

Homer's Iliad
The Basel Commentary

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Edited by
Anton Bierl and Joachim Latacz

Prolegomena

With contributions by
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Wachter, Martin L. West

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Benjamin W. Millis and Sara Strack

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Preface to the 1st Edition (2000)

The commentary commencing with this volume is meant not only to serve as a tool for professional scholars of classical antiquity, but also to make the earliest preserved major text of European literature somewhat more accessible to literary scholars and students of all disciplines, as well as to others interested in literary studies. Homer's era is removed from ours by about 2700 years. In human history, these approximately 80 generations are a mere blink of the eye. But given the structural social and cultural changes from Greece via Rome, Byzantium and the modern European national states, an adequate, spontaneous comprehension of this kind of poem cannot be taken for granted today. An important subsidiary goal of this project is thus to mitigate the impression of foreignness or even inaccessibility common among non-specialists. This is based on the hope that the commentary will contribute to integrating Homer anew, or at least in a new light, into our society's cultural memory.

The structure of organization and the internal composition are described in detail in the 'Introduction' (see COM 36–43). The work as a whole is composed of three parts: (1) the Prolegomena volume, (2) the text/translation volumes, and (3) the commentary volumes (line-by-line commentary). These three parts interlock and form a tripartite unity.

The present Prolegomena volume forms the basis of the commentary and serves to relieve it of repetitiveness. As detailed below (COM 40), it would have been uneconomical and tiresome to discuss indispensable basic information anew at every relevant point. Instead, the most important data regarding the history of Homer commentaries, the history of the text, formularity and orality, Homeric grammar, meter, the structure of the poem, Homeric poetics, the characters in the action (subdivided between gods and humans, and supplemented with an alphabetic index of characters), and the connections between Homeric and Mycenaean vocabulary, are summarized in ten 'blocks' of information. These blocks are designated by abbreviations (G = grammar, M = meter, etc.) and are organized by paragraph or (where more appropriate) alphabetized. In the line-by-line commentary, reference is made to these blocks by abbreviation + paragraph number (G 25, M 10, etc.) wherever a more detailed or systematic explanation appeared necessary or useful.

The central topics for a primarily philological commentary on the *Iliad* are largely covered by the ten blocks of information,¹ as can be seen by comparison

¹ This applies to the present English edition also in comparison to the Homeric compendia published in 1995 (*Homeric Questions*, ed. J. P. Crielaard, Amsterdam), 2004 (*The Cambridge Com-*

with the most extensive recent compendium of Homeric scholarship, the *New Companion to Homer*, published in 1997 (see the bibliography at the end of this volume). Sections from the *Companion*, such as ‘The Homeric Question’, ‘Epic as Genre’, ‘Homer and Hesiod’ and the like find their proper place in a handbook – as does the entire fourth section (‘Homer’s Worlds’: archaeology, history, sociology, ethics) – but will hardly be missed in a work of commentary. Only the lack of a separate block dedicated to ancient explications of Homer (scholia) is to be regretted.² Here, the notes in ‘Commenting on Homer’ (COM) and ‘History of the text’ (HT) may provide some temporary compensation.

The editor and authors have attempted to present the relevant results of Homeric scholarship in accord with the current state of knowledge. Over the course of the last approximately 100 years, Homeric scholarship has not only become international to an unexpected degree (active researchers today reside in about 45 countries), but has also become specialized to such an extent that an overview of the total output has been impossible for some time. Not to attempt this, however, would not only contradict the academic *ethos*, but would also miss the main goal of any commentary, which is to aid the advance of knowledge by collating what has been achieved to date. Accordingly, every attempt has been made to approach this ideal as closely as possible. The editor and authors are grateful for comments and amendments, even more so since an update of the current Prolegomena volume, after a reasonable span of time, is part of the project plan.

The blocks of information are offered in diction as generally comprehensible as possible, with the exception of G and MYC, where prior knowledge is indispensable; a renewed interest in Homer will not be aroused by the use of insider jargon. As for content, on the other hand, every effort has been made to serve even experts as well as possible, particularly by means of information offered in footnotes and abundant bibliographical references. The needs of this second group of users are further addressed through innovations such as the extensive Homeric grammar, specially developed for this volume by Rudolf Wachter, and the narratological premiere of a ‘Homeric poetics in keywords’ by René Nünlist and Irene de Jong. A further innovation can be found in the Mycenaean index by

panion to Homer, ed. R. Fowler, Cambridge) and 2011 (*Homer-Handbuch. Leben–Werk–Wirkung*, edd. A. Rengakos/B. Zimmermann, Stuttgart), as well as to the *Homer Encyclopedia* (3 vols.), ed. M. Finkelberg, Chichester; Malden, MA. – The ten blocks are here supplemented by an eleventh, containing an overview of the most recent scholarship on Homer, by A. Bierl (‘New Trends in Homeric Scholarship’ [NTHS]).

² A welcome temporary filling of the gap has since been published: René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia*, Cambridge 2009.

Rudolf Wachter, similarly formulated specifically for this volume, which for the first time illustrates via concrete examples the breadth and depth of the current linking the Mycenaean period of Greek history linguistically with the ‘Homeric’ period approximately 700–450 years later. The extensive collation and explanation of all characters featured in the *Iliad* (deities, humans, peoples) in two types of survey (‘Cast of characters’ and ‘Character Index’) by Fritz Graf and Magdalene Stoevesandt will likely be welcomed not only by friends of literature but by professional Homeric scholars as well, for whom the previously available lists of this kind, generally incomplete and inaccurate, have long been a source of annoyance. The ‘History of the text’ by Martin West converts the tremendous command of the material exhibited by the latest editor of the text of the *Iliad* (in the *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*) into a masterful yet readable overview.

Every information block draws on the *entire Iliad* for attestations, and frequently also on the *Odyssey*, the works of Hesiod and the Homeric hymns. The Prolegomena volume thus emerges as a reference work meant to serve as a companion volume for the duration of the commentary project. It is hoped that the enormous expenditure of time required to compose it will be rewarded by a similarly long life for its contents.

*

Completion of this volume was only possible thanks to the collaboration, energy and perseverance of all those involved, especially the permanent associates of the project in Basel, René Nünlist, Magdalene Stoevesandt and Claude Brügger, at different times diligently supported by student assistants. Much patience, tolerance and commitment, often approaching the limits of human endurance, has been asked from the permanent associates in particular. Special thanks are due the authors, both project staff and external associates, for their endless readiness to cooperate, which has found its most efficient expression in repeated mutual reading and subsequent revision of manuscripts. The administration of the University of Basel has generously and actively supported the project from the very beginning, making spacious premises available for it and providing indispensable electronic infrastructure. The Basel university library and its staff are due thanks for their regular, engaged support in the procurement of academic literature. We thank the *Freiwilligen Akademischen Gesellschaft Basel (FAG)* for a significant contribution toward the cost of books. In a field as intensively worked as Homeric studies, the overview of printed output and the task of remaining up to date present particular challenges; here we are indebted to Prof. Dr. Françoise Létoublon for providing us with current information from her Homeric research

center in Grenoble, and especially for sending us the extremely helpful current bibliographies on Homer compiled by Dr. Martin Steinrück.³

Of crucial importance for the gradual emergence of the concept of the project, which goes back to conversations at the 9th Congress of the *Fédération Internationale des Associations d'Études Classiques (FIEC)*, held in Pisa in August 1989, was the enthusiastic approval and active support of Dr. h.c. Heinrich Krämer, managing director of the Stuttgart Teubner-Verlag at the time. After Teubner's transition to Saur publishers in November 1999, Prof. Dr. h.c. mult. Klaus Gerhard Saur also showed acute interest in the project. To thank all those mentioned above is more than the mere performance of a duty. But the greatest thanks are due the *Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung*, without whose generous financing the project would never have begun.⁴

Basel, October 2000

Joachim Latacz

3 Cordial thanks are now also due Prof. Dr. Edzard Visser, who provided us with access to the first two parts of his extensive report on Homeric studies in *Lustrum* (see bibliography) when they were still in manuscript form.

