

On the Problem of a Thoman Recension of Aristophanes

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THE GREAT PROJECT of a complete edition of the old and Byzantine scholia on Aristophanes seems to be making steady progress. The latest volume to appear is fasc. III 2 containing Koster's edition of the Thomano-Triclinian scholia and the scholia *recentiora* on the *Nubes* (Groningen 1974). There can be absolutely no doubt about the debt all classical scholars must owe to the untiring energy of Professor Koster and his colleagues involved in this *magnum opus*, but it seems to me that this most recent volume is open to criticism on important counts.¹

Some years ago Koster put forward the theory of two Thoman recensions of Aristophanes,² and he has now edited the scholia on the basis of this theory. Koster believes that the ms Cambridge *Nn.3.15* is the only extant representative of an early recension of the poet by Thomas and that the ms was written under Thomas' supervision. It is quite obvious that Koster was to some degree led to this theory by the example of Turyn, who in his Euripides book³ stated the Cambridge ms *Nn.3.14* to be a first Thoman recension of Euripides, and by the example of Elizabeth Bryson, who likewise tried to account for the position of the Aeschylus ms *Nn.3.17.A* among the Thoman mss on the supposition that this book was the single extant representative of a first recension by Thomas.⁴

It is easy to see that a theory of two recensions by Thomas of the

¹ Koster's views, if accepted as valid, can be used against the position taken by me in my *Studies in the Scholia on Aeschylus I* (Leiden 1975) and my paper "Notes and Observations on Some Manuscripts of Scholia on Aeschylus," forthcoming in *ClMed* 31, on the question of the Thoman recensions. I wish to thank Richard Kerr of the Cambridge University Library for his help and advice on some important points in the ms *Nn.3.15*. Credit is also due to a referee of this journal who has made a number of helpful suggestions.

² *Mnemosyne* SER.4 17 (1964) 337ff.

³ Alexander Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides* (Urbana 1957) 44ff, 99ff.

⁴ Elizabeth Bryson, *Contributions to the Study of the Thoman Recension of Aeschylus* (diss. Urbana 1956).

three poets explains but one thing—since only one representative of the first recension of each poet has been transmitted—namely that the Cambridge mss hold a unique position in that they diverge, or are thought to diverge, from the class of mss in which they have been put on the evidence of their scholia. For instance, the Aeschylus *Nn.3.17* exhibits the Thoman commentary and is therefore grouped with other Thoman mss, though the poetic text of the ms may have nothing to do with Thomas at all. I hope at a later occasion to discuss in more detail the pitfalls of the axiom that the scholia in a given ms always have been copied from the same exemplar as the poetic text. Suffice it to say on this occasion that this principle cannot stand; there are, at least in Aeschylus, many examples of scholia having been taken from another exemplar than the one used for the poetic text.

There are also other *a priori* objections to the theory of two Thoman recensions. Where until now we have had reason to posit two or more recensions by, e.g., Triclinius of the same author, it is because of material facts. In Aristophanes we can see why it is necessary, in order to account for what the mss have, to posit two or more recensions. There are so many differences between *Paris.suppl.gr. 463* and the recension contained in *Vat.gr. 1294* / *Holkham 88* that we simply are driven to the theory of Triclinius' developing his views on the metrical structure of the lyric cola. In Aeschylus, too, we have to explain the differences between τ and \mathbf{T} in terms of Triclinius' development. No such evidence has until now been brought forward in the case of Thomas. There is no logical connection (in terms of development) between the supposed earlier and the later recensions. We know the extent of Triclinius' work, we know his methods and can see how he was working continuously on his texts and his scholia, using new manuscript evidence and so forth. Nothing of this sort is known in the case of Thomas—and it has even been doubted whether he worked on the poetic text of his annotated authors at all.⁵ The most remarkable difference between the Thoman recensions of Aristophanes is that Thomas—on Koster's view—was interested in metre in his first edition but not in his later one (Koster, *op.cit.* p. viii). Surely this points to Triclinius.

Then we have the further objection that the reason why some Thoman mss do diverge is that these mss have something to do with

⁵ Cf. R. D. Dawe, *The Collation and Investigation of Manuscripts of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1964) 21; *id.*, *Studies on the Text of Sophocles* (Leiden 1973) 60ff.

Triclinius. It is indeed a very striking coincidence that precisely those mss—the three Cambridge mss—which scholars have taken to be representatives of the first Thoman recension can be shown to have had something to do with Triclinius. Is it possible that Triclinian influence may account for their peculiar position? It has been seen—and expressly stressed by Koster—that there are definite connections between Triclinius and the first Thoman recension. This is remarkable and ought to have cast some doubt on the whole theory. But of course it is always possible to account for similarities of readings in mss. Readings are always a matter of taste; they may be endorsed or rejected on a quite subjective basis by the individual scholar, ancient or modern. What cannot be explained away are material facts—such facts as scribal hands, the material make-up of mss and manuscript notes of a non-literary sort.

