

Introduction

Scholia, broadly defined, are comments about a featured text that are inserted into the free spaces around it.¹ In the specialized sense in which the term is used by modern scholars of ancient Greek literary texts, scholia are comments on ancient authorial texts excerpted from earlier works of scholarship and preserved in medieval manuscripts, typically inserted as marginal or interlinear notes around the text being commented upon.² While scholiastic corpora exist for many works of ancient Greek literature,³ the scholia to the *Iliad* are by far the richest and most extensive collection of scholia extant, filling thousands of pages of the most comprehensive critical edition currently available, the edition on which the translation in this volume is based.⁴ These scholia offer a unique window into centuries of ancient and medieval scholarship on the *Iliad*, from the editorial activity of Alexandrian philologists and the literary exegesis of Imperial and Late Antique commentators to the grammatical and lexical work of Byzantine scholars. Because most of the sources from which our scholia derive have not survived through direct transmission, these scholia preserve hundreds and in some cases thousands of

¹ On the development of the term *σχόλιον*, see Lundon 1997 and Montana 2011: 105–7. On the different valences of the term ‘scholia,’ see Dickey 2007: 11 n. 25.

² Though the marginal *mise en page* of scholia has become one of their defining features, there are notable exceptions to this rule. Some manuscripts, for example, display scholia as full-page text, sometimes even without the accompaniment of the text being commented upon, as in the case of several manuscripts of the h-family and in the best witnesses of the D-scholia; see Montana 2011: 108 and Montana 2021: 8.

³ See Dickey 2007: 18–71 for an overview of the different scholiastic corpora.

⁴ Hartmut Erbse’s edition of the *scholia vetera* to the *Iliad* (Erbse 1969–88) comprises 3,055 pages of text, roughly one page of commentary for every five lines of the poem. A more comprehensive edition, like the one currently being undertaken by Fausto Montana, Franco Montanari, Davide Muratore, and Lara Pagani, would easily fill twice as many pages as Erbse’s edition.

fragments of works that would otherwise have been lost, and thus constitute our single most abundant and valuable resource for the study of Homeric scholarship in antiquity.

1 Categorizing the Scholia to the *Iliad*

In view of the staggering quantity and heterogeneity of the scholia to the *Iliad*, scholars have divided them in several different ways. The most straightforward way of categorizing scholia is to differentiate them according to the manuscripts in which they are preserved. Thus, A-scholia are those transmitted by the manuscript known as Venetus A (A in Erbse's *sigla*), T-scholia are those transmitted by the *Townleyanus* manuscript (T in Erbse's *sigla*), b-scholia are those transmitted by the manuscripts of the b-family, and so forth.

Another dividing line is that of age. Scholia with origins in or after the middle Byzantine period are classified as *scholia recentiora* ('younger scholia'), while those that descend from ancient and Late Antique scholarship, or at least those that do so more directly, are classified as *scholia vetera* ('old scholia').⁵ Though interest in the Byzantine layers of the Iliadic scholia has increased in recent decades, unqualified references to the *Iliad*'s scholia often refer implicitly to the *scholia vetera* specifically.

The *scholia vetera* are, in turn, subdivided into three main classes, corresponding to the three compilation-commentaries from which they derive: (1) the VMK-scholia, which derive from a Late Antique compilation that extracted the work of four ancient scholars; (2) the exegetical scholia, which can be traced back to a Late Antique or middle Byzantine compilation-commentary derived from older 'exegetical' commentaries on the *Iliad*; and (3) the *D*-scholia, which derive from a popular Late Antique compilation based on a heterogeneous mixture of sources but primarily consisting of short glossographic notes. Though material from these three classes was mixed together at a relatively early stage in their transmission, such

⁵ While the chronological partition of our scholia is useful insofar as it provides a basic organizational framework for an overwhelming mass of exegetical material, the distinction is easier to maintain in theory than in practice, given that the Byzantine scholars behind the *scholia recentiora* often drew on redactions of scholiastic corpora that were fuller than those represented by the manuscripts now extant. A case in point is the Byzantine hyper-compilation represented by the *b*-scholia, on which see §2.4. On the problematic distinction between *scholia vetera* and *recentiora*, see Pontani 2016; Mastronarde 2017: 1–43, 60–1.

that scholia deriving from one class are present in manuscripts that primarily transmit material belonging to another class,⁶ scholars have been able to sort most of these scholia into the class to which they belong.