4 Subsequent additional support by Swiss and German private foundations (see Impressum) allowed gradual expansion from the original two to five younger scholars (see COM 37). We are grateful and happy that the tradition of patronage, including in the field of Classical Studies, is still at home in Europe today.

Preface to the English Edition

The *Basel Homer Commentary* (*Basler Homer-Kommentar*), established by Joachim Latacz (Chair of Greek Language and Literature at the University of Basel, 1981–2002), can already look back on two decades of successful work. Progress on the commentary continues thanks to a research team, attached to the professorship for Greek philology at the University of Basel (Department of Classics), supported by the University of Basel and funded by the *Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung* (Swiss National Science Foundation, SNF), its main sponsor. After Joachim Latacz became Professor emeritus, I joined the team of editors in 2002 when I succeeded him as professor; since then we have jointly managed the project.

Project publications since 2000 are a volume of Prolegomena to lay the groundwork and six double volumes of commentary (*Iliad* Books 1, 2, 3, 6, 19, and 24; each in two fascicules: fascicule 1, text and new translation; fascicule 2, commentary). Two of these volumes (Prolegomena and Volume I: commentary on Book 1) appeared in a third edition in 2009, and another volume (Volume II: commentary on Book 2) in a second edition in 2010. Three more double volumes of commentary (on *Iliad* 14, 16, and 18) compiled in the most recent project phase (2009–2015) are due to be published in 2015. Another three volumes of text, translation and commentary on *Iliad* Books 7, 9, and 22, will be added at yet-to-be-determined dates (ca. 2016/17). Twelve books of the *Iliad* – that is, half of the entire poem, focused on its structural pillars – will thus have received treatment in the commentaries within the near future. A grant application for continuation of the project is currently under consideration by the *Swiss National Science Foundation*.

The research team producing the commentaries currently consists of five post-doctoral ‘Homeric specialists’, each holding a PhD. Four of them (Claude Brügger, Marina Coray, Martha Krieter, Katharina Wesselmann) are producing a commentary on a complete Book of the *Iliad*; Magdalene Stoevesandt serves as the general editor.

Funding in the first phase of the project (1995–2003) was provided solely by the *Swiss National Science Foundation*, joined in the second (2003–2009) and third (2009–2015) phases by the private *Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft* (FAG), the private *Max Geldner-Stiftung*, the private *Frey-Clavel-Stiftung* (all Basel), and the *Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur*, all of which we would like to warmly thank again for their support.

To our delight, the commentary was well received in international professional circles. This is shown by the detailed German- and English-language reviews,¹ as well as by the necessity for second and third printings within a mere ten years. The sole fact regretted by all was that the commentary was only available in German, the rise of English as the academic *lingua franca* does of course not exclude the field of Classical Studies.

Early 2011 provided the occasion for a memorable meeting in Princeton between myself and Michiel Klein-Swormink, who had at that time just begun his tenure as *De Gruyter's* general representative in the United States, when I was spending a year at the *Institute for Advanced Study (IAS)*. With the desirability of an English edition of the commentary already in mind – I had just published an English translation of my book on the comic chorus – I spontaneously suggested at the end of our exchange publishing the Homer commentary in English as well. Michiel Klein-Swormink received the suggestion with similarly spontaneous enthusiasm. We quickly became friends over dinner and immediately began to plan the project in greater detail, and he promised to campaign for the project's swift realization at the publishing house.

In early summer of 2011, our publishers *Walter de Gruyter* (Berlin/Boston) officially decided to translate the Basel commentary into English and to distribute the English-language version throughout the world via the various modern means available (including digital versions with interactive features for acquisition in university libraries).

Michiel Klein-Swormink had made clear in our very first discussion that the publishing house would not be able to shoulder the substantial financial expenditures involved in producing the translation – which would, of course, have to be produced by native speakers with a high level of competence in Classical Studies. We were asked to raise third-party funds, with Michiel Klein-Swormink offering his help in developing the concept. While still at the *IAS*, I approached a variety of potential sponsors in the United States. My letter was accompanied by a detailed description of the commentary and the project design by Michiel Klein-Swormink, together with cost estimate provided by the publishing house. After several disappointments, in the fall of 2011 we found an open ear at the *Stavros Niarchos Foundation*, which has provided and continues to provide significant support to promote Hellenism world-wide. At the same time, the *Stavros Niarchos Foundation* set the condition, in line with practices common to major American founda-

¹ Reviews available digitally can be found at: <https://klaphil.unibas.ch/graezistik/griech/bk/rezensionen/>. – In the meantime, our commentary has also been evaluated by Edzard Visser in *Lustrum* 54 (2012) 208–343 (see III.3.a).

tions, that the sum they were willing to grant be matched by further donations of at least the same amount within the space of one year. Shortly before the deadline, two Basel foundations stepped in: the *Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft* (FAG) and the *L. & Th. La Roche Stiftung*. *De Gruyter* guaranteed the defrayal of the remaining funds. Both foundations as well as *De Gruyter* are due our sincere thanks.

The next steps were to establish the project infrastructure, find a Coordinating Manager/Editor for the English edition, and identify suitable translators. This turned out to be an enormous challenge. As directors of the *Basel Homer Commentary*, we began our search before the official start of the project on 3 December 2012. Already in January 2013, we held a meeting in Basel with Michiel Klein-Swormink, who had now advanced to the position of Senior Editorial Director for Classical Studies and Philosophy and director of the US branch of *De Gruyter*, and had taken over responsibility for the project on the publisher's side. A thorough discussion took place regarding various practical matters of organisation and management, as well as specific questions concerning the design of the translation in detail. These negotiations resulted in an Editorial Publication Agreement between *De Gruyter* and the editors of the *Basel Homer Commentary* (including all team members).

