Aristonicus' work on the critical signs of Aristarchus, written in the tenth century together with the other prefatory texts.³⁴ This means that the original 7v in the manuscript contained some of this preface, since the text on f. 8r starts in the middle of a sentence and ends on this folio.

The verso of folio 8 had remained blank until the twelfth century, when it was painted with a large composition featuring a number of battle scenes (Figure 12, next page). This composition counterbalances the initial scene of the wedding banquet on folio 9r. Like the first image it covers the whole of the folio. In the first we have the cause that brings about what is depicted in the last. In between, a continuous visual narrative portrays the events that elicit the intense human emotions of all the great heroes and leaders of the Achaeans, which bring about wrath, strife, and ultimately death.³⁵ The sequence ends with a grand composition of several types of battle scenes.

At the top left, two armed riders face each other. Both wear helmets, holding in their left hand the reins, in their right a long spear. The rider on the left has the upper hand; his horse gallops with its front legs raised, and the rider's spear is in attacking position. The other's position can be determined almost by the position of the horse's head, which is turned downward. His spear is held upright. Both have fought fiercely, since both horses are shown with steaming breath from exertion.

To the right, a charioteer with a four-horse chariot enters the scene.³⁶ He stands inside a porphyry chariot, together with (possibly) two other soldiers, who are behind him. He does not wear a helmet, but holds the reins with his left hand and swings a whip with his right. The lower part of a figure in a brownish garment is visible on the left horse of the quadriga, possibly an additional soldier guiding the horses on the battlefield. Three of the horses are still in very good condition, especially their manes, which alternate in color between light brown and white with orange highlights. They make the reading of the otherwise closely depicted horses more easily recognizable. In the second tier of the composition, two pairs of riders charge at each other. Their military articles consist of helmets and long spears. Visible also are the hand-held reins and the black bridles of the horses. Below, centrally placed in the composition, a group of six close-together riders charge to the right toward the city of Troy. The attack falls under the command of Agamemnon, who directs the assault from his throne. Represented in the familiar type of the enthroned king with crown and scepter, he gestures toward the cavalry. In this scene the scepter and his red boots are very well preserved. This type of representation, with the riders grouped closely together, is known from illustrations found in the various battle scenes of the twelfth-century Skylitzes manuscript in Madrid, where similar banners are also depicted among the raised spears.³⁷ In the Venetus A scene, the red banner displays five circles as a symbol, shown also in the second banner on this folio; in the Skylitzes there is usually a cross. The scepter held by Agamemnon also has a parallel in the same Skylitzes illustration. The city of Troy, although heavily



Figure 11a. Folio 4v, detail.



Figure 11b. Folio 4v, detail.

damaged, is recognizable on the right. It appears the same as when seen at the beginning of the manuscript in the scenes of Paris and Aphrodite and of Helen traveling by boat to and from Troy. Here, Trojan soldiers, possibly as many as six, decipherable only from the remaining spears projecting beyond the walls, are placed within to defend Troy. The last battle scene at the bottom of the folio, slightly cut off by a cropping of the folios of the manuscript, repeats the same six-rider group's charge toward the city, defended now by a single fighter with a long spear. An additional weapon, a mace, extends beyond the walls of Troy. The image must have been quite impressive with the representation of so many horses in one composition. The legs of the horses, the many spears, the raised arms of the warriors, and the flowing red banner in the center added movement and color, creating the feeling of the turmoil of battle. This full-page painting is the high point or culmination of the ten-year siege of Troy. In visual terms it forms a contrast to the orderly arrangement of the gods around the dinner banquet of the opening illustration.

We must still, however, ask who painted these folios, exactly when in the twelfth century this occurred, and for what purpose. Unfortunately, to ascertain or even guess at such questions will take an investigation that falls outside the realm of this paper. We know that interest in the study of Homer and especially of the *Iliad* flourished primarily from the late eleventh through the twelfth century—the important exception being in the tenth century, when the *Venetus A* was compiled and Arethas was the most prominent Homeric scholar. The most significant surviving scholarship on the Homeric epics dates from the twelfth century. Most widely known are the commentaries by Eustathios of Thessaloniki, who was a church official and scholar. His vast collection of commentaries, meticulously compiled from the works of ancient grammarians and later scholars, has become the most significant contribution to Homeric scholarship of the Middle Ages, since many of the works from which he collected scholia no longer survive. In addition, he is known for sometimes using the epics in his own writings to make allusions to contemporary events. Among other commentators of this period are Ioannes Tzetzes, who wrote two long commentaries, Isaac Komnenos or Isaac Porphyrogenetos, probably the third son of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos.³⁸ In this intellectual and learned environment it is not surprising that the owner of the *Venetus A*, this most precious manuscript, presenting one of the best versions of the *Iliad* with such rich scholia, had the desire to add illustrations to the codex.

Representations of the *Iliad* from the middle Byzantine period are rather rare.³⁹ Most are found on luxury objects, which have not survived in great numbers. These are mostly boxes of ivory or bone with panels or small plaques featuring some of



Figure 12. Folio 8v.

the characters from the epic. The sacrifice of Iphigenia is represented, for example, on one of the front panels of the famous Veroli casket in the Victoria and Albert museum. There, the gods stand by as she is being prepared for sacrifice.⁴⁰ Another ivory panel from a box, possibly from the eleventh century, depicts a battle scene conceptually similar to the full-page battle composition in the *Venetus A*, although in the ivory panel, because of its long and narrow proportions, the battling figures have been arranged in a horizontal sequence.⁴¹ Decorating precious vessels and containers with mythological scenes is a tradition that goes back to ancient times. Examples of this practice include a Hellenistic bowl from Tanagra that depicts an elaborate Homeric battle scene in low relief on its exterior,⁴² and a sixth-century ivory pyxis, now in the Walters Art Museum, where the story of the Judgment of Paris has been carved on its outer surface. On one side is the wedding celebration, on the opposite, however, a fully naked Aphrodite stands out as she fixes her locks. This container was most likely used for the keeping of make-up or other toiletries. Such subject matter on a pyxis suggests that the owner was a woman, who, like Aphrodite, desired to be “the fairest of all.”⁴³

It so happens that six hundred years later, three epigrams written in the twelfth century by Balsamon address the same subject.⁴⁴ The Judgment of Paris and the golden apple never lost their appeal. We do not have the object onto which these verses were meant to be written, but we do have a description of it in the title of the epigram. I would like to conclude my discussion of the twelfth century Byzantine images with the first of these epigrams by Balsamon, which serves as proof of the relevance and popularity that the Homeric epics still held in the twelfth century.

On a golden vessel having depicted three goddesses, Aphrodite, Hera, Athena and Alexander (Paris) giving the apple.

“Like the apple that Aphrodite [received] from Paris [you too] accept

this sphere-shaped golden cup

and drink a glass of thoughtful pleasure;

for you do not give yourself airs over mythical stories,

but you are truly the preferred one

without any lustful vice.”

ENDNOTES

¹Not all folios are original. Some were replaced when a restoration of the manuscript took place (see Chapter 4 in this volume).

²The only illustrated manuscript of a Greek epic is the well-known pre-iconoclastic *Iliad* in Milan. Today it is rather fragmentary, but at some time in the late eleventh or twelfth century, inscriptions were added to the miniatures identifying the characters and events, an indication of the appreciation and interest in this material at that time. The illustrations of the Milan and Venice manuscripts are not, however, related.

³Fourteen are found on recto folios and ten on versos.

⁴On f. 100v there is a schematic representation of the cosmos with ether, air and earth, underworld, and abyss. A lyre-shaped configuration can be seen on f. 12r.

⁵See Belting and Cavallo 1979.

⁶Mioni 1976:188–189 and 192; Diller 1960:35–36.

⁷Various proposals have been made, e. g. Arethas (see Severyns 1962). Although the original patron cannot yet be determined, the scribe has been identified as being the same as the one who wrote the ms. Paris gr. 1741 (see Harlfinger 1970:28–50).

⁸There are several proposals on the reconstruction and sequence of those first folios. Wissowa 1884:198–209 is sound and has earlier bibliography. My reconstruction goes as follows: Folio 9r needs to be brought to the front of all other images. According also to Wissowa (1884:204–205), this folio has a completely different ruling pattern. It has a three-column division in contrast to the pattern of the remaining text folios of the codex (see M. Hequet’s discussion and diagrams of the ruling patterns in this volume) and thus does not belong to the same quaternion. It has been ruled differently because it was meant to serve a different purpose. On its verso (f. 9v) it contains a list of scholiasts on the left of the three columns, which suggests a possible table of contents or index, which, however, was never completed. Where exactly its original placement might have been has been discussed, but I place it at the beginning of the whole codex rather than where it is now located, just before the *Iliad* text proper. The argument for this reconstruction is the illustrations that were added in the twelfth century on its blank unwritten surface. They illustrate the beginning of the narrative and thus need to be placed in front.

Wissowa puts forward the suggestion that it could not have been a single leaf, but must have formed at least a bifolio. I would add that 9r actually was the folded second leaf of this bifolio, since, according to the Greek system of folding, the first recto is the flesh-side with the hair-side on its verso. It would follow that the second folio of this bifolio had the hair-side on the following recto, which is exactly the case with f. 9r.

