Textual Criticism in Pergamum: Hermias on *Iliad* 16.207

A well-known and still discussed question regarding the ancient scholars’ work on the text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is to what extent their readings were based on documentary sources. In the Hellenistic period philological activity flourished at the libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum. However, only fragments of these scholars’ work have come down to us. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain whether their editions were based on conjectural emendation of the transmitted text, on choosing among variants attested in copies of the poems available to them, or on a combination of both methods.\(^1\) The problem is even more difficult in the case of the grammarians who worked in the library of Pergamum, because the material that has come down to us is much scantier than the evidence we possess regarding the Alexandrians. None of the Pergamenes’ readings are found in early papyri; moreover, extant fragments rarely present a variant as such, independently of a problem regarding the content of the passage. Many of these readings are almost certainly conjectures: if we consider the fragments of Crates of Mallos (second century BC), the most important and best known among the Pergamene philologists, his readings are almost always connected with exegetical problems: it is thus natural to think that he changed the text to correct real or supposed contradictions or improprieties, or to make the epics agree with his geographical theories.\(^2\) Only once does he mention a specific copy of the epics when discussing a reading: he refers to a manuscript of the *Iliad* with a different and shorter proem, reduced to one line.\(^3\)

Apart from this case, however, it is impossible to prove that any other of Crates’ readings derives from manuscript evidence. All the more welcome, therefore, is a fragment of one of Crates’ followers, Hermias, who defends a reading that in my opinion is likely to be a manuscript variant. The fragment of Hermias has not attracted much attention, probably because this grammarian is not quoted elsewhere and is to us nothing more than a name.\(^4\) Hermias discusses *Iliad* 16.207, where Achilles is sternly addressing the Myrmidons, who are preparing to go back into battle with Patroclus; he reminds them how in the past he tolerated their threats to sail home, when they reproached him for keeping them from battle: ταῦτα μ᾽ ἀγειρόμενοι θάμ᾽ ἐβάζετε ‘often you would gather in groups and so mutter against me’ (transl. Lattimore).

The scholia A and T on this passage debate the text and accentuation of the words at the beginning of the line. The A scholium, derived from Herodian (vol. 2, p. 100 ll. 39 ff. Lentz), reports two opposite readings of these words, ταὐτά μ’ (ε) and ταὐτ’ ἀμα, assigning the first to Aristarchus, Crates’ contemporary and rival in Alexandria, and the other to Hermias, identified as ‘a follower of Crates’. The text of the A scholium reads as follows:
Sch. A ad II. 16.207 a (Hrd.): ταῦτα μ᾽ ἀγειρόμενοι: ἐπὶ τὴν ταῦτα συλλαβὴν ὀξεῖα· ἐγκλιτικὴ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ μέ, ταῦτα με ἀγειρόμενοι, οὕτως καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος. ο μέντοι Κρατήτ<σ>ιος (suppl. Bekker) Ἐμείας τὸ ἁμα λέγει ἐγκείσθαι. οὕτω δὲ δώσει καὶ διὰ τοῦ ταῦτα τήν γραφήν, οὕτως ἔχουσαν οὕτως.

Herodian and Aristarchus therefore wrote ταῦτα μ’, with an acute accent on the last syllable of ταῦτα, followed by the the enclitic μ’ (ε). Hermias on the contrary read ταῦθ’ ἁμα, dividing the words in a different way;5 Herodian notes that as a consequence he had to aspirate ταῦτα in ταῦθ’.6

The manuscripts of the Iliad almost unanimously agree with Aristarchus’ text, no doubt the correct one; only three later papyri and three medieval manuscripts follow Hermias’ text.7 I do not think that Hermias’ reading was a conjecture: the vulgate does not offer any obvious problems regarding either the grammar or the content of the line, and for that reason a deliberate intervention on the text would not be plausible. On the contrary, Hermias could have found the reading in a manuscript copy of the poem; as Janko notices, the reading ταῦθ’ ἁμα anticipates θάμ’ ἐβάζετε in the second half of the line (ταῦθ’ ἁμ’ ἀγειρόμενοι θάμ’ ἐβάζετε): I think that this reading could be a mistake of the scribe, not a different word division devised by Hermias himself.8 We do not know the date of Hermias: the epithet of ‘Cratetean’ is used to identify grammarians who lived as late as the first century BC (such as Alexander Polyhistor, FGrHist 273). Hermias must have been in any case younger than Aristarchus: he possibly knew and discussed his reading of the line, disagreeing with him.

To conclude, I suggest that Hermias’ fragment might confirm that grammarians at Pergamum used manuscript evidence to establish their text of the epics. This is not as obvious as it may seem, because extant fragments of their work mostly discuss readings that are connected with exegetical problems, where, we suspect, correcting the text could have been the easiest solution. The fragment of Hermias is therefore another little piece of evidence towards the reconstruction of the sources of the Pergamene text of the Homeric poems.9

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2) On Crates’ textual criticism see Broggiato 2001, Introduzione, § 5.1. Other grammarians from Pergamum who worked on Homer and belonged to Crates’ circle are Zenodotus of Mallos (an edition of his extant fragments in Broggiato 2005) and Herodicus of Babylon (see Düring 1941, 128-31).

3) See Crates F 1 B. (the Prolegomenon found in the cod. Rom. Bibl. Naz. 6, published by Montanari 1979, 56; the text is also in Erbse’s edition of the Illiad scholia, vol. I, p. 3, among the testimonia). References to manuscript copies of the poems are extremely rare even among Crates’ contemporaries in Alexandria: see Aristarchus in sch. A ad II. 9.222 b1 (Didymus) and Callistratus in sch. A ad II. 18.39-49 (Didymus + Aristonicus).

4) On Hermias see now Pagani 2008.

5) The words τὸ ἄμα λέγει ἐγκεῖσθαι mean ‘(Hermias) said that the word ἄμα is found in the line’. For this meaning of the verb ἐγκεῖσθαι in the scholia vetera to the Illiad see e.g. the sch. A ad II. 6.465 (where Herodian is discussing an alternative word division); all the relevant passages are listed in Erbse’s Index III, s.v. ἐγκεῖσθαι.

6) This is the meaning of δίδωμι (οὕτω δὲ δώσει) in this sentence, i.e. ‘to write’: see Lehrs (1882, 19), who refers to our scholium. – The scholium T on the same line also reports Hermias’ reading, without mentioning his name: sch. T ad II. 16.207 b (sch. ex.): ταῦτα μ’ <ἀγειρόμενοι ... ἐβάζετε (suppl. Erbse, praeunte Maass)>: τὸ πλῆρες ταῦτα μοι· η’ ἐβάζετε εἰς ἐμὲ ταῦτα ἄμα’, οὐχ ψιμώς.

7) According to M.L. West’s edition of the Illiad (Munich-Leipzig 1998-2000), the medieval MSS reporting Hermias’ reading are: Scorial. Q.I.12 (509), saec. xi (ante corr.); Genav. 44,

8) Note that the Odyssey scholia report two similar variant readings involving the word ἅμα. Odyssey 4.686 has οἳ θ᾿ ἅμ᾿ ἀγειρόμενοι against οἳ θάμ᾿ ἀγειρόμενοι: θ᾿ ἅμ᾿ is found in the majority of medieval MSS, while θάμ᾿ is mentioned by Herodian (sch. ad loc. = vol. 2, p. 141, l. 21 Lentz). Another similar instance is Od. 8.161, where we find the same divergence (Θ᾿ ἅμα against θαμά, see the sch. ad loc. = Herodian vol. 2, p. 147, l. 20 Lentz).

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