Over the next few months, we intensified our efforts to find an editorial and translation team that could meet our conditions of linguistic competence in both German and Ancient Greek and experience in Homeric scholarship, and could work within the budgetary restraints resulting from the aim of finishing as many of the thirteen volumes as possible in the time allotted and with the sum available. After a series of meetings and intense negotiations from July to October 2013, we managed to win as General Editor of the English Edition S. Douglas Olson, Distinguished McKnight University Professor at the University of Minnesota. As a specialist in Greek Philology with a particular interest in the commentary-writing process and, among many other accomplishments, the author of a monograph on the *Odyssey* and a commentary on the *Homeric Hymn of Aphrodite*, he is familiar with Homer, a native speaker of English with competence in German and currently, as a result of his association with the Heidelberg Academy-supported *Kommentierung der Fragmente der griechischen Komödie* project, a resident of Freiburg im Breisgau near Basel. The complex series of negotiations between the publishing house, *Basel Homer Commentary* team, Douglas Olson, and the various other persons involved, yielded a happy agreement that Douglas Olson would form and work with his own team of translators, Sara Strack and Benjamin W. Millis, each holding a PhD in Classics. In late fall 2013, they began translating the first batch of three volumes, the Prolegomena and the commentaries on Books 3 and 6.

In concept, there was rapid agreement between our team and *De Gruyter* not simply to translate the volumes that had already appeared in German, but to publish a thoroughly revised new edition. From the start, we made it a point to include supplementary information directed specifically at an Anglophone audience. In addition, the English-language version omits the accompanying text volume with our own translation; the lemmata are instead drawn from Richard Lattimore's popular translation of the *Iliad*.²

Since summer 2013, the authors of the *Basel Homer Commentary* have been revising and updating the German volumes previously produced. I have also written an additional chapter for the Prolegomena that deals with the current trends and developments in international, especially Anglophone, Homeric scholarship.

We now present the Prolegomena volume as the basis for the new *Homer's Iliad: The Basel Commentary*, expanded and updated in the fashion described above. The authors have once again revised their contributions and, where appropriate, made additions, particularly to the bibliography. The volumes on Books 3 and 6 will follow shortly. In the future, approximately three new volumes are projected per year.

We wish to thank once again our sponsors and the individuals who have supported us within the various foundations, namely Dr. Caspar Zellweger (Chairman of the *FAG*), Stefan Schmid (Chairman of the *L. & Th. La Roche Stiftung*), Prof. Dr. Jan Philipp Reemtsma (Founder and Manager of the *Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur*) and Matthias Kamm (Director of the managing office of the Hamburg foundation), Oliver Ehinger (president of the *Frey-Clavel-Stiftung*) and Prof. Dr. Peter Blome (treasurer of the *Frey-Clavel-Stiftung*), as well as Dr. Peter Lenz (Chairman of the *Max Geldner-Stiftung*). In addition, we thank the *De Gruyter* publishing house, in particular Michiel Klein-Swormink, for their dynamic support and vision, both managerial and academic; also Dr. Anke Beck (Vice-president, Humanities Program) for guaranteeing the remaining funds, Dr. Serena Pirrotta (Senior Acquisitions Editor, Ancient Studies) for steady support from the Berlin central office, Katharina Legutke (Project Editor, Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies) for ongoing support, and the book production team for their problem-free and professional production. We further thank all contributors to the Prolegomena, who in addition to their administrative and

² See most recently R. Lattimore, R. Martin (trans.), *The Iliad of Homer* (new introduction and notes by Richard Martin; first published 1951), Chicago/London 2011, and the review by K. Chew in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2012.10.04.

research tasks at their home institutions completed the task of updating their texts in a timely fashion; our research team, who despite the heavy claims of their ongoing commentary work shouldered the substantial additional workload without recompense; all the experts, as well as all the associated collaborating projects and individuals; and not least, our *alma mater*, the University of Basel, which has generously provided us with infrastructure and has constantly supported us in the acquisition of bibliographic materials.

Particularly warm thanks are due to the two translators, Benjamin W. Millis and Sara Strack, and the General Editor of the English Edition, S. Douglas Olson, with whom this project allowed me to reconnect 25 years after our collaboration as young colleagues at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA) in 1989/1990, for a smooth and collegial collaboration.

At a time when German is unfortunately declining in importance within the humanities and when many academics are only aware of publications in English, the publishing house and the Basel team are convinced that the current effort represents a significant contribution to the study of Classics, literature, and the humanities in general, by providing anyone interested with access in English to our commentary on the *Iliad*, one of the great foundational texts of Western literature.

Basel, January 2015

Anton Bierl

The goal of my team has not been to produce a new Basel commentary on the *Iliad* – although the English-language version has been updated in numerous small but important ways by the commentators themselves – but to offer a faithful, clear translation of the original. Our efforts should accordingly be judged on that basis alone; we claim no credit for the insights the Prolegomena and the individual commentary volumes offer, only for the rendering of the work into English. But we hope that this in itself will be seen as a significant contribution to scholarship, by breaking down some of the artificial linguistic boundaries that separate students of the *Iliad* working in different national and regional traditions.

Texts are fundamentally shaped by the syntax and vocabulary of the language in which they are produced, making translation (as is often observed) as much an art as a science. In addition, the Basel *Iliad* commentary is full of highly specialized linguistic and literary concepts, and engages with a wide variety of academic subdisciplines in the field of classical studies. I accordingly take the occasion of this preface to express my thanks and admiration for the members of my translation team, Benjamin W. Millis and Sara Strack, who have done a

superb job of rendering the original German into clear, colloquial English that nonetheless allows something of the individual voices of the various contributors to be heard.

Those who know Joachim Latacz and Anton Bierl personally will instinctively understand precisely how easy and collegial our collaboration up to this point has been. We look forward to the production of further volumes in the series.

S. Douglas Olson

Freiburg, 22 January 2015

Abbreviations

1. The following abbreviations are used for cross-references within the Prolegomena volume:

CG/CH	Cast of Characters of the <i>Iliad</i> : Gods/Human Beings
COM	Introduction: Commenting on Homer
FOR	Formularity and Orality
G	Grammar of Homeric Greek
HT	History of the Text
M	Homeric Meter (including prosody)
MYC	Homeric – Mycenaean Word Index
NTHS	New Trends in Homeric Scholarship
xxx ^p	Superscript ‘P’ after a term refers to the definition of the term in ‘Homeric Poetics in Keywords’.
STR	The Structure of the <i>Iliad</i>

2. References to the commentary volumes:

n.	Lat. <i>nota</i> (‘1.15n.’ refers to the commentary on Book 1, verse 15).
R	refers to the ‘24 Rules relating to Homeric Language’ found in each commentary volume.

3. Additional abbreviations and symbols

(Abbreviations in general use are not listed here. – For special abbreviations used only in G and MYC, see pp. 66 and 236 respectively. – For bibliographic abbreviations, see pp. 259 ff.)