Mioni has also seen it necessary to have an additional folio X before f. 9. Thus after moving f. 9 to the front, the illustrated narrative continues on f. 1r, followed by the two newly inserted blank folios, which were probably meant to replace the lost *Cypria* section, then f. 6, and then f. 4, which clearly continues the text of *Ilioupersis* from f. 6v.

The Proklos text of the *Telegonia* ends at approximately one third of the way through folio 4v. At a later date, on the remaining blank surface, a paraphrase from Heliodoros’ *Aethiopika* 8.13/14 was written. We do not know a number of things about this text. We know neither why this particular text was inserted on f. 4, nor how far this excerpt from Heliodoros continued on the next folio. We do not know at what point the next text, which is on f. 8r and is part of the preface of Aristonikos of Alexandria’s work on the critical signs of Aristarchus (*peri sēmeiōn Iliados*), begins. Because it starts in the middle of a sentence, it must have had at least one folio preceding it. On the

other hand, I do not believe that there was another folio after f. 8 continuing this text, since folio 8r is not fully written out and its reverse remained blank until the twelfth century, when the full-page illustration of a big battle was represented. I believe it is the beginning of the intended Preface of Aristonikos, which would have explained the uses of and reasons for each sign, but which was not completed.

⁹Allen 1912:99–102.

¹⁰*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. “Homer.” For an interesting article on the Epic Cycle in contrast to the Homeric texts, see Griffin 1977:39–53.

¹¹It is very likely that images that are now lost existed, since parts of the original Proklos text is also missing.

¹²See n8 above.

¹³The original ruling is visible where the paint has flaked off. On the verso the folio has the list of commentators arranged in a descending order that is part of the original indexing of these authors. Thus this folio was blank on its recto side and introduced the authors on its verso before beginning with the text of the *Chrestomathia* of Proklos. This folio was separated from its bifolio and was restored in this alternate position.

¹⁴Τῆ ΚΑΛΛΙΣΤῆ

¹⁵The tunic is decorated with a pattern that is very close to the design usually found on the *Loros*, the official purple-colored, jewel-covered outer garment that identified an individual holding the imperial office. Here, however, it is clearly a tunic with long sleeves.

¹⁶Pelekanides et al., eds. 1975: Ms. 6, folio 163v, figure 312. It is interesting to note that now that research has revealed that many of the sculptures on the ancient Greek public monuments were colored, blue was a common background color, especially in the pediments and metopes of temples where the gods were usually represented. See Brinkmann et al. 2007: figures 74, 76, 110–114, 202.

¹⁷See Kalavrezou 2004:279–296.

¹⁸The most extraordinary case of a whole manuscript illustrated in an anachronistic way is the Vatican Psalter gr. 752 from the mid-eleventh century; see Kalavrezou et al. 1993:195–219.

¹⁹On the *skaranikon* see Tsamakda 2002, esp. 360–361, and *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* III, s.v. *skaranikon* (1908–1909).

²⁰This folio has lost the segment close to the spine, which has been restored with a newer piece of parchment.

²¹Folio 1 is the only folio still attached to its bifolio (8), which formed the outer leaves of the quire.

²²See Grabar and Manoussacas 1979.

²³Part of the damage is more recent, since fragments of the flaked paint are visible on the more recently inserted blank folio from the restoration by Bessarion.

²⁴The round, red dots applied to the cheeks of the figures throughout the manuscript’s illustrations are first found in Byzantine monuments already in the eleventh century, for example the fresco portrait of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi. The most famous example is on the cheeks of the empress

Irene in the early twelfth-century mosaic at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

²⁵ Between this scene and the one below there is a short scholion in semi-uncial, in red ink like that used for the headings in the Proklos text, probably written by the same hand. It reads: **ΟΙ ΔΕ ΛΕΓΟΥΣΙ ΤΗΓΡΗΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΡΟΣ**. It is unclear to what exactly this refers, but in its construction it parallels the line in the text where we find this sentence: **ΟΙ ΜΕΝΤΟΙ ΓΕ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΚΥΚΛΟΝ ΑΝΑΦΕΡΟΥΣΙΝ**. . . . I do not see a connection to the image above, as suggested by Myriam Hecquet. In any case, see her chapter in this volume for her reconstruction of the line and a translation.

²⁶ Close parallels of this depiction of a fortified city are found in the illustrated Skylitzes manuscript of the twelfth century in Madrid; see Grabar and Manoussacas 1979, folios 31v and 41v.

²⁷ This folio has on its recto the flesh-side and on its verso the hair-side.

²⁸ See Oakley and Sinos 1994.

²⁹ Furlan 1980 in his brief description of this scene recognizes only the one woman in red and does not see the second dressed in blue (44).

³⁰ A similar arrangement of a female standing beside a reclined figure is found in the Menologion of Basil II in the Vatican on folio 78r, in the scene where the Virgin appears to the sleeping Romanos Melodos. I mention this to emphasize that the reclining person is not lying down because he is dead, but rather sleeping, a reference to the relationship of Achilles and Briseis.

³¹ In a brief discussion of these two scenes, Weitzmann 1960:56 and figure 22 states that the images in this manuscript must have been added in the fifteenth century.

³² This folio was damaged and separated from its bifolio. Now it is attached through a new segment of parchment on its inner edge. Its recto is on the hair-side, its verso the flesh-side.

³³ Wissowa 1884:203. See also Myriam Hecquet's short discussion of this text in this volume.

³⁴ See discussion of this text by Graeme Bird in this volume.

³⁵ Although more scenes must have existed in the lost folios, the events that have survived do give rise to personal jealousy and wrath and in general *thymos* 'high spiritedness' among the protagonists.

³⁶ Although a quadriga for the purpose of facilitating the reading of the scene, the legs of only two horses are represented.

³⁷ Grabar and Manoussacas 1979, for example folios 31r (a), 43r (b), or 86r (a) and (b).

³⁸ Kazhdan and Epstein 1990:134–137. Buchwald *et al*, eds., 1982:365.

³⁹ Except the Milan *Iliad* and a fragment on papyrus.

⁴⁰ Evans and Wixon, eds. 1997:230–231.

⁴¹ The panel is now in the Cluny museum in Paris; Weitzman 1951; see plate XIII, figure 212.

⁴² Weitzmann 1951, see plate LIII, figure 213a–c.

⁴³ Kalavrezou 2003:236–237.

⁴⁴ These epigrams are published in Horna 1903.

Traces of an ancient system of reading Homeric verse in the Venetus A

GREGORY NAGY

The publication of digitized images of the Venetus A manuscript of the Homeric *Iliad* on the website of the Center for Hellenic Studies (chs.harvard.edu) has finally made this precious document accessible to all. And it has enhanced in two ways the actual reading of the document. First, the improved clarity of the images has made it possible to see details that have up to now been too blurred for the naked eye to make out. Second, the digital formatting that functions as a manuscript viewer for readers has made it possible for the mind's eye to make mental connections that replicate the way ancient readers used to read Homeric verse. This essay has to do with the making of such mental connections. That is, it has to do with an ancient system of reading Homeric verse. My aim is to show that there are traces of such a system to be found in the visual formatting of the Venetus A manuscript.

This visual formatting, now enhanced by the digital manuscript viewer, trains the mind's eye to make connections that link the text of the verses of the Homeric *Iliad* as featured in the central space of each folio page of the Venetus A to the texts of the scholia featured in the border spaces, that is, in the blank spaces at the top and the bottom and the two sides of each page. These scholia, which are commentaries deriving from the ancient world of Homeric scholarship, tell us not only how to understand Homer the way ancient readers had understood him. They tell us also how to read Homer the way ancient readers had read him. To be more specific, they tell us how to read Homeric verse out loud. That was the practice, to read Homer out loud.

As I have argued in previous work, there was an ancient system underlying the practice of reading Homer and all other verse out loud (Nagy 2000). And this system, as I have also argued, originated from an even more ancient system of poetic performance (Nagy 1998). What I propose to do here is to back up my previous argumentation by analyzing a specific example taken from the pages of the Venetus A—and by making further arguments based on this example. By way of this argumentation, I hope to show the value of the Venetus A as a precious source for reconstructing the ancient system of reading Homeric verse out loud.

Before I turn to my analysis of the example I have chosen from the pages of the Venetus A, I need to offer a set of clarifications.



When I speak here of an ancient system of reading Homer out loud, the word ancient does not refer to the specific time when the Byzantine manuscript known as the Venetus A was created, that is, to the tenth century CE. Nor does it refer to the time of the Byzantine period in general, the beginnings of which can be dated as far back as the fourth century CE. When I say ancient here, I have in mind instead a pre-Byzantine period. In particular, I have in mind the period of Greek civilization that started from around the fourth century BCE and continued into the fourth century CE. It is in this period that we see most clearly the ancient system of reading Homer out loud. And it is from this period that the sources for the scholia of the Venetus A originated.

In the ancient pre-Byzantine period, the general practice of reading Greek texts—not only the specific practice of reading the Homeric text—was different from what we see in the Byzantine period. And, correspondingly, the general practice of writing Greek texts was different, as we know primarily from the evidence of literary papyrus documents dating from the Hellenistic and the Roman eras of Egypt. The time-span of these two eras combined corresponds to the pre-Byzantine period that extends from around the fourth century BCE and continues into the fourth century CE.

