The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

The Text of the *Iliad*—II

T. W. Allen

The Classical Review / Volume 14 / Issue 06 / July 2010, pp 290 - 291

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00082901, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00082901

How to cite this article:

T. W. Allen (2010). The Text of the *Iliad*—II. The Classical Review, 14, pp 290-291

doi:10.1017/S0009840X00082901

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

THE TEXT OF THE *ILIAD*—II.

IN a previous paper (March 1899) I endeavoured to show that the existing MSS. of the *Iliad* constitute a vulgate, with two exceptions, the Ptolemaic fragments of papyrus and one minuscule family, *h*. The place that the Ptolemaic fragments hold in Homeric tradition is still a mystery,¹ and is likely to remain so, until Teptunis or some yet more fertile site enlighten us. I proceed in this article to elucidate the mediaeval family *h*.

The peculiarity of this family is that, compared to any other group of MSS., it is overwhelmingly Aristarchean. This fact, and its importance, were first brought out by Dr. Leaf, *Journal of Philology* xviii. p.

181 *sq.* While the other Homeric MSS. certainly have the same origin, whatever it be, these characteristics of *h* suggest that it may be an exception to the vulgate, and really represent some distinct current of descent. Whether this expectation is justified will I think appear from the figures that follow. I have for convenience sake dealt only with the Italian MSS. of the family, viz., M 1, 12, Vat 3, 6, 19, 23, Ven. 2, 4, and I have not been over-careful in determining the archetype, but whenever an ancient reading appears in one member, I have taken that as the reading of the family. For the purpose of this paper it was well to give *h* every advantage.

	A	B	Γ	Δ	E	Z	H	Θ	I	K	Λ	M	N	Ξ	Ο	Π	Ρ	Σ	T	Τ	Φ	Χ	Ψ	Ω
Peculiar readings	0	8	3	7	5	4	9	9	10	10	13	12	11	15	7	14	12	9	4	9	16	10	9	15
Aristarchus ...				3	3	1	3	3	6	3	3	3	2	5				2	1	1	2	2		1
Aristophanes ...							1				1			1		1	1	1			1			
Zenodotus ...																		1						
Ancient (non-Ar.)	1	1					1				2	2	1			4		1	2	3			1	
No anc. authority	7	2	4	2	3	4	6	4	7	9	7	7	8	7	13	4	7	2	5	10	10	8	14	

TOTALS.

Peculiar readings ...	...	...	221
Aristarchus...	...	...	44
Aristophanes ...	...	...	7
Zenodotus ...	...	...	1
Ancient (non-Ar.) ...	...	...	19
No ancient authority	...	...	150

Expressed in percentages, of every 100 peculiar readings in *h*, 20 are Aristarchean, 12 are ancient but non-Aristarchean, and the remainder, 68, have no known source.

What conclusion upon the origin of the family do these figures indicate? Two hypotheses naturally present themselves:

¹ The fragments published by Professors Mahaffy and Nicole contain no clue to any ancient connection; the Geneva MS. on A 814, 822 has coincidences with mediaeval MSS. and (822) with an *ἐν ἁλλω* of Ven. A, but nothing further can be inferred. Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt's pieces have two superscribed variants at φ 397, 398, one of which, *ὑποδόφιον*, is known to be Antimachus' reading, the other (*ἐμὲ* for *διὰ*) may belong to Antimachus also. If these variants, as is most probable, were added out of curiosity, then at all events we know that the edition to which the fragments belong is not that of Antimachus: it is less likely, but still conceivable, that they are intended as real corrections of actual errors of the scribe. Then the edition would be that of Antimachus. The other peculiarities lead nowhither.

There is, of course, a strong likeness between all these fragments and the copies used by Aeschines, Plato (in the II. Alcibiades), and Plutarch. Unfortunately these variants also are all but isolated and

the family may be either a recension, or a survival more or less direct of an ancient edition. The former is the suggestion which *prima facie* most commends itself: we are familiar with attempts upon the Homeric text for at least six centuries, and there would seem nothing to hinder the view that towards the decline of the ancient world, about the period when the Viermänner-commentar was reduced to scholia, and when so many Latin authors underwent revision, a grammarian should have improved the common text by the fruits of his reading.