*	reconstructed form
<	developed from
>	developed into
	marks verse beginning/end
~	approximately corresponds to
≈	approximately the same
A 1, B 1 (etc.)	indicates caesurae in a hexameter (cf. M 6)
AN	Animal name
<i>Chrest.</i>	<i>Chrestomathia</i> (Proclus’ summary of the ‘Epic Cycle’)
<i>Cypr.</i>	<i>Cypria</i> (in the ‘Epic Cycle’)
DN	Divine name
<i>fr.</i>	fragment (<i>fragmentum</i>)
Gr.	Greek
Hes.	Hesiod (<i>Op.</i> = <i>Opera</i> , ‘Works and Days’; <i>Th.</i> = <i>Theogony</i>)
‘Hes.’	works ascribed to Hesiod

<i>h.Hom.</i>	Homeric Hymn (<i>h.Cer.:</i> to Ceres/Demeter; <i>h.Merc.:</i> to Mercury/Hermes; <i>h.Ven.:</i> to Venus/Aphrodite)
HN	Human name
IE	Indo-European
imper.	imperative
loc.	locative
Myc.	Mycenaeans
OH	Officeholder
PN	Place name
POxy	Oxyrhynchus Papyri
sc.	<i>scilicet</i>
schol.	scholion, scholia
schol. A (etc.)	<i>scholion</i> in ms. A (etc.)
<i>s.v., s.vv.</i>	<i>sub voce, sub vocibus</i>
VB	verse beginning
VE	verse end
<i>v.l.</i>	<i>varia lectio</i>
voc.	vocative

4. Additional notations used in this volume

In order to avoid confusion and facilitate cross referencing between this edition and the German edition, the former paragraph and footnote numbering have been preserved. Where new paragraphs and footnotes have been added to this edition, this has been indicated with the addition of a, b, etc., especially in FOR.

Introduction:

Commenting on Homer.

From the Beginnings to this Commentary (COM)

By Joachim Latacz

1. Preliminary Remarks (1)
2. Commenting on Homer in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (2)
 - 2.1 Oral Commentaries (3)
 - 2.2 Written Commentaries (4)
 - 2.2.1 Early School Exegesis (the so-called D-scholia) (5)
 - 2.2.2 Linguistic Studies of the Sophists (6–8)
 - 2.2.3 Exegesis by the Philosophers, especially Aristotle (9–13)
 - 2.2.4 Commentary Work of the Alexandrians (14–17)
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3. Commenting on Homer in the Modern Period (21)
 - 3.1 Before and after ‘Ameis-Hentze(-Cauer)’ (22–27)
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4. The Present Commentary
 - 4.1 Institutions and Authors (36–37)
 - 4.2 Intended Readership and Objectives (38)
 - 4.3 Arrangement and Presentation (39–41)
 - 4.4 Summary (42–44)

1. Preliminary Remarks

A history of commenting on Homer has yet to be written.¹ Given the unusual quantity and diversity not only of Homer Commentaries proper (begin-

¹ For the present, guidance can be found in the relevant sections of Rudolf Pfeiffer’s *History of Classical Scholarship: from the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (PFEIFFER 1968). Georg Finsler’s *Homer in der Neuzeit von Dante bis Goethe* (FINSLER 1912) remains useful as a supplement. The instructive collective volume *Homer’s Ancient Readers. The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic’s earliest Exegetes*, edited in 1992 by Robert Lamberton and John J. Keaney (LAMBERTON/KEANEY 1992), with chapters on e.g. Aristotle (N. J. Richardson), the Stoics (A. A. Long), Aristarchus and the Pergamenes (J. I. Porter), the Neoplatonists (R. Lamberton), the Byzantines (R. Browning) and the reception of ancient readings of Homer in the Renaissance (A. Grafton), examines not philological commenting (the ‘philological tradition’: vii) but rather ‘readings’ (viii), i.e. various interpretational appropriations (or better, monopolizations) of Homer. – The present sketch is restricted to philological matters, in line with the objectives of the work as a whole.

ning with the ancient scholia) but also of observations and interpretations of Homer embedded in other works since the 6th c. BC (e.g. Aristotle's *Poetics*, Stoic interpretations, the tract *On the Sublime*, interpretations of the Neoplatonists, Church Fathers and Byzantines, Renaissance poetics, the literary debate 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes', interpretations by poets and philosophers in the German Classicism), a comprehensive work of this sort may need to remain a desideratum.² Each new commentary must nevertheless provide an account of the scope and nature of the intellectual tradition in which it stands, if only in broad strokes; past achievements can only be maintained and surpassed when their scope, method, emphasis and research focus are kept in mind. The following sketch accordingly attempts to record at least an outline.

2. Commenting on Homer in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

- 2 The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* represent the highpoint and conclusion of an ancient living oral tradition of song that goes back centuries and perhaps millennia.³ The introduction of writing around 800 BC made the perfect conservation of this tradition possible, but brought with it the tradition's demise as well: *after* the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, epic as a living art form belongs to the past (see FOR 45). Epic as a 'national', ever-changing poetry of the elite, supporting the social status quo, is replaced in the wake of the general societal change of the 8th/7th c. BC by lyric poetry, which with its new diversity and colorfulness, characterized by individuality and widely scattered in locale, is taken to be 'modern' in contrast to the monolithic nature of epic. Epic poetry continues to exist; it is no longer produced, however, in the moment by singers (*oidoi*) spontaneously combining and inventing before an audience, but is recited by rhapsodes on the basis of a fixed text. The Homeric epics come to occupy a special position. Always admired for their superior artistic quality, they are increasingly used for the purpose of education, thanks to their universal potential to instruct;⁴ promoted to educational texts, they fossilize as an intellectual heritage. Homer as 'school text' forms the

2 An account of Homer commentaries in modernity (since the *editio princeps* of the *Iliad* in 1488), planned for inclusion in the present commentary, had to be postponed for the moment in favor of the running commentary.

3 LATACZ (1998) 2006; LATACZ (2001) 2004.

4 'There are [in antiquity] very few dissenting voices to the proposition that Homer's goals were educational': LAMBERTON 1992, xxi.

common basis⁵ of the new intellectual class, centered in Miletus in Ionian Asia Minor, that starting around 600 BC initiates the Greek enlightenment and later continues in the sophistic movement of the 5th c., particularly in Athens. A need for commentaries on both epics naturally arises in connection with this didactic function of Homer.

2.1 Oral Commentaries

The first commentators on the Homeric epics were their performers, the rhapsodes. The (original) Homeridai⁶ were a special group, perhaps the nucleus of the rhapsodic craft; they seem to have traced themselves back to Homer himself and to have restricted themselves to performing *his* epics. As is evident in Plato's *Ion*, Platonic irony notwithstanding, for the rhapsodes commenting meant explication on all levels; the basis (as is still the case for us today) of this work was the elucidation of unusual words and phrases that were often no longer understood, the so-called *glōssai*.⁷ On this basis, a multi-tier complex of layers and directions in interpreting of the content developed; this becomes tangible to us only after its transfer to a written form.

2.2 Written Commentaries

As long as the person-specific commentaries of the rhapsodes, subject to time, location and competence, remained oral and thus unfixed, no merger of different insights and methods and thus no continuous growth of knowledge beyond the individual was possible. Theagenes of Rhegion (last quarter of the 6th c. BC) appears to have made the move to written form, crucial for all subsequent commentaries on Homer; he supposedly 'was the first to write about Homer',⁸ namely 'about his poetry, his genealogy and his life-time',⁹ and later commenta-

⁵ See Xenophanes of Colophon *VS* 21 B 10: '... from the beginning onward, they all learned from Homer ...'; on the development as a whole, see LATACZ 1991b, 512–595 (for the quotation: 547).