I list here three characteristics of written texts stemming from this pre-Byzantine period, all three of which are noticeably distinct from what we find in texts written in the Byzantine period:

1. In this pre-Byzantine period, scribes ordinarily did not write marks indicating the accentuation of words. That is, it was not the general custom for a scribe to write accent marks into the text he was copying. In exceptional cases where a text does show the writing of accent marks, it is clear that such markings served a purpose that went above and beyond the copying of a text. And that purpose was primarily educational (Laum 1928:53). In particular, accentual markings served as an aid for maintaining correct pronunciation while reading literary texts out loud. Ordinarily, accent marks would be added by a *diorthōtēs* ‘corrector’, that is, by a master of correctness who had the requisite education to understand the relevant literature:

πρὸ μὲν τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸν νέον ἀναγινώσκειν ὁ διορθωτῆς λαμβάνων τὸ {19} βιβλίον διωρθοῦτο αὐτὸ ἵνα μὴ ἐπταισμένον αὐτὸ ἀναγνοῦς ὁ νέος εἰς κακὴν ἔξιν ἐμπέσῃ· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα λαβὼν ὁ νέος τὸ βιβλίον διωρθωθὲν ἀπήει πρὸς τὸν ἀναγνωστικὸν τὸν ὀφείλοντα αὐτὸν διδάσκειν ἀναγινώσκειν κατὰ τὴν διόρθωσιν τοῦ διορθωτοῦ.

Before the student would begin to read, the *corrector* [*diorthōtēs*] would take the book and *correct* [*diorthōsthai*] it so that he [the student] would not read it wrong and thus fall into a bad habit. Afterward, the student would take the book, as *corrected* [*diorthōsthai*], to a reading-teacher [*anagnōstikos*] who was supposed to teach him how to read according to the correction-work [*diorthōsis*] of the *corrector* [*diorthōtēs*].

Scholia for the *Tekhnē Grammatikē* of Dionysius Thrax (12.3f, ed. A. Hilgard 1901)

Alternatively, accent marks could be added by the scribe who originally wrote down the text—if he too had the requisite understanding. This practice of accentual marking was more common in poetic than in prosaic texts. Even in poetic texts, however, marks indicating accentuation were not written out word for word over the wording of texts.

2. Scribes would normally leave no space between words. That is, there were normally no spaces indicating boundaries between words in any given line of a page (Nagy 2000:8-9, 15-17). This convention is known as *scriptio continua*.

3. Scribes wrote in an alphabet that was uncial in shape. The non-uncial alphabet evolved only later, in the Byzantine period.

These three characteristics of pre-Byzantine written texts are notably absent in Byzantine written texts. And they are absent from the written text of the Homeric *Iliad* as copied out by the scribe of the Venetus A manuscript at the height of the Byzantine period, in the tenth-century CE. But there are traces of all three of these pre-Byzantine characteristics in the scholia that this same scribe copied out into the same manuscript.

With these clarifications in place, I can now develop the main point of my argumentation, which is this: to say that the scholia of the Venetus A manuscript show traces of three pre-Byzantine conventions in the writing of texts is also to say that there had once existed matching conventions in the actual reading of texts. And I mean not only the reading of Greek texts in general but also the reading of the Homeric text in particular.

As we begin to view the pages of the Venetus A, I focus on the visual links between the text of the Homeric *Iliad* and the texts of the scholia. In the traditional visual formatting of the Venetus A, the cognitive focal point for the mind’s eye to establish links between these separate texts is the *lemma* (λήμμα). This word *lemma*, which I will spell from here on simply as *lemma* (and the plural as *lemmata*), is an ancient tech-

nical term referring to whatever wording is literally ‘taken’ (the corresponding Greek word is λαμβάνειν / λαβεῖν) from the overall wording of a *scriptio continua* that is being quoted. In the case of the Venetus A, what happens is that the wording of any given lemma is notionally being ‘taken’ out of the overall wording of a Homeric verse and then transferred into the scholia, where it serves to lead off the wording of the relevant commentary. Literally, the string of letters that is the lemma is being ‘taken’ out of the longer string of letters that is the overall verse, which had formerly been written in *scriptio continua*.

The explanations that follow the lemmata in the scholia of the Venetus A, as in the scholia of other manuscripts containing Homeric poetry (such as the Venetus B), were meant to enhance the reader’s understanding of the Homeric verses from which the lemmata were taken. And, from time to time, the explanations were specifically meant to enhance the actual reading of those verses out loud. I concentrate here on those kinds of explanations.

The one specific example I have chosen from the Venetus A manuscript is a set of scholia corresponding to what we know as verse 364 of Scroll I (= A) of the *Iliad* (from here on, I will refer to the scroll-numbers of the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by using respectively the upper- and lower-case letters of the Greek alphabet). There are two parts to this set. (See Figure 1.) The first part is to be found in the primary border scholia of the Venetus A, which are called *Randscholien* by experts writing in German. The second of the two parts is to be found in the secondary border scholia called *Textscholien*. Before we examine what these scholia for *Iliad* A 364 have to say, I offer three paragraphs of background about *Randscholien* and *Textscholien*, to which I will refer from here on as *primary scholia* and *secondary scholia* respectively. (In this presentation, I will not have any occasion to speak of a third kind of scholia, the conventional label for which is self-explanatory: they are the interlinear scholia.)

I begin with the secondary scholia of the Venetus A. The conventional labels for these scholia are ‘A^{int}’ and ‘A^{im}’. These labels are to be contrasted with the conventional label for the primary scholia, which is simply ‘A’. The abbreviation ‘A^{im}’ stands for the secondary scholia situated within the available space that exists between the primary scholia and the Homeric text, while ‘A^{int}’ stands for the secondary scholia situated within the available space that exists between the Homeric text and the binding.

Next I turn to the primary scholia of the Venetus A, which are the A scholia. The text of these scholia normally starts in the space of the upper border of each page, filling in most of the space available there before spilling over and flowing down

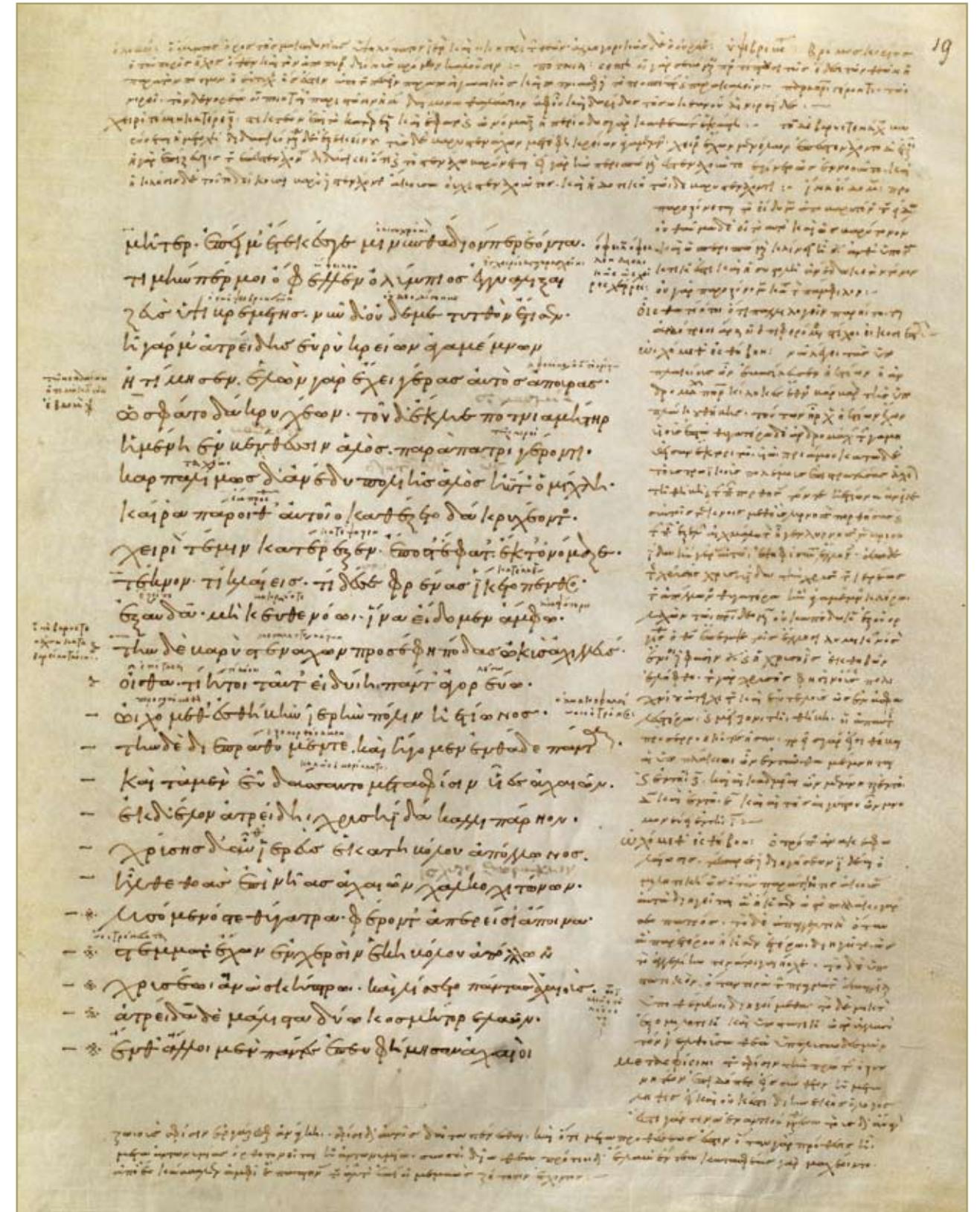


Figure 1 (opposite). Folio 19r of the Venetus A, featuring *Iliad* A 352–376, with accompanying scholia.

along the available space at the right/left border of the Homeric text on each recto/verso page of each folio.