This is the point I should like to raise in the present paper: that Koster's view of the Cambridge ms as a representative of the first Thoman recension not only does not take into account some important material aspects of the problem but also tries to explain away some evidence against his theory in a manner which is very doubtful. In my view the Cambridge ms contains so many Triclinian elements that its status as a Thoman ms—not to speak of a representative of the first Thoman recension—cannot be seriously upheld. The Triclinian evidence is as follows.

On Plate 2 (facing the title page) in his edition Koster reproduces a page of the Cambridge ms, f.67^r. On this page we have a marginal scholium on *Nubes* 1178 in the hand of the black-ink-scholia scribe (on this scribe see my discussion below of the scribes in the ms): *σημείωσαι ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ διὰ δύο νν εὔρηται ἢ ἔννη, ἀλλ' ἐνταῦθα πανταχοῦ ὁ Ἀριστοφάνης δι' ἐνὸς ν τῆι ἔννη χρῆται διὰ τὴν ἀνάγκην τοῦ μέτρου*. The metrical remark is of course not decisive proof of this note's being Triclinian. But in the right margin, as Koster himself observes, there is an indication of authorship, written in red ink: *τρικλ*. Demetrius Triclinius, I presume. But Koster in his note 8 (p. cii) offers the following explanation: "Tales curas metricas potius a Triclinio exspectes, cum cuius editione priore Thomae priori multa communia esse mox ostendam . . . Haec affinitas eum non effugit, qui iuxta . . . apposuit *τρι* (superscr. κλ) i.e. *Τρικλινίου* . . . quamquam in utraque Triclinii editione explicatio formae ἔννη longe alia est. Si quid ex paucarum litterarum scriptura iudicare licet, inscriptio illa manu 1, cum cuius

subscriptione in n.5 exscripta pugnat [This pertains to the note on f.114^v where there is a note on the Thoman authorship of the scholia], recentior est, sed adhuc saec.XIV; certe neque a m² neque a m³ exarata est.”

Any reader familiar with scholiasts and scribes may judge the validity of this argument. The note, according to Koster, does not have any similarity to the Triclinian explanation, but the scribe, whoever he was, knew that Triclinius had used Thomas' first edition and therefore put the sign of Triclinius' authorship. It will be admitted, I hope, that a more farfetched explanation would be difficult to envisage. Fortunately we can account for the facts in a more reasonable way. There are, as I shall point out later, two hands in the scholia. One scribe writes most of the marginal commentary in black ink (mainly; he also writes red glosses); the other scribe uses red ink and seems to have entered additional matter in places where he could find room. This latter scribe wrote the note of authorship here (and, by the way, also that on f.114^v), and may be seen on Koster's plate writing the interlinear scholium protruding into the margin above the marginal scholium just mentioned.⁶

But this is not the only example. There is a further one, and to my mind it is one even more damaging to Koster's view. On f.32^r (see PLATE 1 figure 1) there is a scholium on *Nubes* 638 which is extant only in the supposed early Thoman recension and in Triclinius. It is too long to print in full here, and I give only the final paragraph: δέον οὖν ἐστὶ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις⁷ καὶ τὰ περὶ μέτρων μανθάνειν ζητεῖν· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν καὶ πολλὰ τῶν τοῖς ποιηταῖς ῥηθέντων διορθοῦν ἔχοι τις τῷ χρόνῳ παραφθαρέντα. It is hard to see who else but Triclinius could have said so. And in fact the red-ink scribe has been good enough to tell us that it was Triclinius who wrote this note. In the margin we have the same sign which we met on f.67^r: τρι^{κλ}. This note is very difficult to read and it may therefore have escaped Koster.

It is much more difficult to account for another omission in Koster's edition. Since we have only the Cambridge ms as a representative of

⁶ The identity of the hands are, I trust, verifiable on Koster's plate, but since the reader might entertain some doubts as to this verification, I have asked for the expert help of Richard Kerr, Cambridge University Library. He has checked my point on the original ms and agrees.

⁷ The word ἄλλοις is not in the Cambridge ms; it is in the Triclinian version of the scholium. Possibly it was omitted, as Koster suggests (crit. not. *ad loc.*), because the scribe of the Cambridge ms after τοῖς moved on to the next line.

the supposed early Thoman recension, one would surely expect that the whole of its scholiastic matter could be found in what must be *the* edition of Aristophanic scholia for this and the next generations. It cannot; for some reason a very telling note on *Nubes* 907 in the Cambridge MS f.60^r (cf. PLATE figure 2) is not printed in Koster's edition. I have on another occasion discussed this note, which seems to me clear-cut proof that this MS was written in Triclinian circles⁸: τὸ ἴν' ἐμέ^ω οὐχ εὐρηγται ἔν τινι τῶν παλαιῶν βιβλί^{ων}, written by the black-ink-scholia scribe. Thus it will be seen that the Triclinian elements are found with both scholia hands; these elements cannot be explained away by the supposition of later additions.