Finally, the three classes of the *scholia vetera* have traditionally been divided into two further groups: (1) the *scholia maiora* ('greater scholia'), comprising the VMK-scholia and the exegetical scholia, and (2) the *scholia minora* ('smaller scholia'), corresponding to the *D*-scholia, so designated with reference to the short glossographic notes that constitute its core.⁷ Thus, when Hartmut Erbse defines his edition of the *scholia vetera* as an edition of the *scholia maiora* specifically, he signals his intention to reconstruct the earliest ascertainable archetypes of the VMK-scholia and exegetical scholia, to the exclusion of *D*-scholia not already present in those archetypes.⁸

2 Classes and Sources

2.1 *The VMK-scholia*

The VMK-scholia, whose most important witness is the manuscript Venetus A,⁹ derive from a lost Late Antique compilation-commentary known as the *Viermännerkommentar* (= VMK),¹⁰ so called because it compiled the works of four scholars, Aristonicus, Didymus, Nicanor, and Herodian, all active between the first century BCE and the second century CE. In accordance with the interests of these scholars, the VMK-scholia deal primarily with questions raised by the form, rather than the narrative content, of the *Iliad* (e.g., matters of orthography, pronunciation, punctuation, grammar, and textual criticism). As each of these scholars engaged

⁶ On the hybridization of the different classes of scholia, see Erbse 1969–88 I xiii–xxxiii, xlv–lix; Montana 2019; Pagani 2020. The table in Montana 2019: 120 offers a particularly useful overview of the distribution of the different classes of scholia among the manuscripts. See also the stemma below, §4.3.

⁷ To avoid confusion, I maintain the distinction between these terms, using '*D*-scholia' to designate the scholiastic corpus and '*scholia minora*' to designate its glossographic component alone, namely the glosses on individual words or phrases that derive from the free-standing Homeric glossaries of antiquity.

⁸ See Erbse 1969–88 I xi–xii. On Erbse's edition, see §4.4.

⁹ On this manuscript, see §4.1.

¹⁰ The *Viermännerkommentar* is generally dated to the fifth or sixth century, though a date of the fourth century has also been proposed; see Pagani 2014: 46, with references. On the basis of Σ *Il.* 10.397–9*b*, Erbse 1969–88 I xlvii (following Lehrs 1882: 35 n. 2) speculatively identifies Nemesion as the compiler of the VMK.

with the work of Aristarchus, a thorough understanding of the VMK-scholia must begin with him.

2.1.1 Aristarchus

A pupil of Aristophanes of Byzantium and his successor as the director of the Royal Library at Alexandria from c. 186/175–145 BCE, Aristarchus of Samothrace (c. 216–144 BCE) was a prolific scholar who played a pivotal role in the direction of Homeric scholarship in antiquity.¹¹ In addition to the composition of several monographs,¹² Aristarchus' scholarship on Homer included the preparation of two editions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and two sets of commentaries on each poem.¹³ Though Aristarchus was not the inventor of either genre of scholarship,¹⁴ he does appear to be the first to have prepared a commentary in coordination with a new edition,¹⁵ an innovation that allowed him to justify his editorial choices and expand his repertoire of critical signs to include those whose significance required elaboration. While Aristarchus' predecessors annotated their editions exclusively with critical signs of stable and straightforward significance (e.g., the *obelos* (—) to mark athetesis, the asterisk (※) to mark lines repeated elsewhere, and the combination of the two to mark the athetesis of such lines), Aristarchus' pairing of edition with commentary afforded him the flexibility to introduce the diple (>), a versatile sign used to mark passages of interest that he discussed in his commentary. In addition to these signs, Aristarchus also used the dotted diple (>.), which he

¹¹ On Aristarchus and his scholarship, see especially Pfeiffer 1968: 210–33, Matthaïos 1999, and Schironi 2018.

¹² Aristarchus wrote at least five monographs on Homeric topics, including *Against Comanus* (see in this volume Σ *Did. Il.* 1.97–9 and 2.798a), *Against Philittas* (see in this volume Σ *Did. Il.* 1.524c and 2.111b), *Against the Paradox of Xenon*, *On the Iliad and the Odyssey*, and *On the Camp*.