By contrast with the text of the A scholia, which flows down along the available space at the right/left border of the Homeric text on the recto/verso page of each folio, the text of the A^{int} scholia flows down along the available space at the opposite left/right border of the Homeric text. As for the text of the A^{im} scholia, it is squeezed into the available space that is left between the A scholia and the Homeric text on each page.

With these three paragraphs in place, I can now proceed to analyze what the primary and the secondary scholia for *Iliad* A 364 actually have to say.

First we will look for the relevant text in the primary scholia. We find it at the upper right-hand corner of the recto of folio 19 of the Venetus A (Figure 2, below). There we see the following lemma: ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ.

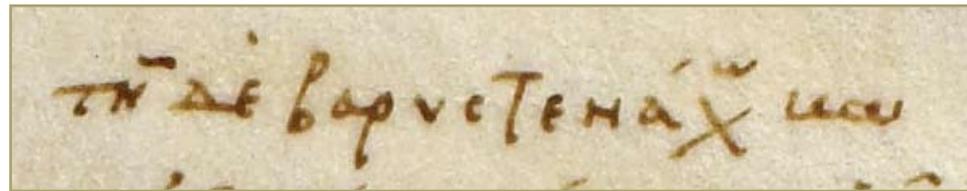


Figure 2. Folio 19r of the Venetus A, detail of a lemma from *Iliad* A 364.

The wording of this lemma ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ is taken from the beginning of the verse we know as *Iliad* A 364. And the actual Homeric text as copied out on the same page of the Venetus A shows this wording in the corresponding verse: τὴν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων. I translate the wording as follows: ‘addressing her [= Thetis], as he [= Achilles] groaned deeply’.

In transcribing this lemma ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ as we found it in the primary scholia, I have used a stylized modern uncial Greek font to indicate that the wording of this and other lemmata quoted in the primary scholia is written in stylized ancient uncial letters. This ancient uncial lettering is evidently derived from an ancient form of the Greek alphabet that dates back to the pre-Byzantine era, when the only kind of lettering in formal contexts was uncial lettering. In the Byzantine text of the Venetus A, however, the uncial lettering of the lemma serves a special purpose. It becomes a kind of upper-case lettering. That is because the uncial lettering of the lemma stands out in contrast to the non-uncial lettering of the Byzantine spelling system, which is actually being used for writing everything else in the primary scholia except for the lemmata themselves. By contrast with the uncial lettering of the lemmata, this non-uncial lettering can be seen as a kind of lower-case lettering.

In the Venetus A, not only the text of the primary scholia but also the text of the Homeric verses themselves is written in non-uncial lettering. This practice is only to be expected. After all, as I have already noted, the actual writing down of the Venetus A manuscript dates from the tenth century CE. And the fact is, manuscripts in this Byzantine era were regularly written in non-uncial lettering. So it is all the more striking that an upper-case kind of lettering was used in the Venetus A to spell out the wording of the lemmata in the primary scholia.

Clearly, the distinction that is being made in the primary scholia between upper-case lettering for the text of the lemmata and lower-case lettering for the rest of the text is an extraordinary feature of the Venetus A. This distinction between two kinds of lettering, I argue, expresses a distinction between two registers of information: (1) what was actually being quoted in earlier times from Homer and (2) what was being written in later times as the text of Homer or as the text of commentaries about the text of Homer.

From the standpoint of my argumentation, these two distinct registers of information had two distinct origins:

- (1) What was being quoted in upper-case letters from Homer originated from pre-Byzantine traditions of actually reading Homeric verse out loud, and so the use of this upper-case lettering system reflects an older and therefore more accurate way of reading the text of Homeric verse.
- (2) What was being written in lower-case letters as the text of Homeric verse or as the text of commentaries about Homeric verse originated from contemporary Byzantine traditions of rewriting what had been written earlier in the pre-Byzantine period, and so the use of this lower-case lettering system can be seen as a newer and therefore less accurate way of reading the text of Homeric verse or even the text of commentaries about Homeric verse.

From the standpoint of the Byzantine traditions that shaped the Venetus A, however, these two distinct origins of upper- and lower-case lettering were understood in a radically different way:

- (1) What was being quoted in upper-case letters from Homer originated from pre-Byzantine traditions, and so the use of this upper-case lettering system reflects an older and therefore less accurate way of writing the text of Homeric verse.

(2) What was being written in lower-case letters as the text of Homeric verse or as the text of commentaries about Homeric verse originated from contemporary Byzantine traditions of rewriting what had been written earlier in the pre-Byzantine period, and so the use of this lower-case lettering system was seen as a newer and therefore more accurate way of writing the text of Homeric verse as well as the text of commentaries about Homeric verse.

Viewed from the standpoint of Byzantine traditions, the Byzantine rewriting of pre-Byzantine texts was more accurate in two ways:

(α) There was now a space for indicating where each word was separated from the next word.

(β) There was now an accent mark written over each syllable of each separate word that had an accented syllable.

From the standpoint of my own argumentation, however, the Byzantine rewriting of pre-Byzantine texts was less accurate. It stripped away two kinds of information embedded in the lettering practices stemming from the pre-Byzantine traditions:

(α) The new writing practice of using a space for marking where each word was separated from the next word undid the old writing practice of *scriptio continua*, which had served to protect the integrity of the phrase and the integrity of the intonation embedded in the phrase.

(β) The new writing practice of consistently marking the accents of words on a word-by-word basis undid the old writing practice of selectively marking the intonation of phrases on a phrase-by-phrase basis.

These differences between old and new writing practices in the pre-Byzantine and Byzantine periods respectively were caused by what may best be described as a sea change in the evolution of the Greek language. We can see the beginnings of this change around the second century BCE. Already then, an old system of pitch-accentuation was changing into a new system of stress-accentuation. Where the syllable once had a pitch accent, there was now a stress accent. (This is not to say, however, that the new stress-accent was not simultaneously a pitch-accent as well.) And the new system of stress-accentuation persisted in the Byzantine Greek language and even in the Modern Greek language of today. In previous work, I have formulated this summary (Nagy 2000:21):

[A]lready by the time of Aristarchus, whose *floruit* was the middle of the second century BCE, unaccented vowels were shortened while accented vowels were lengthened. That is, the accent-system of the Greek language had already shifted to the pattern that we find to this day in Modern Greek. Vital evidence is presented by Horrocks [1997a:67], in analyzing a sample papyrus dated ca. 152 BCE (Pap. Par. 47/UPZ 70). In this papyrus, the patterns of confusion in spelling long vowels as short (notably, omicron instead of omega) show that “vowel-length oppositions had already disappeared, a change that is directly correlated with the shift from the classical pitch accent to an accent characterized primarily by greater loudness.”

I must stress, however, that the differences between the pre-Byzantine and the Byzantine systems of accentuation were not confined to matters of pitch and stress. In the old pre-Byzantine system, the pitch-accentuation of words had operated within a larger framework, which was the intonation of the phrase that framed the words. In the new Byzantine system, by contrast, the stress-accentuation of words was now operating within the smaller framework of the word itself.

Just as the new Byzantine system of stress-accentuation was matched by the new writing practice of consistently marking the accents of words on a word-by-word basis, with each word separated by a space from the next word, so also the old pre-Byzantine system of pitch-accentuation had been matched by the old writing practice of selectively marking the intonation of phrases on a phrase-by-phrase basis, with the entire phrase written in *scriptio continua*.

The clearest evidence for this old pre-Byzantine writing practice comes from the texts of literary papyri dating from anywhere between the fourth century BCE and the fourth century CE. In these literary papyri, we see the pre-Byzantine practice of selectively writing three kinds of marks to approximate three kinds of pitch accent: acute (´) and grave (`) and circumflex (^). The basic features of the practice can be summed up this way:

- The writing of the acute accent (´) over the vowel of a syllable signaled a rising tone.
- The writing of the grave accent (`) over the vowel of a syllable signaled a non-rising tone.
- The writing of the circumflex accent (^) over the long vowel of a syllable signaled a rising and then falling tone. By contrast, the writing of an acute (´) over the long vowel of a syllable signaled simply a rising tone.

As the angular writing of the circumflex (ˆ) makes clear, unlike the stylized alternative non-angular writing (˘), this sign was once understood as a combination of an acute followed by a grave over the same syllable (Laum 1928:121-124).