Natural as the view is, it seems at once set aside by the results given above. A

connect with no known ancient source. One possibility has not been noticed. One of the passages in which Aeschines' copy departs from the common text is ψ 77 *sq.* His substantial differences—the addition of 81a, 83a b, and the new versions of 82 and 84 are nowhere else alluded to, but his verbal variant in 77, *οὐ γὰρ ἔτι* for *οὐ μὲν γὰρ* is quoted by schol. A as *ἐν τισι τῶν πολιτικῶν*. It is possible, considering how defective our knowledge of the *πολιτικά* is, that the additions also may have come from the same copy—one of the *κατὰ πόλεις*. (Aeschines also *appears* to omit 92, a verse athetised by Aristarchus, and of which we are told *οὐκ ἦν ἐν πάσαις*.) It is perhaps not too much to assume that Aeschines' quotations are made from the same book. (Plato also, *Ion* 538 D, reads *πῆμα* in Ω 82, with *ἐνταὶ τῶν κατὰ πόλεις*.)

Given therefore the general resemblance in character between the papyrus-variants and the quotations there is this faint connection between the Ptolemaic papyri and the *πολιτικά*.

certain amount of eclecticism may be allowed to a commentator, but it is too much to suppose that any Graeculus could have made so eccentric a choice of readings as results from this table: not only are the readings chosen without regard to their intrinsic merit (the consideration of *merit* as such is foreign to my plan, but any one who includes that side of the question will find that survival is in no sense dependent on it), but the supposititious editor leaps at will from Aristarchus to his adversaries, and in one book and another ignores both. Nothing can be more evident than the absence of plan or intention from *h*.

If the family is not a recension, is it the descendant of an original ancient, probably prae-Aristarchean edition? This certainly daring view has met with the qualified approval of Dr. Leaf (*l.c.* p. 204). We are however met with (1) the difficulties of the readings offered by *h* that are given above: the motley, inconsistent and arbitrary selection of the lections themselves. An 'edition' which was *ex hypothesi* the source of these readings would be a marvel. (2) We actually know a considerable number of prae-Aristarchean editions, the *πολιτικάί*, the *κατ' ἄνδρα*, etc. The coincidences between these and *h* are negligible. (3) That there were other texts in existence before Aristarchus besides these appears clearly from the Ptolemaic fragments: but these fragments stand in no relation to *h*. Their characteristic is the omission or addition of lines: *h* deals very slightly in this sort of variant. Its peculiarities are verbal. (4) We have to add the great improbability of an edition, unmentioned in our scholia, and at least prae-Christian, propagating itself in obscurity and emerging in three or four copies in the 13th century. The catena of papyri is now fairly continuous and becomes every day stronger. No mediaeval family, at all, one may say roughly, is continued backwards by them: but no papyrus, Ptolemaic, Roman, or Byzantine, has yet been found which bears the faintest relation to *h*. Its disappearance and emergence would be an unparalleled literary katavothra. (5) Lastly, as against both the recension and the survival theory, we must set the extreme imperfec-

tion of the Aristarchean tradition offered by the family. Compared with any single family, the proportion of Aristarchean readings peculiar to *h* no doubt is large (*e* 3, *f* 4, *g* 2, *h* 44); but in relation to the total recorded number of Aristarchus' lections (664), or even the total number of those which have found a place in MSS. whether few or many (495), such a total of peculiarities is trifling; and suggests that the phenomenon does not stand apart, but is only a slightly special case of the conditions under which Aristarchean readings have survived generally.

The nature of the peculiarities of *h*—that the ancient readings vary in number from book to book (Aristarchean readings being entirely absent from A, B, Γ, O, II, X, Ψ), belong to different and contrary sources, and in all cases are merely a tithe of what we know from other authorities to have existed, seems to require an origin which shall not involve purpose, but which shall provide for the free working of chance. I can think of no other than the adscription and absorption of marginal readings. This process takes us into the region of semi-conscious graphical phenomena, in which the incalculable and the casual is the rule. I suppose the ancestor of *h*, a MS. of some not very ancient period, certainly Byzantine, to have exhibited a vulgate text with a copious selection of variants in the margin, variants not chosen as proceeding from one or another critic, but as alternatives to the text. Successive copyists allowed their eye to be caught now by one now by another of these marginalia and transferred them to the book in hand. Result, the fine sprinkling of Aristarchean, anti-Aristarchean and merely ancient readings which we see.

I will not develop this suggestion further at present: but I would point out that it implies a process which is independent or almost independent of design, operates in the case of all authors without exception, is the cause of most textual variation, and involves the minimum of presupposition. It explains I think the characteristics of this family, and has an even wider application.

T. W. ALLEN.