¹³ The nature of Aristarchus' second Homeric edition remains a topic of debate. Whether this second edition was in fact published by Aristarchus himself, was carried out by pupils working from Aristarchus' materials, or simply represented modifications that Aristarchus made to his first edition subsequent to the publication of his commentary thereon, it seems clear that this revision represents diorthotic activity conducted by Aristarchus after the publication of his first edition and second set of commentaries. See Schironi 2018: 35–45 for a detailed discussion.

¹⁴ Aristarchus' Homeric editions were preceded by those of Antimachus, Zenodotus, and Aristophanes. While Aristarchus' commentaries on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are, as Schironi 2018: xxiii n. 22 points out, the earliest “running commentar[ies] on Homer” that we know of, commentaries on ancient Greek literary texts existed since at least the fourth century BCE, as the Derveni papyrus demonstrates.

¹⁵ See Schironi 2018: xxiii n. 22 and 756.

used to indicate points of disagreement with Zenodotus, and, less frequently, the *antisigma* (Ⲛ), dotted *antisigma* (Ⲛ̣), and the *stigma* (Ⲛ̣̣), whose functions are more difficult to ascertain.¹⁶

Though none of Aristarchus' works survive in their original form, much of his Homeric scholarship has been preserved by the four scholars of the VMK: Aristonicus and Didymus, who sought to reconstruct Aristarchus' Homeric commentaries and editions, respectively, and to a lesser extent Nicanor and Herodian, who drew on earlier Alexandrian scholarship, especially Aristarchus', for their own purposes. Aristarchus' Homeric scholarship is thus the foundation on which the VMK-scholia rest.

2.1.2 *Aristonicus*

Aristonicus was a grammarian active in Rome between the first century BCE and the first century CE. In addition to producing exegetical work on the poetry of Alcman, Stesichorus, Pindar, and Sophocles, and monographs on literary, linguistic, and antiquarian topics, Aristonicus composed *On the Critical Signs of the Iliad and the Odyssey*, in which he explained, with reference to Aristarchus' commentaries, the critical signs that Aristarchus placed in the margins of his editions of the Homeric poems. This treatise, from which more than a third of all VMK-scholia derive, is especially valuable for the extent to which it preserved material from Aristarchus' lost commentaries and consequently for the light it sheds on his critical judgments and working methods. In the present volume, as in Erbse's edition, scholia that derive from Aristonicus are indicated by the marginal abbreviation *Ariston*.¹⁷

2.1.3 *Didymus*

A younger contemporary of Aristonicus,¹⁸ Didymus of Alexandria was a prolific scholar whose voluminous output¹⁹ included not only a wide array of commentaries on works of both poetry and prose, but also lexica and monographs on a wide variety of grammatical,

¹⁶ For an overview of Aristarchus' critical signs, see Bird 2009. For discussion of Aristarchus' use of the *antisigma*, dotted *antisigma*, and the *stigma*, see Schironi 2017.

¹⁷ Unless otherwise noted, the marginal attributions in this volume follow those in Erbse's edition.

¹⁸ On the relative dates of these scholars, and Didymus' apparent use of Aristonicus' work, see West 2001: 48–50.

¹⁹ *Suda* 8 872 attributes a remarkable 3,500 volumes to Didymus; cf. Ath. 4.139c, Sen. *Ep.* 88.37, and Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.20.

lexicographic, and literary topics.²⁰ Though little of his work survives in its original form,²¹ many of his works were incorporated into scholiastic corpora, which are now our primary source for his scholarship. His lost monograph *On the Aristarchean Recension*, for example, was one of the four works selected for inclusion into the VMK and is consequently the source of roughly one fifth of all VMK-scholia. In this treatise, Didymus collected and established Aristarchus' readings of Homer, compared them against other editions, and occasionally made qualitative judgments about them. The excerpts that survive are valuable not only because they constitute our best source for reconstructing Aristarchus' edition and give us insight into his editorial methods, but also because they contain many citations of lost editions of the Homeric poems²² and other lost works of ancient scholarship.²³ Scholia that derive from Didymus are indicated by the marginal abbreviation *Did.*