More needs to be said about the writing of the grave accent (˘). We find in the literary papyri many examples of a usage that is distinctly alien to the later usages of the Byzantine period. Here is a working formulation of this usage:

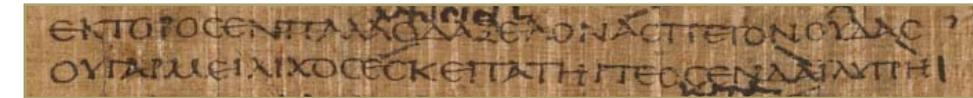
Any number of grave accents could be written over the vowels of any number of syllables in a given phrase—until a syllable that carried a rising tone was finally reached. The writing of such a series of grave accents could indicate not only a sequence of falling tones following a rising tone. More simply, it could indicate also a sequence of non-rising tones preceding the next rising tone. Such a successive marking of grave accents could be prolonged until the syllable that carried the next rising tone was reached. This next rising tone could then be marked by an acute accent written over the vowel of the syllable that carried it, or, alternatively, the marking of the acute could simply be left off. For example, an accentual pattern ...οό... (where each ‘ο’ is the vowel of a distinct syllable) could be written not only as [...οό...] but also as [...ὀό...] or even as [...ὀο...].

In earlier work, I studied such conventions of marking accentuation in literary papyri, focusing on poetic texts. I found that the selective marking of accents in the *scriptio continua* of poetic texts was a reflex of traditional patterns of intonation embedded in the poetry itself. To say it more precisely, these traditional patterns of intonation were embedded in the traditional phrases contained by the metrical framework of the poetry, as in the case of Homeric verse. Within each Homeric verse, the intonational patterns of these phrases combined to form a melodic contour (Nagy 2000:17).

In what follows, I will test my working formulation on a randomly chosen sample of accentual markings in a literary papyrus featuring a sequence of Homeric verses. The sample is taken from the Homeric text of the so-called Bankes Papyrus (= Papyrus 14 in the 1920 edition of the *Iliad* by Monro and Allen), which is a fragment from a papyrus manuscript of the *Iliad* produced in the second century CE. The fragment contains the verses of *Iliad* Ω 127-804. My sample consists of two of these verses.

As I will argue on the basis of this sample, the accentual markings made by the ancient *diorthōtēs* or ‘corrector’ of the Bankes Papyrus show that he was truly a master of correct poetic pronunciation. In a later work, I plan to make the same argument about other *diorthōtai* of other literary papyri.

The two verses I have chosen at random from the Bankes Papyrus correspond to verses 738 and 739 of *Iliad* Ω (See Figure 3). For each verse, I first give the wording as written in the *scriptio continua* of the papyrus, and I then give the same wording as it is written in the Byzantine spelling system:



Ω 738: ΕΚΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΝ ΠΑΛΑΜΗΙΣΙΝ ΟΔΑΞ ΕΛΟΝ ΑΣΠΕΤΟΝ ΟΥΔΑΣ

Ἐκτορος ἐν παλαμῆσιν ὀδᾶξ ἔλον ἄσπετον οὐδας

‘At the hands of Hector they [= the Achaeans] hit the ground hard, teeth first, that indescribably hallowed ground.’

Ω 739: ΟΥΓΑΡ ΜΕΙΛΙΧΟΣ ΕΣΚΕΠΑΤΗΡ ΤΕΟΣ ΕΝ ΔΑΪ ΛΥΓΡΗΙ

οὐ γὰρ μείλιχος ἔσκε πατήρ τεὸς ἐν δαΐ λυγρῆι

‘For your father was not kind and gentle in woeful battle.’

I start with what at first sight seems most familiar to modern readers of ancient Greek. Both the acute and the circumflex marks in the pre-Byzantine spelling **ΑΣΠΕΤΟΝ ΟΥΔΑΣ** of the papyrus version correspond to what we see in the Byzantine spelling, ἄσπετον οὐδας. But even such a correspondence is only superficial. The pre-Byzantine system of accent marking at work here is different in two ways from the Byzantine system:

(1) In this part of the sequence as marked by the *diorthōtēs*, the melodic contour of **ΑΣΠΕΤΟΝ ΟΥΔΑΣ** has a melodic peak as signaled by the acute mark written over the **α** of **ΑΣΠΕΤΟΝ** to indicate a rising tone. The *diorthōtēs* wrote an acute mark over the **α** of **ΑΣΠΕΤΟΝ** not because the word ἄσπετον has an acute over the α but because the phrase **ΑΣΠΕΤΟΝ ΟΥΔΑΣ** has a melodic peak over that initial **α** of that phrase. In many other situations where the Byzantine spelling would call for an acute over a syllable, we find that the *diorthōtēs* of the Bankes Papyrus does not indicate any accent mark at all. A case in point is **ΟΥΓΑΡ ΜΕΙΛΙΧΟΣ**, corresponding to οὐ γὰρ μείλιχος in the next line, at Ω 739. The absence of an acute mark over the **ει** of

Figure 3. Bankes Papyrus (British Library, Papyrus 114), detail of *Iliad* Ω 738–739.

ΜΕΙΛΙΧΟΣ, unlike what we see in the Byzantine marking of εἶ in μείλιχος, indicates that there was no melodic peak here. The peak comes rather in the next word of the phrase **ΜΕΙΛΙΧΟΣ ΕΨΚΕ**, corresponding to μείλιχος ἔσκε.

(2) The circumflex mark for rising-falling tone in the sequence **ἄσπετονοῦδας** does not indicate a melodic peak here but rather an abrupt fall from the peak that started at the vowel **α** of **ἄσπετον**. We see an analogous pattern in the sequence **ἐνδάλιγγρη**, corresponding to ἐν δαῖ λυγγῆι (I follow the spelling as it is written in the Venetus B; the Venetus A has ἐν δαῖ λυγγῆι). In this case, a melodic peak has already been reached over the vowel **ι** of **ἐνδάλι**, as indicated by the grave mark over the **α**, and what still has to happen is for the rising tone to fall abruptly, and it does in fact fall when the phrasing reaches the final syllable of the verse, falling over the **η** of **λγρη**. Just as there is only one melodic peak in the sequence **ἄσπετονοῦδας**, which happens over the vowel **α** of **ἄσπετον** as signaled by the acute mark over the **α**, so also there is only one melodic peak in the sequence **ἐνδάλιγγρη**, which happens over the vowel **ι** of **ἐνδάλι**, as indicated by the grave mark over the vowel **α** of the preceding syllable. As for the writing of **ἐνδάλι** to express *ενδαῖ here, I have already formulated the range of options in spelling such an accentuation: the sequence...οό... (where each ‘ο’ is the vowel of a distinct syllable) could be written not only as [...οό...] but also as [...ὀό...] or even as [...ὀο...]. Examples abound in the Bankes Papyrus, but I confine myself here to one set of alternative spellings featuring [...ὀό...] and [...ὀο...]: we find **ἐπιτέκον** = ἐπεὶ τέκον at Ω 493, but **ἐπιμάλα** = ἐπεὶ μάλα at Ω 541.

Before I bring to a close my analysis of the sample I have chosen from the Bankes Papyrus, I need to emphasize one more detail that sheds light on the differences between the accentual systems of the pre-Byzantine and Byzantine periods. It has to do with the rising tone over the vowel **ι** of **ἐνδάλι** in the phrase **ἐνδάλιγγρη** corresponding to ἐν δαῖ λυγγῆι at Ω 739. In terms of the Byzantine system of accentuation, there should be no rising tone over the vowel **ι** of δαῖ, since this word is followed by another word without any intervening syntactical break. In terms of Byzantine accentuation, the acute accent over the vowel **ι** of δαῖ should therefore become a grave accent. Such is not the case, however, in the pre-Byzantine system of accentuation. In this system, polysyllabic words that have oxytone accentuation—that is, words that have an acute accent on the last syllable—can remain oxytone in the middle of a phrase.

To give just one other example of this pre-Byzantine pattern of maintaining acute accent over mid-phrase oxytone words (there are many other examples given by Laum 1928:164), I note this wording in the Bankes Papyrus (Figure 4):



Ω 345: **ΤΗΝ ΜΕΤΑ ΧΕΡΣΙΝ ΕΧΩΝ ΠΕΤΕΤΟ ΚΡΑΤΥΣ ΑΡΓΕΙΦΟΝΤΗΣ**

τὴν μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχων πέτετο κρατὺς ἀργεῖφόντης

‘Holding it [= his wand] in his hands, the mighty Argos-killer flew off.’

In this verse as marked up by the *diorthōtēs*, I draw attention to the melodic peak indicated on the **υ** of **κρατύς αργειφόντης**—precisely where we see the grave accentuation over the **υ** of κρατὺς ἀργεῖφόντης in the Byzantine spelling.

In previous work (Nagy 1996a:126-127n87), I offered a formulation to explain this pre-Byzantine pattern of maintaining acute accent over mid-phrase oxytone words:

Though modern editors print a polysyllabic oxytone word consistently with a grave accent when that word is followed by another word without an obvious intervening syntactical break, the evidence of the papyri and of the Homeric scholia indicates that the accent in this context could in fact be acute, not grave: see Laum 1928:152, 159, 161. ... I say “could,” not “should,” because Moore-Blunt 1978 has found several instances of papyri dated earlier than 400 CE where we do see the spelling of grave as well as acute in this same context. Laum treats the earlier pattern of acute spellings as a constant, whereas in fact it is a gradually disappearing tendency. The point remains—and Laum says this just as effectively as Moore-Blunt—that earlier patterns of ancient Greek accentuation are conditioned by the melodic contour, as it were, of the overall syntax.