⁶ LATACZ (1998a) 2006.

⁷ PFEIFFER 1968, 5, 12f.

⁸ Porphyry, *Quaestiones Homericae ad Il.* 20.67sq. = Theagenes *VS* 8 A 2.13f.: ... ἀπὸ Θεαγένους τοῦ Ῥηγίνου, ὃς πρῶτος ἔγραψε περὶ Ὀμήρου. On Theagenes, see PFEIFFER 1968, 9 ff.

⁹ Tatian 31 p. 31,16 Schwartz = Theagenes *VS* 8 A 1: περὶ γὰρ τῆς Ὀμήρου ποιήσεως γένους τε αὐτοῦ καὶ χρόνου καθ' ὃν ἤκμασεν προηρεύνησαν πρεσβύτατοι μὲν Θεαγένης τε ὁ Ῥηγίνος κατὰ Καμβύσην [529–522] γεγονώς καὶ Στησίμβροτος ὁ Θάσιος ...

tors¹⁰ numbered him among the founders of *allegorical* interpretation. Theagenes' contemporary, Pherekydes of Syros, will have been part of the same direction in interpretation.¹¹

2.2.1 Early School Exegesis (the so-called D-scholia)

- 5 In school teaching, Homer was required reading from the earliest period (see 2 above). The rhapsodes' fundamental explications (*glōssai*) were integrated into education in the form of word lists, arranged in the order of the Books (likely already in use – see HT 18 – as they still are today). The examination in Homeric *glōssai* administered to a wayward son transmitted in a fragment (*fr.* 233 K.-A.) of Aristophanes' comedy *Daitalēs* (staged 427 BC) probably reflects Athenian school education in the 5th c.: 'Explain Homeric *glōssai*: What does *kórumba* mean?¹² [...] What does *amenēnā kārēna* mean?'¹³ Such 'vocabulary tests' will have formed part of the curriculum from the 7th century on. The earliest 'Homeric-Attic' 'dictionaries' of Homer (in part contained even in the elementary section of the present commentary [see 41 below] in curtailed form) presumably developed from corresponding lists. They represent the basis for the word-explanations erroneously attributed to the Augustan period philologist Didymos (hence 'D'-scholia).¹⁴ In most cases, these seemingly simple glosses could not be dealt with as 1:1 renderings, but required excursions into Homeric grammar, realia, religion and the like (as in the two Aristophanic examples), and assumed an ability to make meaningful sense of the passage in question.¹⁵ They consequently represented a constant challenge to further commenting on Homer.

2.2.2 Linguistic Studies of the Sophists

- 6 The development of written explication takes place within the framework of the first European educational movement, the Greek sophistic of the 5th c. BC.

10 Theagenes VS 8 A 2

11 Pherekydes VS 7 A 9; cf. PFEIFFER 1968, 10.

12 *Il.* 9.241 (= decorations at the stern of a ship).

13 *Od.* 10.521 (= 'powerless heads' = the souls of the deceased in the underworld); PFEIFFER 1968, 14 f.

14 ERBSE 1965b, 2724 (C 2).

15 These 'translations' were thus ongoing and were elevated to a higher level after the transition to written form. The learned poets Antimachus of Colophon (PFEIFFER 1968, 93 ff.), Philitas of Cos and Simias of Rhodes (PFEIFFER 1968, 88 ff.) were known in their time as authors of such dictionaries, *glōssai* (cf. Engl. 'glossary').

This initially encompasses the problematization of linguistic and factual details. The direction and level of enquiry of these early ‘commentaries’ are basic at first, as might be expected; much of the content is bizarre by modern standards.

The sole preserved example of a sophistic interpretation of poetry can be seen as the beginning of the line along which these ‘explanations’ developed: Plato’s staging in the dialogue *Protagoras* of a – still oral – ‘interpretation contest’ between the sophist Protagoras and Socrates (who calls in the sophist Prodicus for support) regarding a poem by the lyric poet Simonides (Plat. *Prot.* 338e6–347a5). Even granting Plato’s aim of ironically exposing interpretations of poetry as useless gimmicks in this ‘performance’ (347c3–348a6), the core of these early interpretations is clear: a grasp of the overall sense of the passage is less relevant than control of the meanings of individual words (which are therefore tenaciously and ‘sophistically’ contested).¹⁶ As Rudolf PFEIFFER showed,¹⁷ this is due less to a lack of explanatory *ability* than to the explanatory *aim*. At the very beginning of the interpretation of the poem, Plato has Protagoras say: ‘I am of the opinion that the major part of a man’s education is his knowledge of literature.’¹⁸ But the same Protagoras had just made Socrates define the aim of his instruction as *politikē téchnē*, statesmanship, and describe his curriculum as an education for becoming a good statesman (319a3–7). The sophists are thus not concerned primarily with poetry *per se* but rather – aside from their own theoretical insights into the structure of language – with its ideal instrumentalization via (1) a logico-linguistic cognitive training of their students that is as efficient as possible, and (2) the students’ ability to use literature in argument. For their students were meant to become not literary scholars, but intellectually dexterous citizens and politicians. (School commentaries have faithfully retained this aim in European education, which is also still primarily literary.)

¹⁶ Does ‘to become’ (γενέσθαι) mean the same as ‘to be’ (ἔμμεναι), does ‘difficult’ (χαλεπόν) mean ‘not easy’ (μὴ ῥάδιον) or ‘bad’ (κακόν), etc. In a book entitled ‘Truth’ (Ἀλήθεια), Protagoras had discovered on the basis of the Homeric texts four discrete categories of sentences (plea, order, question, response) as well as the three genders of nouns (with the corresponding standard endings), and had demanded strict observance of differences in linguistic use; Aristophanes ridiculed this in *Clouds* (658 ff.), suggesting that instead of ‘trough’ (τὴν κάρδοπον), one would have to say ‘trough-ess’ (τὴν καρδόπην), since, as the word was feminine (τήν), no masculine ending (-ον) could be used. Remarkable grammatical reflections, prompted by Homeric reading, shine through these witticisms.

¹⁷ PFEIFFER 1968, ch. II (‘The Sophists ...’), esp. 30–47; cf. RICHARDSON 1975; RICHARDSON 1992, 32–34.

¹⁸ Ὑποῦμαι ... ἐγὼ ἀνδρὶ παιδείας μέγιστον μέρος εἶναι περὶ ἐπῶν δεινὸν εἶναι: *Prot.* 338e6–8.