I take it as proved that the MSS were produced in a Triclinian milieu, possibly in Triclinius' scriptorium. It is a typical product of a scriptorium; several hands, two of which I have already referred to, were working on this MS which, as I have shown elsewhere, was a large undertaking, uniting in one big codex the triads of Aristophanes, Euripides and Aeschylus.⁹

The scribe of the poetic text writes in a style very near the main scribe in the Triclinian metrical MS *Ven.Marc.gr.* 483.¹⁰ This mode of writing can be historically connected with Thessalonica; indeed, the best representative of it is none other than Demetrius Triclinius. In the scholia there are two hands using two different colours of ink. One of these scribes, the one who wrote the marginal scholia in black ink and red interlinear glosses, was the owner of the book, and he tells us that his name was Ioannes Zeianos.¹¹ Koster's assertion on p. vi that the book was written by one scribe is patently incorrect. His further remark in n.6 that this single scribe also wrote *Nn.3.14* and *Nn.3.17.A* (this is against Turyn) is equally mistaken. I refer to my discussion of this matter elsewhere.¹²

There are several other doubtful statements in Koster's edition that may be ascribed to negligence in evaluating the contents of the MSS, but the examples above will suffice for the present; my aim has been

⁸ *ClMed* 31 (forthcoming).

⁹ See my *Studies* (*supra* n.1) 225 n.109.

¹⁰ Cf. Turyn, *Epet* 39–40 (1972–73) 403ff.

¹¹ This was noticed by Nigel Wilson and Koster, *Mnemosyne* SER.4 17 (1964) 342.

¹² The large codex consisting of what is now *Nn.3.15*, *Nn.3.14* and *Nn.3.17.A* has been written by four different hands; for details I must refer to my paper forthcoming in *ClMed* 31.

only to demonstrate the extremely shaky foundations of Koster's view of two Thoman recensions.¹³

The outcome of my discussion of this aspect of Koster's edition is that if we are to solve the problems of the late Palaeologean recensions of the Attic dramatists and to reduce the Byzantine mss to order, the first prerequisite is that we base our investigations and theories on facts. The hypothesis of two Thoman recensions is a fiction. What we know is that Demetrius Triclinius made several attempts, some of which we may call recensions, of which much has been transmitted to us in various ways. We also know something about how to evaluate codicological facts, and it is advisable that this knowledge be applied to the study of the Byzantine transmission of the dramatists.

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¹³ I shall on a later occasion (*cf.* my *Studies* 113) deal with Koster's equally mistaken view of the scholia *recentiora*.



Figure 1. FOL. 32 verso, DETAIL OF MARGIN

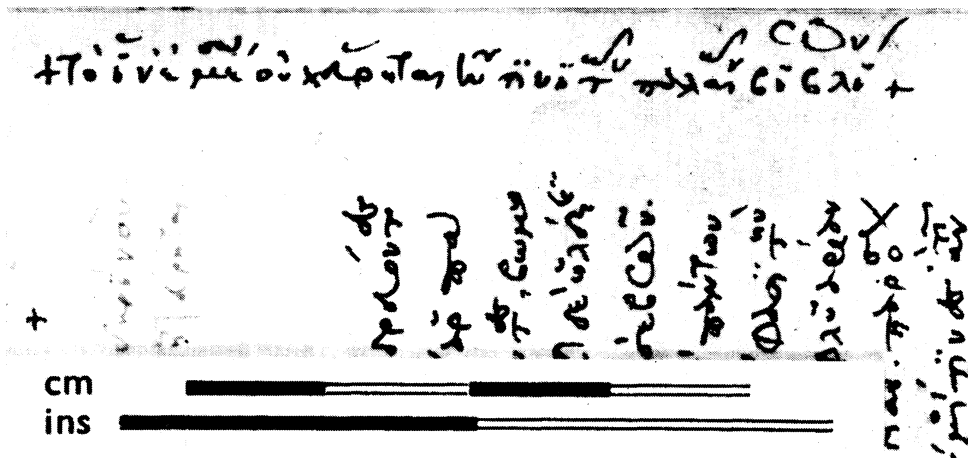


Figure 2. SCHOLIUM *ad Nubes* 907 IN MARGIN OF FOL. 60 *recto*

SCHOLIA TO ARISTOPHANES, *Nubes*, IN CAMBRIDGE MS Nn.3.15

(Photographs by courtesy of the Cambridge University Library)