2.1.4 Nicanor

Active in Alexandria in the first half of the second century CE, Nicanor worked in the field of punctuation, hence his nickname, ὁ στίγματίας ('the punctuator').²⁴ Three monographs on punctuation are securely attributed to him: an explication of his theory of punctuation, *On Punctuation in General*, and two author-based studies, *On Punctuation in Callimachus* and *On Punctuation in Homer and the Resulting Difference in Meaning*.²⁵ Though none of Nicanor's works survive in their original form, his treatise on Homer was one of the few monographs selected for inclusion into the VMK, and so is the source of a substantial portion (roughly one seventh) of all VMK-scholia.

²⁰ See Braswell 2013: 40–103 for a critical catalogue of Didymus' works.

²¹ For the papyrus containing part of Didymus' commentary on Demosthenes, see Harding 2006.

²² The scholia that derive from this treatise cite several city editions (those from Marseilles, Chios, Argos, Sinope, Cyprus, and Crete) and personal editions (those of Antimachus, Zenodotus, Rhianus, Aristophanes, Aristarchus, Philemon, Callistratus, and Sosigenes), in addition to 'common' or 'popular' editions and an obscure text known as ἡ πολύστιχος ('the text with extra verses'). On Didymus' consultation of textual witnesses, see West 2001: 50–73.

²³ West 2001: 74–85 enumerates and discusses the scholars cited by Didymus.

²⁴ *Suda* v 275; Eust. *Comm. Il.* i 33.12. On the valences of this sobriquet, see Nünlist 2021: 35.

²⁵ He is also credited with other treatises: *On the Form ὥναξ*, *Contents of Comedies*, *On Alexandria*, and *To Hadrian*.

Nicanor developed a unique system of eight punctuation marks, which are divisible into two categories:²⁶ those that punctuated grammatically complete sentences (namely στιγμαί, 'stops') and those that punctuated phrases within sentences (namely ὑποστιγμαί, 'commas,' and the ὑποδιαστολή, 'pause').²⁷ Nicanor's punctuation marks differed from one another in appearance, in relative position, and in the temporal and logical distance between the phrases they distinguished.²⁸

To signify the end of grammatically complete sentences, Nicanor employed five hard punctuation marks, all roughly equivalent to the modern full stop. The hardest mark, the τελεία στιγμή ('final stop'), signaled the division between complete sentences in asyndeton and signified a pause lasting four temporal units. The second hardest mark, the ὑποτελεία στιγμή ('near-final stop'), signaled the division between complete sentences connected by δέ or a conjunction with similar force (e.g., γάρ, ἀτάρ, αὐτάρ) and signified a pause of three temporal units. Both the final stop and the near-final stop were meant to be placed beside the final letter of the phrase they punctuated, the final stop appearing to the right of the letter's vertical midpoint and the near-final stop somewhat below that.²⁹ The other three στιγμαί in Nicanor's system were meant to be placed above the final letter of the phrase they punctuated. The πρώτη ἄνω στιγμή ('first high stop') marked the division between complete sentences connected by the correlatives μέν . . . δέ, ἤ . . . ἤ, or οὐκ . . . ἀλλά and signified a pause of two temporal units. The δευτέρα ἄνω στιγμή

²⁶ On the bipartite basis of Nicanor's system of punctuation, see Blank 1983 and Nünlist 2024: 75–6. Nünlist 2023b: 11 points out that the relative positioning of Nicanor's eight punctuation marks also lends itself to a tripartite division: the hardest marks were placed beside the final letter of the phrase they punctuated; the three high stops were placed above it; and the three softest marks were placed below it.

²⁷ On the criteria by which Nicanor determined grammatical completeness, see Nünlist 2024.

²⁸ See Nünlist 2020 for a detailed explication of Nicanor's system of punctuation, with examples. For the physical form and relative position of Nicanor's punctuation marks our best sources are Σ Dion. Thrax 26.4–28.8, which describes them verbally, and the summary of Nicanor's system in ff. 95^{r-v} of Bodleian Library ms. Barocci 216, which depicts them graphically. See Nünlist 2020: 134–7 for an English translation of Σ Dion. Thrax 26.4–28.8. The relevant text in ms. Barocci 216 has been edited and translated into Italian by Sandri 2022; Nünlist 2023b: 18–21 provides an English translation. With regard to the temporal values of Nicanor's punctuation marks, ms. Barocci 216 largely confirms the reconstruction of Friedländer 1857: 119–23, except that the τρίτη ἄνω στιγμή and the ὑποδιαστολή had half the temporal value that Friedländer attributed to them. See Sandri 2022: 293–4 and Nünlist 2023b: 9 for discussion.