In other previous work (Nagy 2000:18), I pointed out that this pattern in ancient Greek accentuation corresponds to a pattern we find in ancient Greek traditions of melody. The melodic pattern in question has been described this way: “when the accent [is] on the final syllable of a word, and is not circumflex, and not succeeded by a grammatical pause, then the melody does not fall again until after the next accent” (West 1992:199).

Such a correspondence helps explain the relevance of the point I was making in my formulation about the melodic contour that we find embedded in the Homeric

Figure 4. Bankes Papyrus (British Library, Papyrus 114), detail of *Iliad* Ω 345.

verse. When I say that pre-Byzantine patterns of Greek accentuation were conditioned by a melodic contour within the syntactical framework of the Homeric verse, I have in mind a medium that could actually preserve such patterns—even after such patterns were lost in the everyday language.

That is how I propose to explain the fact that patterns of pitch-accentuation still survive and are still being written down in the era of the Bankes Papyrus. By the time of this papyrus, dated to the second century CE, pitch-accentuation of phrases had long ago been replaced by stress-accentuation of words in the everyday Greek language. And yet, an educated person like the *diorthōtēs* of the Bankes Papyrus clearly knew about a system of pitch-accentuation underlying the Homeric text that he was marking up for pronunciation. He clearly knew the melodic contours of the verses he was reading for mark-up. Such melodic contours survived in the diction of Homeric poetry and in other such traditional poetic diction, outliving the old patterns of intonation from which they had evolved—and with which they had coexisted until the pitch-accentuation of phrases was replaced by the stress-accentuation of words.

In this regard, the last example I gave from the Bankes Papyrus was most telling:

Ω 345: ΤΗΝΜΕΤΑΧΕΡΣΙΝΕΧΩΝΠΕΤΕΤΟΚΡΑΤΥ΄ΑΡΓΕΪΦΟΝΤΗΣ

τὴν μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχων πέτετο κρατὺς ἀργεΐφόντης

‘Holding it [= his wand] in his hands, the mighty Argos-killer flew off.’

As this example shows, it is not enough to say that the pitch accents of the words we know as πέτετο and κρατὺς and ἀργεΐφόντης determined the melodic contour of the phrase that contained them. There was more to it. The intonation of the whole phrase, within the overall syntax of the Homeric verse, shaped the melodic contour. And it was this melodic contour that ultimately preserved the older phrase-by-phrase pattern of pitch accentuation, which could no longer be understood in terms of the newer word-by-word pattern of stress accentuation.

With this perspective in mind, I return to the evidence of the Venetus A. Traces of the old pre-Byzantine practice of (α) writing in *scriptio continua* and (β) selectively marking the intonation of phrases on a phrase-by-phrase basis are still both evident in the text of the lemma we have been considering, taken from the primary scholia for *Iliad* A 364. This text, as we have seen, does not match exactly the text of the corresponding Homeric verse as written in the Venetus A. In the lemma, there is no space between the words βαρυ and κτενάχων, though we would surely expect a

space if the spelling were non-uncial, that is, if it followed regular Byzantine practice. And there is no accent mark over the γ of βαρυ, though we would surely expect a grave accent if the spelling were non-uncial, that is, if it once again followed regular Byzantine practice.

As my argumentation proceeds, I will have still more to say about these two differences between the lettering βαρυκτενάχων in the lemma of the primary scholia for *Iliad* A 364 and the lettering βαρὺ στενάχων in the Homeric verse of *Iliad* A 364 as written in the actual Homeric text of the Venetus A, where the spelling does in fact follow regular Byzantine practice.

Such differences are undone in the edition of Iliadic scholia by Hartmut Erbse (volumes I-VII, 1969-1988). In that edition, which contains all major Iliadic scholia except for the so-called ‘D’ scholia, here is what we find when we look up the lemma for *Iliad* A 364 in the primary scholia of Venetus A: τὴν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων. Erbse here is following his usual practice of distinguishing the text of a given lemma in the primary scholia from the rest of the text of these scholia by printing the lemma in a highlighted format. But the text of what he prints this way, τὴν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων, does not match ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΚΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ, which is what we find written in the actual text of the lemma for *Iliad* A 364 in the primary scholia of Venetus A. Instead, it matches τὴν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων, which is what we find written in the corresponding Homeric text of the Venetus A.

Before I consider the actual content of the lower-case primary scholia commenting on the lemma ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΚΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ in *Iliad* A 364, I have to consider the corresponding secondary scholia commenting on the same wording as quoted in the lemma of the primary scholia (see Figure 5). In the tight space available for the A^{int} scholia on the recto side of Folio 19, that is, in the space extending down along the left border of the Homeric text, we read the following:

ὅτι τὸ βαρυκτε|νάχων καταβαρείαντάσιν.

(The sign ‘|’ here indicates line-breaks.) I translate:

‘That is because the wording βαρυκτενάχων is pronounced with barytone accentuation.’

When the text here speaks of barytone accentuation, it has to do with the avoidance of placing an accent over the final syllable of a word. So, what the text of the secondary scholia is saying here can be paraphrased as follows: the wording βαρυκτενάχων has a barytone accent, that is, an accent placed not over the final

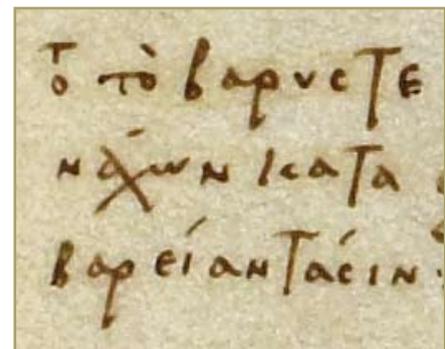


Figure 5. Folio 19r of the Venetus A, detail of secondary scholia for *Iliad* A 364.

syllable but over a non-final syllable (in this case, over the next-to-final syllable) of the word **CTENAXΩN**.

In the edition of Erbse, here is how the same text of the secondary scholia for *Iliad* A 364 is actually printed:

⟨βαρυστενάχων:⟩ ὅτι τὸ βαρυστενάχων κατὰ βαρεΐαν τάσιν.

Whenever Erbse thinks that a lemma is missing at the start of the commentary provided by scholia, it is his practice to indicate where the lemma should be by printing it, as here, within the angular brackets ‘<’ and ‘>’. When we view the image of the secondary scholia for *Iliad* A 364, we can see that there is in fact no lemma **ΒΑΡΥCTENAXΩN** at the start of the abbreviated commentary. But we can also see that the lemma **ΒΑΡΥCTENAXΩN** is actually quoted within the wording of the commentary itself.

Here too in the secondary scholia as in the primary scholia for *Iliad* A 364, we have found (1) no space between **ΒΑΡΥ** and **CTENAXΩN** and (2) no accent mark over the **Υ** of **ΒΑΡΥ**. So, as in the lemma of the primary scholia, the text of the quoted Homeric wording in the secondary scholia for *Iliad* A 364 does not match exactly the text of the corresponding Homeric verse as written in the actual Homeric text of Venetus A, where we read βαρὺ στενάχων.

There is a difference in the formatting of the secondary scholia and the primary scholia for *Iliad* A 364. As we have seen when I quoted the text of the secondary scholia, it is written in uncial lettering: ὅτι τὸ βαρυστενάχων κατὰ βαρεΐαν τάσιν. To be contrasted is the text of the primary scholia for *Iliad* A 364, which is written in non-uncial lettering. And we find the same contrast between the texts of secondary border scholia and primary scholia in general.

What we see here as well as elsewhere in the secondary border scholia is the survival of a pre-Byzantine formatting of the Homeric text. In the pre-Byzantine period, as I have already noted, there was no distinction at all between lower-case and upper-case lettering, since everything was still being written in the uncial alphabet that later became the basis for upper-case lettering.

In that pre-Byzantine period, the absence of lower-case lettering was not the only feature that differed from what we see in the Byzantine period as represented by the Venetus A. There were two other features, and I have already noted them: (1) marks indicating accentuation were not written out word for word over the wording of texts; and (2) the wording was written in *scriptio continua*, that is, with

no spaces between words. There are traces of both these two features in both the secondary and the primary scholia, as we see from (1) the spelling of **ΒΑΡΥ** without an accent mark over the **Υ** and (2) the spelling of the lemma **ΒΑΡΥCTENAXΩN** as if it were one word.

In the case of the secondary scholia, there is also a trace of yet another pre-Byzantine feature in formatting. I have in mind the random line-break indicated by way of the mark ‘|’ in the sequence **ΒΑΡΥCTENAXΩN**. What we see here, I suggest, is yet another indication that the original lettering of the secondary scholia had been written in *scriptio continua*. The practice of *scriptio continua* would explain why the reformatting into word-by-word spelling was not always consistent in matching line-breaks with word-breaks. I should add that this kind of random line-breaking seems to happen more often in the secondary scholia than in the primary scholia.

