

Holkham Hall 88: Guarino's Aristophanes

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THE RECENT acquisition by the Bodleian Library of the Greek manuscripts from the Earl of Leicester's library at Holkham Hall has brought to light another manuscript of Aristophanes, number 88 in the collection. Although ably described by R. Barbour and further studied by N. G. Wilson,¹ it has not yet been noticed that it almost certainly belonged to the Italian humanist Guarino Guarini da Verona (d. 1460).

Holkham Hall 88 contains eight plays, with scholia and interlinear Greek glosses: *Plutus*, *Clouds*, *Frogs*, *Knights*, *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Birds*, and *Peace* to line 1268. They are preceded by excerpts from Hephaestion (*inc. τὸ λαμβικὸν μέτρον δέχεται*) and several short items, including two by Demetrius Triclinius. There are also metrical scholia ascribed to Triclinius.² J. W. White does not include this manuscript in the list of Aristophanes manuscripts he compiled,³ and according to Wilson no other editor has ever consulted it.⁴ Manuscripts of Aristophanes containing eight plays are quite rare, which proves to be an important factor in connecting this manuscript with Guarino. White lists only one manuscript containing eight, *Laur.* XXXI,16.⁵ This manuscript has no scholia, only hypotheses, and contains nothing except Aristophanes.⁶

A brief description of *Holkham Hall 88* will assist in its identification with Guarino's copy. According to Wilson the manuscript consists of 278 leaves of 258 x 192 mm., with one column of 20 lines to the page.

¹ R. Barbour, "Summary Description of the Greek Manuscripts from the Library at Holkham Hall," *Bodleian Library Record* 6 (1957-61) 609; N. G. Wilson, "The Triclinian Edition of Aristophanes," *CQ* 56, n.s. 12 (1962) 32.

² Barbour, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

³ J. W. White, "The Manuscripts of Aristophanes, I," *CP* 1 (1906) 1-20.

⁴ Wilson, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

⁵ White, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 14.

⁶ A. M. Bandini, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Laurentianae* II (Florence 1768).

The space occupied by the text measures approximately 190 x 90 mm., and there is a large area in the margins assigned to the scholia.⁷ Judging from this layout it seems unlikely that the scholia would be overlooked in an early description. It is on thick paper with a watermark similar to the designs numbered 7680 and 7682 in Briquet's collection, so that as Wilson suggests a date *ca.* A.D. 1400–30 appears likely.⁸ The manuscript is written in a good hand typical of the first half of the fifteenth century. The volume is bound in a fairly recent binding with the Holkham emblem on it. This Holkham emblem is the only indication of its provenance. The book is in extremely good condition and seems hardly to have been used.⁹

The records of what became of Guarino's collection are scant. But in 1892 H. Omont published a list, found in the collection Dupuy, of fifty-four Greek codices with the following title: *Index librorum graecorum manu descriptorum qui in bibliotheca Bapt. Guarini Veronensis reperti sunt et nunc Ferrariae adservantur.*¹⁰ Diller has identified or discussed about twenty-five manuscripts which belonged or may have belonged to Guarino, paying particular attention to the Dupuy list and to those now kept at Wolfenbüttel.¹¹

Diller was not able to locate item number 43 on the Dupuy list, which describes a manuscript of Aristophanes: 43. *Aristophanis comediae octo cum scholiis, et cum quadam Ephestionis appendice de metris, ubi sunt etiam nonnulla de caractere.*¹² This item must be *Holkham Hall 88*: the eight plays (a very rare number), the scholia, and Hephaestion. The "nonnulla de caractere" refers to some short excerpts of Platonius' *περὶ διαφορᾶς χαρακτήρων* given in the manuscript.¹³ All of the data shown in the notice match those in the manuscript. The early date for the manuscript indicated by the watermark and the handwriting make it most unlikely that it is a copy of Guarino's manuscript rather than Guarino's copy itself. Guarino was acquiring manuscripts at about the same time *Holkham Hall 88* was written, having been an

⁷ Wilson, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

⁸ Wilson, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.1); C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes* II (Leipzig 1923) 421.

⁹ Wilson, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

¹⁰ H. Omont, "Les Manuscrits grecs de Guarino de Vérone et la Bibliothèque de Ferrare," *Revue des Bibliothèques* 2 (1892) 78–81.

¹¹ A. Diller, "The Greek Codices of Palla Strozzi and Guarino Veronese," *JWarb* 24 (1961) 313–21.

¹² Omont, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) 80.

¹³ Wilson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 33. They are not mentioned by Barbour, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

ardent collector from his trip to Constantinople in 1403 until his death at Ferrara in 1460. At his death his collection went to his son Battista, and the manuscripts originally owned by Guarino began to be dispersed.¹⁴

How *Holkham Hall* 88 got from the Guarini family to Holkham Hall cannot be determined. It is not among the seventy-three Holkham Hall manuscripts which belonged to Markos and Joannes Morezenos, two priests in Crete, in the seventeenth century; nor was it among the seventy-six Holkham Hall manuscripts which belonged to Giulio Giustiniani in Venice later in the same century. These manuscripts were viewed by Montfaucon in 1698, and the Aristophanes was not among them.¹⁵

Holkham Hall 88 is not an unimportant copy of the text of Aristophanes. As Wilson's article illustrates, it is a valuable example of the Triclinian recension of the text, which was hitherto known only for four plays: *Plutus*, *Clouds*, *Frogs* and *Knights*.¹⁶ The additional knowledge that the manuscript belonged to Guarino da Verona permits us to move still further from the abstract study of *stemmata* to a clearer sense of the people, readers and copiers of Aristophanes, who lie behind and influenced the preservation of our manuscripts.

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¹⁴ Diller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 317.

¹⁵ Wilson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 32.

¹⁶ Wilson, *ibid.*