²⁹ As Nünlist 2023b: 11 n. 12 observes, the prefix ὑπο- in ὑποτελεία στιγμή reflects both a lower typographical position and a weaker force than that of the τελεία στιγμή.

(‘second high stop’), which resembled a dot at the opening of a right-pointing dipole (i.e., ·>), marked the division between complete sentences connected by καί and signified a pause of one temporal unit. Finally, the τρίτη ἄνω στιγμή (‘third high stop’), which resembled a dot at the opening of a left-pointing dipole (i.e., <·), marked the pivot between complete sentences connected by τε and signified a pause of half a temporal unit.

Nicanor’s three soft punctuation marks were reserved for phrases that did not meet the requirements of a grammatically complete sentence. All three appeared below the final letter of the phrase they punctuated and signified a pause of one temporal unit or less. The ὑποστιγμή ἐν ὑποκρίσει (‘expressive comma’) marked the transition from a subordinate clause to the main clause, and indicated that the clause it punctuated should be read out with special intonation (hence ‘expressive’), “for instance, by raising the pitch of the voice from where it descends into the main clause.”³⁰ The ὑποστιγμή ἀνυπόκριτος (‘non-expressive comma’), on the other hand, marked the transition from a parenthetical clause to the main clause and was not associated with a particular manner of delivery.³¹ Both of the ὑποστιγμαί corresponded to a pause of one temporal unit. Nicanor’s softest punctuation mark was the ὑποδιαστολή (‘pause’),³² which signified a pause of half a temporal unit and took the form of a short stroke positioned below the final letter of the phrase it punctuated.³³ This punctuation mark signaled the transition from a main clause to a subordinate clause and grouped together or separated words in order to resolve ambiguities and facilitate understanding.

Given the subtlety and complexity of Nicanor’s system, it is perhaps unsurprising that his system of punctuation “remained an isolated phenomenon”³⁴ that had “a limited impact on general

³⁰ Nünlist 2020: 128 n. 14. On the function of this punctuation mark inside and outside of Nicanor’s system, see Nünlist 2023a.

³¹ On the confusion of our sources regarding the precise function of this punctuation mark, see Nünlist 2020: 129 n. 18 and Nünlist 2023b: 12–13.

³² Though the Homeric scholia regularly refer to this as the διαστολή (or βραχεῖα διαστολή), it is likely that Nicanor’s original term was in fact ὑποδιαστολή, the term used in both Σ Dion. Thrax 26.4–28.8 and ms. Barocci 216. See Nünlist 2020: 130 n. 21; Sandri 2022: 289; Nünlist 2023b: 11 n. 12.

³³ Σ Dion. Thrax 27.32 describes it as having “the shape of an acute accent” (τὸν τύπον . . . τοῦ ὀξείας τόνου); however, as Nünlist 2023b: 10 n. 8 notes, the scribe of ms. Barocci 216 gave it a shape closer to that of a smooth breathing mark.

³⁴ Nünlist 2021: 35.

principles of punctuation.”³⁵ In this volume, as in Erbse’s edition, scholia that derive from the work of Nicanor are indicated by the marginal abbreviation *Nic*.