Here is another example. In the space available for the A^{int} scholia on the recto side of Folio 54, that is, in the space extending down along the left border of the Homeric text, we read the following scholion for the Homeric verse that we know as *Iliad* Δ 153:

ὅτι ΔΕΙΒΑΡΥΤΟΝΕΪΝ|ΤὸCTENAXΩNΩCὈΡΕΓΩN·ΚΑΙΓΑΡ|CTENAXONTOΩCὈ|ΡΕΓONTO

(The sign ‘|’ here indicates line-breaks.)

(Before I proceed to analyze this example, I must note that my reading of the scholion as I just gave it here is predisposed toward the Homeric text as we know it, since it does not reflect some of the uncertainties experienced by an unprejudiced reader of the markings of accents and breathings. Here are two such uncertainties, as shared with me by Myriam Hecquet-Devienne. First, it is unclear whether there really is an acute over the **Δ** of **CTENAXONTO** here. Second, the markings of rough breathing and smooth breathing respectively in the sequence **ΩCὈΡΕΓONTO** look like markings for grave accent.)

In the edition of Erbse, here is how the same text of the secondary scholia for *Iliad* Δ 153 is actually printed:

<στενάχων:> ὅτι δεῖ βαρυτονεῖν τὸ στενάχων ὡς ὀρέγων· καὶ γὰρ “στενάχοντο” (Π 393 al.) ὡς ὀρέγοντο.

Next I give my translation. The formatting I use for rendering the Greek text of the quoted Homeric wording approximates the formatting as it would have appeared in the pre-Byzantine period:

‘That is because the wording **CTENAXΩN** must be pronounced with barytone accentuation. Just like **OPEGΩN**. And in fact **CTENAXONTO** is attested [Π 393, etc.], just like **OPEGONTO**.’

As for the actual information given by the secondary scholia for the verses we know as *Iliad* A 364 and Δ 153, it came ultimately from Aristarchus, the great editor of Homer who flourished in the mid-second century BCE. And the mediator for both of these secondary scholia was Aristonicus, a more recent representative of the Aristarchean school of thought who flourished in the second half of the first century BCE. In the secondary scholia for both A 364 and Δ 153, the wording that shows the mediation of Aristonicus is ὄτι. Relevant is the sign ‘>’, called the *diplē* in the ancient world, which is placed in front of verse 364 of *Iliad* A in the Venetus A. Aristarchus would place this sign in front of any verse when he was calling attention to some unusual feature in the language of the verse, which he would proceed to analyze in the separate text of his commentaries, that is, in his *hupomnēmata*. In these commentaries, he would go on record to express his disagreement with other experts if they had a different interpretation of the relevant reading inside that verse—or if the text used by these experts featured a variant reading.

Aristonicus wrote a monograph about all such editorial signs used by Aristarchus, and the Venetus A actually preserves these signs in front of the verses of its Homeric text, as in the case of verse 364 of *Iliad* A. The expression ὄτι, meaning ‘because’, was the conventional way for Aristonicus to start his explanation of a given sign in front of a given verse. For further background on the work of Aristonicus, I refer to the chapter of Graeme Bird in this volume.

In the case of verse 364 of *Iliad* A, as we see from the reportage of the secondary scholia of Venetus A, Aristonicus was explaining why there was a *diplē* placed by Aristarchus in front of this particular verse. Aristonicus begins his explanation with the conventional tag ὄτι ‘because’, by which he means here that Aristarchus had placed a *diplē* in front of the verse. In this case, as we will see, Aristarchus had disagreed with some other expert, not named here, about the pronunciation of the wording **CTENAXΩN**.

The scholia here actually preserve the essence of what Aristonicus said that Aristarchus said about the pronunciation of **CTENAXΩN**: according to Aristarchus the reader should pronounce **CTENAXΩN** with barytone accentuation, that is, with the accent on the non-final syllable. According to Aristarchus, then, the wording should be read as -στενάχων.

As we will see, the unnamed expert with whom Aristarchus disagreed thought that **CTENAXΩN** here should be pronounced with the accent on the final syllable: according to this alternative opinion, the wording should be read -στεναχῶν. As I said before, the source of this alternative opinion is not named here in the scholia of Venetus A.

The identity of this unnamed expert who had read -στεναχῶν can be pieced together from the scholia of the Venetus B manuscript of the *Iliad*, combined with the cognate scholia C and E³ and T. This group of Iliadic scholia can be traced back to an “archetype” known as bT. Here is how the relevant text of the bT scholia for *Iliad* A 364 is printed by Erbse:

βαρὺ στενάχων: ὁ Σιδώνιος περισπᾶ: b(BCE³)T

περισπᾶσθαι γὰρ καὶ “ἀδινὰ στοναχῆσαι” (Σ 124) φησίν. T

Ἀρίσταρχος δὲ βαρύνει· τὰ πολλὰ γὰρ κινήματα ὡς ἀπὸ βαρυτόνου γέγονε “βαρὺ δὲ στενάχοντος ἄκουσα” (θ 95), “ἐπεστενάχοντο δ’ ἑταῖροι” (Δ 154). b(BCE³)T

Next I give my translation. Once again, the formatting I use for rendering the Greek text of the quoted Homeric wording approximates the formatting as it would have appeared in the pre-Byzantine period:

ΒΑΡΥCΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ: ‘as he [= Achilles] groaned deeply’.

The Sidonian has a circumflex accentuation over the last syllable. For he says that there is also a circumflex [over the **Η**] in **ΔΔΙΝΑCΤΟΝΑΧΗCΑΙ** ‘to groan again and again’ [Σ 124].

But Aristarchus has a barytone accentuation, since inflections happen for the most part by way of starting from barytone accentuation: **ΒΑΡΥΔΕCΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟCΑΚΟΥCΑ** ‘I heard him groaning deeply’ [θ 95] and **ΕΠΕCΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟ(ΔΕΤΑΙΡΟΙ)** ‘(and the comrades) groaned in response’ [Δ 154].

The expert who is mentioned here simply as ‘the Sidonian’ is the Aristarchean scholar Dionysius of Sidon. As we learn from other references to him in the Homeric scholia, Dionysius knew a great deal about the methods and findings of his predecessor Aristarchus. A shining example is what we read about Dionysius from Didymus, another Aristarchean scholar: in an excerpt from the scholia of Venetus A

for *Iliad* T 365-368, Didymus says that Dionysius reported on the changing views of Aristarchus concerning the authenticity of these four Homeric verses.

We cannot be sure of the precise dating of the life and times of this Aristarchean scholar Dionysius, but we know at least this much: he postdates Aristarchus, who flourished in the mid-second century BCE, and he predates the Aristarchean scholar Didymus, who flourished in the second half of the first century BCE, contemporaneously with the Aristarchean scholar Aristonicus.

I return to the testimony of the bT scholia, which report that Dionysius of Sidon had read **CTENAXΩN** as -στεναχῶν, in opposition to the reading preferred by Aristarchus, which was -στενάχων. Since Dionysius clearly postdates Aristarchus, there is no reason to think that Aristarchus was arguing with this expert against the reading -στεναχῶν. But Aristarchus must have been arguing with some other expert against such a reading when he defended the reading -στενάχων. Otherwise there would have been no point in drawing attention to the reading -στενάχων, since there is nothing unusual at all about the accentuation of this form. We would expect a verb like στενάχω to have a participle accented as στενάχων, and that is all there is to it. But Aristarchus went out of his way to argue for this expected form -στενάχων, and so he must have been arguing with someone against an unexpected form, against an unusual reading. And -στεναχῶν, as we will now see, is in fact a most unusual reading. (As Mary Ebbott points out to me, there is a comparable example of such an unusual reading in the A scholia for *Iliad* K 447, where it is reported that ‘some’ [τινες] read δολῶν instead of Δόλων.)

If Aristarchus was arguing with someone who had read the form -στεναχῶν, who would that person be? The most likely candidate would be a contemporary, or even a predecessor. But who in particular?

For an answer, I start with the form στοναχῆσαι as attested in *Iliad* Σ 124. This form, as we have seen, is cited by the T scholia for *Iliad* A 364 as an example that supports the reading -στεναχῶν, which was advocated by Dionysius of Sidon according to both the b and the T scholia for that Iliadic verse. But there is an obvious problem with this form: we would expect an aorist infinitive στοναχῆσαι to be matched by a present participle that is shaped στοναχῶν (from στοναχέων), not στεναχῶν. So, in *Iliad* A 364, why not read -στοναχῶν instead of -στεναχῶν, if you are not going to read -στενάχων? After all, the verb στοναχέω is attested in Homeric poetry. And even the noun στοναχή is attested. Those forms are quite usual.

Here is the surprise: the noun στοναχή has a most unusual attested variant in Homeric poetry, and that is στεναχή. The existence of such an unusual form στεναχή as a variant of στοναχή is reported in the scholia for *Odyssey* ε 83 (H.P.):

στοναχῆσι] διὰ τοῦ ε στεναχῆσιν αἰ Ἀριστοφάνους

I translate:

CTONAXHICI: the manuscripts of Aristophanes have it with an ε, so
CTENAXHICIN

So the existence of στεναχή as an unusual variant of the noun στοναχή could justify the existence of στεναχέω as an unusual variant form of the verb στοναχέω. Since we now know that we can expect to find the noun στεναχή in the manuscripts of ‘Aristophanes’, we may also expect to find the verb στεναχέω, and that is why a participle spelled **CTENAXΩN** may be pronounced as -στεναχῶν.