- 8 The sophists Prodicus and Hippias seem to have continued this line in their writings,¹⁹ and Diogenes Laertius transmits a long list of book titles on Homeric themes by Antisthenes.²⁰ To the latter as well, poetry in and of itself was of no concern: ‘The Sophistic explanations of poetry foreshadow the growth of a special field of inquiry, the analysis of language; *the final object is rhetorical or educational, not literary.*’²¹

2.2.3 Exegesis by the Philosophers, especially Aristotle

- 9 The restriction to questions of language, in contemporary terms philological and especially linguistic matters, is retained by the philosophers. Where they do not aim at an ethical or allegorical reading of Homer, as did e.g. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae or Metrodorus of Lampsacus,²² they chiefly remain in the traditional field of word explanation, like e.g. Democritus,²³ but also Plato and Aristotle.
- 10 Plato’s most influential contribution to commenting on Homer lies in his implicit deterrence from engaging in it. His deep-seated skepticism toward poetry – as toward the written word in general (*Phaedrus* 275d3–277a5) – is well known. It has been demonstrated elsewhere (VICAIRE 1960, esp. 81–103) that Plato could not have dared to exempt Homer in this regard. Had his direct and indirect students followed their master’s forceful verdict in *Protagoras* (347e1–7) – ‘gatherings of respectable men do not require an alien voice, not even that of the poets, since, on the one hand, they cannot be consulted regarding their statements, while on the other hand, among the majority of those citing them, one group claims that the poet means this, the other group that, exchanging words about a matter they cannot prove either way’ (the classic denial of any point to literary studies) – the present commentary would not exist. Fortunately, however, Plato’s students

19 Aside from ‘On Nature’ and ‘Horai’, no further book title referring to linguistic issues is transmitted for Prodicus; given his prominence and the influence of his linguistic studies (Plato, Aristophanes), this must be chance. His lessons on the ‘correctness of denomination’ (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος; Plato, *Cratylus* 384b6) were famous, expensive and clearly established; they represent the beginning of the study of synonyms, see MAYER 1913. – Nor are publications on linguistic or literary topics known for Hippias of Elis, renowned for his learning in many fields; given the frequency of relevant citations (see PFEIFFER 1968, 52ff., 60f.), however, these are probably to be assumed.

20 PFEIFFER 1968, 36f. He may have already written ‘On Homeric interpreters’ (Περὶ Ὅμηρου ἐξηγητῶν).

21 PFEIFFER 1968, 37 (italics: J. L.).

22 On these two, see PFEIFFER 1968, 35.

23 Περὶ Ὅμηρου ἢ ὀρθοεπειῆς καὶ γλωσσέων; see PFEIFFER 1968, 42f.

instead took up the challenge of the following cry for help from him, trapped in his own system: ‘Still let it be said that we at any rate, if poetic imitation directed toward pleasure could give any account why it ought to be in a well-governed city, that we should receive it gladly, since we are aware that we are charmed by it [...]. For indeed, my friend, are not even you charmed by it, most of all when you view it in the form of *Homer*?’ (*Republic* 607c3–d1). Plato’s *Cratylus* could be seen (namely by his students) as a bridge to addressing this call to defend poetry and Homer, since here, despite all buffoonery, a fondness for language, and once more for Homer in particular (391c8–393b6), results in the presentation and discussion of an impressive catalogue of ‘linguistic’ insights (see LATACZ [1979] 1994, 646 f.).

Aristotle, in heeding Plato’s cry for help, accomplished more regarding 11
Homeric philology as a whole, and commenting on Homer in particular, than is generally realized today. On the one hand, he brought together on a large scale and partially systematized findings regarding Homeric word use and problems of interpretation that had previously been collected for the purpose of instruction or were scattered across the works of individual sophists and philosophers. This much at least is clear from the 40 fragments²⁴ of his six books on *Homeric Problems* (Προβλήματα Ὀμηρικά or Ἀπορήματα Ὀμηρικά or Ὀμηρικὰ ζητήματα), together with chapter 25 of his *Poetics*, which appears to have been intended as a summary.²⁵ It is clear from this chapter that Aristotle designed a systematic defense against attacks, often ridiculous by today’s standards, mounted by a critique of Homer²⁶ that had turned into a kind of popular game operating in numerous areas, the ethical in particular (a critique that likely also affected Aristotle’s teacher, Plato, after it was first formulated by Xenophanes of Colophon). Aristotle’s defensive structure solved problems ‘in three ways: by assessing the intent of the portrayal [...], by recourse to purely linguistic aspects, or finally by arguments that render an error irrelevant from an aesthetic point of view’ (FUHRMANN 1982, 137 n. 2, transl.). His solution regarding *Iliad* 20.234 can serve as an example: (*problem*) How can the poet state that Ganymede ‘pours wine’ for Zeus [οἶνοχοεύειν], even though the gods drink not wine but nectar? (*solution*) This is based on word usage (τὸ ἔθος τῆς λέξεως, *Poet.* 1461a30) (there simply being no alternative verb for ‘serve as a cupbearer’).

²⁴ Aristotle *frr.* 142–179 Rose + Ps.-Aristotle *frr.* 20a (145), 30a (156), 38 (165) Rose. It is of course impossible to accurately determine how much originated with Aristotle himself, how much derived from his predecessors and how much is from later members of the Peripatos; see LAMBERTON 1992, xi n. 12.

²⁵ RICHARDSON 1992, 36 f.

²⁶ In Aristotle’s time, the main proponent was Zoilus of Amphipolis, who had published a work *Against Homer’s Poetry* (Κατὰ τῆς Ὀμήρου ποιήσεως, 9 books), see PFEIFFER 1968, 70.

- 12 Aristotle's efforts at solving problems prepared the way for the later Alexandrian Homer commentaries with their largely linguistic and factual orientation;²⁷ at the same time, his 'tidying' provided the basis for his rescue of Homer,²⁸ which explored very different dimensions and runs as a theme throughout the *Poetics* as a latent answer to Plato's appeal for help (see 10 above). This aspect of Aristotle's interpretation of Homer is discussed in the chapter on 'Structure' below (STR 4–8).
- 13 The preceding was intended to highlight Aristotle's major role in laying the practical and theoretical foundation for the philology, and Homeric philology in particular, that arose in Alexandria later. The contribution to Homer commentaries in a strict sense by Hellenistic philosophical schools that developed from the Academy and the Peripatetics – the Stoa and Epicureanism in particular – but also by later Imperial schools of thought such as neo-Platonism and Christian apologetics, is more peripheral compared with the Alexandrian tradition. These schools were not concerned with poetry for its own sake, but with using poetry to confirm their own specific ideologies. One means was allegory, which had Homer mean something other than simply what he said. Apologetics in particular could not otherwise utilize Homer's authority, which could not be ignored, as it was the Greco-Roman counterpart to the authority of Judeo-Christian scripture. This kind of instrumentalization of Homer was initiated by the Stoa, which conceived of Homeric epic as a conscious or unconscious anticipation of Stoic cosmology and ethics in particular: 'Interpretation of the meaning and composition of Homer or Hesiod *per se* was not their concern. [...] the Stoics treated early Greek poetry as ethnographical material and not as literature in, say, an Aristotelian sense' (LONG 1992, 64 f.). Literary commentary could not come into being this way. Instead, the path led from Aristotle straight to Alexandria.