2.1.5 *Herodian*

The son of the celebrated grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus, Herodian was a grammarian who worked in Rome in the latter half of the second century CE. He wrote extensively on Greek linguistics, with monographs on topics pertaining to morphology, orthography, phonology, etymology, word-formation, inflection, accentuation, and prosody. His most significant work, *General Prosody*, discussed the rules for the pronunciation of Greek words, with a particular focus on accentuation, an interest that he explored in three earlier monographs, *Attic Prosody*, *Iliadic Prosody*, and *Odyssean Prosody*. Of the dozens of works credibly ascribed to him,³⁶ only *On Lexical Singularities* has survived in its original form; the rest are known only through indirect transmission, and a minority of these survive in more than a handful of fragments. Because Herodian was one of the four men whose work was included in the VMK, thousands of excerpts from Herodian’s monographs on Homeric prosody have been transmitted by the VMK-scholia, making them one of the most important sources for knowledge of his scholarship. Scholia that derive from the work of Herodian are indicated by the marginal abbreviation *Hrd*. Scholia that can be traced back to Herodian’s *General Prosody*, *Orthography*, and *On Modifications of Words* are specified by the marginal abbreviations *Hrd. Gen.*, *Hrd. Orth.*, and *Hrd. Mod.*, respectively.

2.2 *The Exegetical Scholia*

The exegetical scholia constitute the second main class of the Iliadic scholia. These scholia, whose best witnesses are the manuscripts of the bT-family, derive from the lost archetype c,³⁷ a compilation-commentary drawn largely from commentaries of the Roman Imperial period. These scholia, and the commentaries from which they derive, have been labelled ‘exegetical’ because their primary

³⁵ Nünlist 2024: 98.

³⁶ For a catalogue of the works attributed to Herodian, with information about the editions in which each of his works can be read, see Dickey 2014; cf. Dyck 1993.

³⁷ On these manuscripts, see §4.2.

interest is in explaining why the poet and his characters speak and act as they do. Whereas the VMK-scholia often imply ‘what’ questions about the text’s formal elements (e.g., What is the correct reading? What is the correct accentuation? What is the correct punctuation?), the exegetical scholia frequently provide answers to implied ‘why’ questions about the narrative or the story (e.g., Why does Chryses describe Apollo as “far-shooting”? Why do the Achaian troops express approval of Chryses’ request? Why do the troops refer to Chryses as “priest” rather than “old man”?). As Francesca Schironi puts it, “Their content is generally less technical than the VMK scholia and is closer to what we would label as ‘literary criticism.’”³⁸ In contrast to the VMK-scholia, whose principal sources are clarified by subscriptions in Venetus A,³⁹ little is known about the sources of the exegetical scholia. On the basis of the use of ἄλλως (“differently”) in the scholia transmitted in the manuscript T, Hartmut Erbse argued that the compiler of c must have drawn on three exegetical commentaries.⁴⁰ This became the scholarly consensus until Martin Schmidt reassessed Erbse’s evidence and concluded that the production of c was “easier than previously thought: beyond the VMK, a copy of the *D*-scholia and Porphyrius, the author(s) had to regularly consult not three, but only two continuous commentaries.”⁴¹ Moreover, Schmidt argued that the author of one of these two commentaries could be discerned on the basis of the distinctive voice, worldview, and interpretations identifiable across hundreds of our exegetical scholia, concluding that he was an individual of the third or fourth century CE who read Homer through a didactic and Hellenocentric lens and often opposed the textual criticism of Aristarchus.⁴² Whether or not one

³⁸ Schironi 2020: 157. The content of the exegetical scholia is well summarized by Schmidt 2002: 170–3 and Schmidt 2011: 121–58.

³⁹ In Venetus A, nearly every book of the *Iliad* closes with a subscription that identifies the authorities from which the core of its scholarly apparatus derives. At the end of book 2, for example, we find the following: “Excerpted here are Aristonicus’ *Signs* and Didymus’ *On the Aristarchean Recension*, as well as selections from the *Iliadic Prosody* of Herodian and Nicanor’s *On Punctuation*.” On these subscriptions, see Pagani 2014.

⁴⁰ Erbse 1953: 9–11; cf. Erbse 1960: 170, Erbse 1969–88 i li, van der Valk 1963–4 i 434, Schmidt 2002: 171, Montanari 2009: 182. Maass 1884 was the first to determine that multiple exegetical commentaries lie behind the bT-scholia. On the use of ἄλλως in scholiastic corpora to signal the shift from one source to another, see Zuntz 1938: 660; Zuntz 1939: 601–5 (= Zuntz 1974: 30, 117–21); Zuntz 1965: 273–5; van der Valk 1963–4 i 47–8; Wilson 1967; Dickey 2007: 108–9.

⁴¹ Schmidt 2011: 120–1. ⁴² Schmidt 2011.