By now we can see clearly that the reading -στεναχῶν at *Iliad* A 364 must have originated from the manuscripts of ‘Aristophanes’, just as the reading στοναχῆσιν at *Odyssey* ε 83 originated from there.

And the biggest surprise is, this ‘Aristophanes’ was none other than Aristophanes of Byzantium. This man was not only the teacher of Aristarchus - and his predecessor in the role of editing Homer. He was also the reputed inventor of the notation system for indicating the pitch accents we know as the acute, the grave, and the circumflex.

This is not the time, of course, to undertake the task of reviewing the traditions about the invention of accentual notation by Aristophanes—a task I have attempted elsewhere (Nagy 2000:15-16). Here I simply make a connection between the general interest of Aristophanes in questions of accentuation and his specific interest in the accentuation of such forms as **CTENAXΩN** in *Iliad* A 364. That specific interest is being mediated here by Dionysius of Sidon, who must have noted the disagreement of Aristarchus with the reading of the teacher of Aristarchus, Aristophanes.

Having considered the testimony of the relevant bT scholia for *Iliad* A 364, I return to the relevant scholia of the Venetus A. So far, we have considered how the lemma of the primary scholia refers to *Iliad* A 364 and what the secondary scholia have to say about this Homeric verse. Now we are finally ready to consider what the primary scholia themselves have to say about this same verse.

The information given by the primary scholia following the lemma **ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ** for *Iliad* A 364 comes once again from Aristarchus, just as the information given by the secondary scholia for A 364 comes from that same scholar. In the case of the primary scholia for A 364, however, the mediator of Aristarchus is an Aristarchean other than Aristonicus. This time, the mediator was an Aristarchean named Herodian, who flourished in the second half of the second century CE. By way of review, I note that Aristonicus flourished in the second half of the first century BCE and that Aristarchus himself flourished in the mid-second century BCE. So Herodian lived about three hundred years after Aristarchus.

Herodian specialized in interpreting what Aristarchus had observed concerning accentuation and quantity in Homeric diction. So what we are about to see is how an expert like Herodian mediates the relevant testimony of Aristarchus concerning the accentuation of *Iliad* A 364.

Here is the text of what the primary scholia actually have to say about the lemma **ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ** for *Iliad* A 364. I show the text as it is printed by Erbse:

τὴν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων· βαρύνεται ἡ μετοχή· διδασκόμεθα δὲ ἐξ ἐκείνου “τοὺς δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων μετέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων, / χειρὸς ἔχων Μενέλαον· ἐπεστενάχοντο δ’ ἑταῖροι” (Δ 153-154)· ἡ γὰρ ἐπίζευξις τοῦ “ἐπεστενάχοντο” διδάσκει ὅτι καὶ τὸ στενάχω βαρύνεται· εἰ γὰρ ἦν περισπώμενον, ἐστεναχοῦντο ἐγένετο ὡς ἐν<ε>νοοῦντο· καὶ ἡ κλίσις δὲ τοῦτο δείκνυσι “βαρὺ δὲ στενάχοντος ἄκουσα” (θ 95), οὐχὶ στεναχοῦντος· καὶ ἡ δοτικὴ “τῷ δὲ βαρὺ στενάχοντι” (Σ 70).

Next I give my translation. Once again, the formatting I use for rendering the Greek text of the quoted Homeric wording approximates the formatting as it would have appeared in the pre-Byzantine period:

ΤΗΝΔΕΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝ ‘addressing her [= Thetis], as he [= Achilles] groaned deeply’: [the expected post-lemma sign ‘:’ is actually missing at this point] The participle [= **CTENAXΩΝ** ‘groaning’] has barytone accentuation. And we learn this from the following [passage in the *Iliad*]:

**ΤΟΥΣΔΕΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΩΝΜΕΤΕΦΗΚΡΕΙΩΝΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ΧΕΙΡΟΣΕΧΩΝΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΝΕΠΕΣΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟΔΕΤΑΙΡΟΙ**

‘Addressing them as he groaned deeply, king Agamemnon spoke, while holding Menelaos by the hand; and the comrades were groaning in response.’

[Δ 153-154]

For the correlative expression **ΕΠΕΣΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟ** ‘groaned in response’ teaches us that [the word] **CTENAXΩ** ‘groan’ likewise has barytone accentuation. For if it [= **CTENAXΩΝ** ‘groaning’] had a circumflex over the last syllable, then the correlative expression would have been **ΕΣΤΕΝΑΧΟΥΝΤΟ** ‘groaned in response’, just like **ΕΝΕΝΟΟΥΝΤΟ** ‘had in mind’. And the declension [of the participle **CTENAXΩΝ**] also shows this: **ΒΑΡΥΔΕΣΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟΚΑΚΟΥΣΑ** ‘I heard him groaning deeply’ [θ 95] not ...**CTENAXΟΥΝΤΟC**... . So also the dative: **ΤΩΙΔΕΒΑΡΥΣΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΙ** ‘and to him groaning deeply’ [Σ 70].

In this excerpt from Herodian as written in the primary scholia of Venetus A, we see a mediation of the same testimony of Aristarchus that we saw mediated in the excerpt from Aristonicus as written in the secondary scholia of Venetus A—and in the excerpt from an anonymous source in the **bT** scholia. In some ways, the excerpt from Herodian gives us more information than what we got in the other excerpts, but in other ways it gives us less. For example, we are not told about the variant pattern of accentuation defended by Dionysius of Sidon, which as we have seen is based on the testimony of Aristophanes of Byzantium. So there is something to be said for the argument that the information we get from the primary scholia of Venetus A concerning the testimony of experts like Herodian is less valuable than the corresponding information from the **bT** scholia concerning the testimony of experts like Dionysius of Sidon, who are earlier than Herodian (Laum 1928:82). Still, such considerations run the risk of losing sight of something even more valuable than the earlier information we get from experts like Dionysius. The fact remains that the most valuable information we get from both the Venetus A scholia and the **bT** scholia goes back to one single source, and that source is the testimony of Aristarchus himself.

Even when this testimony reveals a mental slip made by Aristarchus, his Aristarchean mediators will often simply repeat the slip. I take as an example the moment when both (1) the Aristarchean expert Herodian as excerpted in the A scholia and (2) the unnamed Aristarchean expert as excerpted in the **bT** scholia are citing Aristarchus citing this Homeric phrase:

ΒΑΡΥΔΕΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟCΑΚΟΥCΑ

‘I heard him groaning deeply’.

In the Homeric text as we have it in the *Odyssey* (θ 95), by contrast, we read this wording instead:

ΒΑΡΥΔΕΤΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟCΑΚΟΥCΕ

‘He heard him groaning deeply’.

The fidelity of both our Aristarchean mediators in following the observations of Aristarchus, mental slips and all, leads me to make this general formulation: the empirical observations of Aristarcheans concerning Homeric accentuation normally derive from the empirical observations of Aristarchus himself.

A qualification is needed here. An Aristarchean expert like Herodian, even as late as the second century CE, could still make his own independent judgments about Homeric accentuation. That is because he lived in an era when Homeric verse was still being accented phrase-by-phrase, not word-by-word. As we see from a document like the Bankes Papyrus, which was not that far removed from the life and times of Herodian himself, people were still trying to read Homer correctly. And the way to read Homer correctly was to get the pronunciation right. To get the pronunciation right, you had to make sure that the Homeric phrases you were reading out loud sounded right. And the right sound was an overall melodic contour that framed the intonations of the phrases embedded in the Homeric verse.

Having made room for this qualification, I still insist that the quest to maintain the pronunciation of Homer in the era of Herodian depended on a body of knowledge that derived ultimately from the expertise of distant predecessors like Aristarchus himself—predecessors who had studied the melodic contours of Homeric verses not so much because they wanted to read these verses correctly but because they were interested in the accentual patterns that could be extracted from these contours for the sake of studying the accentuation of words. For the likes of Aristarchus, the study of Homeric accents was merely a means toward the end of studying accents for their own sake, in all their archaic complexities.

In studying accents for the sake of accents, Aristarchus was ahead of his time, since he had to think about the individual accents of individual Homeric words. But the only way he could be sure about the accent of any individual Homeric word was by studying the melodic contours of Homeric phrases in which that word was embedded (Nagy 1996a:128-130).

I conclude. The Homeric scholia in the Venetus A and in other Byzantine manuscripts like the Venetus B have much to teach us about the studies of Aristarchus and his Aristarchean successors. And what we learn from the testimony of the Aristarcheans helps us reconstruct the ancient practice of reading Homer out loud. The Homeric scholia show clear traces of this practice. And they show traces of an even more ancient practice, which is, the actual performance of Homeric poetry. That is because the traditions of reading Homeric poetry out loud stem from older traditions of performing this poetry, which had once been oral poetry (Nagy 1996a:125-127).

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