27 PFEIFFER's (1968, 67) polemic against the idea of Aristotle as the founder of literary criticism and grammar, common from Dio Chrysostomus' pre-Christian sources onward (*Oration* 53 [36] § 1), has not found favor (cf. LAMBERTON 1992, xi f. n. 13), especially since Pfeiffer here appears to contradict himself: Strato 'was called [...] to Alexandria from Aristotle's school, to which he returned as Theophrastus' successor in 287 B. C.' (PFEIFFER 1968, 92), and Demetrius of Phaleron, 'one of Theophrastus' prominent pupils', lived for ca. 10 years, ending in 283, 'highly esteemed by his royal host' at the court of Ptolemy I (ibid. 96). The Peripatetics' direct influence from the beginning on the community of scholars at the Museum can hardly be more clear; its powerful continuation and later renewal, particularly by Aristarchus, has been demonstrated by PORTER 1992, 74 f.

28 'The *Homeric Problems* constituted a preliminary ground-clearing exercise of a practical kind in preparation for the more theoretical approach of the *Poetics* as a whole': RICHARDSON 1992, 37.

2.2.4 Commentary Work of the Alexandrians

Beginning in the 3rd century BC, literary explanation in its own right developed in the *Museion* at Alexandria from the above-listed sources as one of the disciplines of the newly conceived ‘philology’. The work of Alexandrian philologists from Zenodotus to Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus, which focused time and again on Homer, is too extensive to discuss in detail in this context. Reliable information regarding the institutional framework can be rapidly and easily obtained e.g. in GLOCK (2000) 2006; on the explanatory efforts of individual scholars, see HT 9–15. Here only the key points will be taken up. 14

Editions of texts (ἔκδοσις, διόρθωσις) are complemented by two types of explanatory material: (1) the so-called ‘*On XY-literature*’ (Περί-literature), i.e. the treatment of individual linguistic and factual problems in dedicated accounts, which continue to be produced to the present day in the shape of monographs, articles and miscellanea in our philological ‘secondary literature’; (2) beginning at the latest with Aristarchus (2nd century BC), the *Hypómnēma* (ὑπόμνημα), a comprehensive running explanation of the text that proceeds line by line and word by word,²⁹ as has been obligatory for all primary commenting since then in the shape of so-called ‘line commentaries’. (The focus on textual criticism, linguistic and factual explanation, privileged by the Alexandrians, has essentially been retained as well; while ‘aesthetic’ explanation was also already part of Aristarchus’ commentaries, in particular as a result of his debate with Crates of Mallos, the master of the rival school of grammarians in Pergamum,³⁰ it began to occupy more space only during the Imperial period).³¹ 15

²⁹ ‘Running commentaries had to follow the text of the author line by line, while the Περί-literature was at liberty to select aspects and problems of text, language, and subject’: PFEIFFER 1968, 218.

³⁰ On the core of this debate, see PORTER 1992. Crates considered the Alexandrine style of commentary ‘micro-philology’, and its representatives ‘grammarians’, while he himself was a ‘critic’ (κριτικός) setting out to advance into more elevated spheres – a stance that (since it seems inherent in philology) survives today (e.g. in the opposition between Oxford and Cambridge and their respective commentary practices). Aristarchus, who as a staunch follower of Aristotle was able to introduce ‘higher’ aspects as well (PORTER 1992, 74 f.), rejected Pergamene practices in particular due to their propensity toward overly free-floating mental gymnastics and accompanying paternalism in regard to users of the commentaries.

³¹ PFEIFFER 1968, 210–231, on Aristarchus’ textual criticism, linguistic and factual explanations (not limited to *Homer* commentaries); Pfeiffer (231) is probably overly disparaging toward Aristarchus’ approaches to aesthetic explanation. Nonetheless, given the development of ancient literary theory (FUHRMANN [1973] 1992), it may be regarded as certain that the *consolidation* of aesthetic explanations did not occur until the later Hellenistic and Imperial periods (‘exegetic scholia’); for an introduction to this challenging complex of issues, see ERBSE 1965b, 2725.

5th cent. BC	Glossographi (γλωσσογράφοι): Homeric → Attic (earliest content of the D scholia); sophists (σοφισταί), e.g. Prodicus, 'On synonyms' (Περὶ τῶν συνωνύμων [?])		↔	scholia
4th	Aristotle; Zoilus; Antimachus of Colophon; Philitas, 'Glōssai' (Γλῶσσαι) ↓		↔	
3rd	Museum (Μουσεῖον): Zenodotus, 'Glōssai Homērikai' (Γλῶσσαι Ὅμηρικαί); Aristophanes of Byzantium		↔	
2nd	ARISTARCHOS of Samothrace, 'Hypomnēmata' (Υπομνήματα)		↔	
1st	↓ ↓			
1st cent. AD	Didymus; Aristonicus	→	Epaphroditus	↔
2nd	Herodian; Nicanor	→	Pius ↓	↔
3rd	↓		Porphyry	↔
4th	↓			
5th	↓			
6th	↓			
7th	↓		↓	
8th	↓			
9th	↘		↙	
10th	Viermännerkommentar (VMK; 'four-man-commentary')		↔	scholia
11th	↓			
12th	Eustathius		↔	
13th	↓			
14th	↓			
15th	(1488: <i>editio princeps</i>)	↓		
16th		↓		
17th		↓		
18th	<i>Inter alios</i> : Joshua Barnes 1711; Samuel Clarke 1729–40			
19th	<i>Inter alios</i> : Heyne 1802; Ingerslev 1830/34; Spitzner 1832/36; Crusius 1842; Lécluse 1845; Faesi 1849–52; Lefranc 1852; Düntzer 1866/67; Paley 1867			
	AMEIS-HENTZE (<i>Odyssey</i> : 1856–68; <i>Iliad</i> : 1868–86)			
	La Roche 1870–78; Merry–Riddell (<i>Od.</i> 1–12) 1876; LEAF 1886. ²1900/02			
20th	<i>Odyssey</i> : Heubeck and others 1981–86 <i>Iliad</i> : KIRK et al. 1985–93			ERBSE 1969–88

chart: Joachim Latacz, Basel

Fig. 1: Sketch of the development of commentaries

Not a single book has been preserved in its entirety from all this commentary literature. But we know enough titles to be able to assess the breadth of the problems discussed, and in the form of the extensive *scholia* (σχόλια, originally ‘school-explanations’) that have reached us (in grammatical and philosophical works of later scholars, in ancient lexica, in the form of comprehensive marginal and interlinear *scholia* [= explanations written between the lines of the main text] in the medieval manuscripts of Homer; see Fig. 1), we possess immeasurably rich material to illustrate the explanatory efforts of the Alexandrians.³² Aristarchus of Samothrace, who served as the director of the library of the Museum and as tutor of the eventual Ptolemy VII during the first half of the 2nd century BC, played a leading role here.³³ His extensive³⁴ line-by-line commentary on Homer, discussing textual criticism (based on a comparison of mss. [see HT 11/12; PFEIFFER 1968, 214 f.], close observation of Homeric word usage and a thorough familiarity with the Homeric world view), grammar, semantics and realia, as well as issues of content and structure (see HT 12), formed the basis for all subsequent commentaries, and was scarcely unsurpassed until Friedrich August Wolf’s refounding of Homeric philology in 1795 (see STR 12). It is significant that Wolf’s refounding was inspired by the publication of the Homeric manuscript ‘Venetus A’ (10th cent.) in 1788 by J.-B. d’Ansse de Villosion. (Brought to Venice by Giovanni Aurispa at the beginning of the 15th century, the manuscript had not been appraised further before this.) The manuscript contains extensive *scholia* in the margins and between the lines, which largely go back to Aristarchus via the so-called Viermännerkommentar (‘Four-man-commentary’; see 19 below).³⁵ In this way, Aristarchus, the *éminence gris* of ancient Homeric philology, again

32 The bulk of material regarding the *Iliad* was first made accessible in its entirety by the magisterial work of Hartmut Erbse. The D-scholia, not included by Erbse, were published digitally by H. van Thiel (<http://kups.ub.uni-koeln.de/1810/>); a 2nd edition is available (<http://kups.ub.uni-koeln.de/5586/>); both retrieved 9. 1. 2015.

33 F. A. Wolf’s instructive *laudatio* of Aristarchus remains worth reading (WOLF 1795, *cap.* XLV); based on ancient testimonia, he highlights the fact that Aristarchus was idolized as their master by his ca. 40 students in Alexandria and Rome, as well as by the even more numerous students of the next generation. Aristarchus’ contemporary Panaetius, head of the Stoa, called Aristarchus a ‘seer, because he easily divined the point of poems’ (μάντιν, διὰ τὸ ῥαδίως καταμαντεύεσθαι τὰς τῶν ποιημάτων διανοίας; at Athenaeus 14.634d).

34 The *Suda* ascribes 800 volumes of *commentaries* alone to him (λέγεται δὲ γράψαι ὑπὲρ ω’ βιβλία ὑπομνημάτων μόνων); even if the number itself (which does not refer only to *Homer commentaries*) is exaggerated or distorted, the emphasis on the *hypomnemata* reflects Aristarchus’ fame as a commentator; PFEIFFER 1968, 213, probably correctly, surmises 48 volumes of *Homer commentaries* alone (i.e. one volume per book of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*).

35 PFEIFFER 1968, 213f., with relevant bibliography; PFEIFFER 1976, 48.

became the founding father, this time of *modern* Homeric scholarship, some 2000 years after his death.

- 17 A particularly momentous issue from this period should be stressed in this context: with the invention of the *hypómnēma*, the accompanying running commentary, literary explication became subject to the scholarly compulsion to strive for perfection by filling in gaps and surpassing the findings of predecessors. This created an opportunity to progressively improve comprehension. Although no one in antiquity after Aristarchus had the ability to outdo his Homer commentary as a whole, later scholars isolated individual problems where advances could be made by adding depth to earlier work (see 18–19 below). They also continued and extended the commenting done by the Alexandrians, which was by no means limited to Homer but treated numerous poets of all genres. This opened up the path on which we hope to make further progress with the present commentary: by not merely explaining but revealing what is *not* explained, each subsequent commentary opens up new layers of the work and new possibilities for consideration. Each commentary, provided it does not merely repeat its predecessors, thus calls for the next. In this way, the reception and use of the text are kept alive, and commenting acquires the function of preserving culture. The beginning of this path was located in Alexandria.

2.2.5 Compilation Commentaries in the Roman Imperial and Byzantine Periods

- 18 Alexandrian philologists from *Zenodotus* to *Aristarchus*, in Pfeiffer's words, 'had been moved by their love of letters and by their own work as writers to preserve the literary heritage of the epic, Ionic, and Attic ages; they firmly believed in its eternal greatness' (PFEIFFER 1968, 279). The motivation of their philological *successors* in Alexandria was different and is already represented in the earliest notable Alexandrian scholar of this new generation, namely *Didymus*, who was active at the *Museion* in the 2nd half of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD and who, because of his almost inexhaustible productivity, was known among his colleagues as 'The man with bronze guts' (Χαλκέντερος) and 'Forgetter of (his own) books' (Βιβλιολάθας). Given his supposed output of 3500 to 4000 books, one would not expect much originality, and the remains of *Didymus*' writings in fact already display the stamp of the entire era that follows to the end of antiquity and beyond, to the end of Byzantine culture: a propensity for compilation. 'Didymus [...] was moved by the love of learning to preserve the scholarly heritage of the Hellenistic age; he had a sincere admiration for the greatness of scholars and a firm belief in their authority, although he was not totally devoid of critical judgement' (PFEIFFER 1968, 279). '[N]ot totally' in the last half-sentence sufficiently clarifies the difference. This difference was nonethe-

less instrumental in preserving the work of the great Alexandrian philologists for posterity. Didymus' own commentaries on Homer have been forgotten. What is not forgotten is his 'On Aristarchus' edition [of Homer]' (Περὶ τῆς Ἀρισταρχείου διορθώσεως).³⁶ In this text, Didymus summarized Aristarchus' work on Homer by collating both the notes relating to textual criticism and those pertaining to the content of individual passages in Homer, as presented in the *hypomnemata* and the 'secondary literature'; here and there he also added his own comments ('its weakest points': PFEIFFER, *loc. cit.* 275). This compilation, made up of excerpts, was centuries later joined with three other compilations (and likely additional material as well) in a new arrangement (see 19 below) that formed the basis of the A scholia (see 16 above).

The three other compilers were Didymus' contemporary *Aristonicus* (with a book on Aristarchus' 'critical signs'; like his predecessors, Aristarchus had used particular signs – asterisks and crosses, similar to the ones we use today – to mark the verses and words in his text of Homer he meant to annotate, which he then picked up in his commentary by means of matching signs),³⁷ and later *Herodian* (with a treatise on Aristarchus' accentuation of the Homeric text) and *Nicanor* (with a treatise on Aristarchus' punctuation).³⁸ At an unknown date, but apparently still in antiquity, a learned compiler united excerpts from these four works, together with further material produced by later scholars, into a single volume, the so-called *Viermännerkommentar* ('Four-man-commentary'). This volume survived into the Middle Ages and was itself excerpted at various points. One of these excerpts is found in the form of the above-mentioned *scholia* (see 16 above) in Venetus A.

Homer was also read and commented on in the Byzantine Empire, the heir of the culture of antiquity after the fall of the Roman Empire. Transmitted explanatory literature was faithfully consulted, but was barely expanded by new insights. This can be seen in the work of two well-transmitted Byzantine commentators on Homer, (1) *Johannes Tzetzes*, author of an 'Exegesis of Homer's *Iliad*' dated 1143 and 'Homeric allegories' dated 1145, and (2) *Eustathius*, archbishop of Thessalonica, the author of two voluminous commentaries (written before 1175), one on the *Iliad* and the other on the *Odyssey*, that are actually preserved today as autographs. Eustathius is of use to us because he frequently cites commentaries

³⁶ A detailed account of the contents is found at PFEIFFER 1968, 275 f.

³⁷ The signs are explained by VAN THIEL 1996, xvii (who also inserts them into the text); cf. ERBSE 1965, 301.

³⁸ On these scholars (who lived two centuries after Didymus and Aristonicus), see PFEIFFER 1968, 218 f.