The Getty Homer Fragment

Marianina Demetri Olcott, San Jose State University
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Marianina Olcott

Now in residence at the Getty Museum is a rather small but potentially significant papyrus fragment identified as having been written sometime in the late second or early first century B.C., which possibly may be attributed to a scribe working in the Fayum sometime during that period (figs. 1a, b). Although the recto text has previously been identified as Homer Odyssey 10.397–403, the verso text has thus far eluded identification.

Of the seven lines of writing across the vertical fibers of the rougher, verso surface, which Brashhear published in 1983, four appear to contain a lemma (λέμμα, direct quote from the text under discussion), and I have tentatively identified them as Odyssey 21.91–94 = Getty verso lines 4–7; we might even add Odyssey 21.89 = Getty verso line 3. Thus, verso lines 3–7 can, with the customary caution, be reconstructed according to Brashhear’s reading. In the reconstruction that follows, Brashhear’s reading of the verso is set into the passage from Odyssey 21.91–94.

line 1 ν = Too little remains for identification.
line 2 ἔρεθ = Does not appear to be identifiable.
line 3 μενου = ἀλλ’ ἀκέων δεινοτεθεν καθήμενοι ἦν θεραῖς = Od. 21.89
(Od. 21.90 is not represented in the verso fragment.)
line 4 οὖ = μημοτίμεον ἄθλον ἀστον; οὔ γὰρ οἶο = Od. 21.91
line 5 γεντα = ῥήματος τόδε τῶν ἐξον ἐντανύεοθη = Od. 21.92
line 6 γεντοι = οὔ γὰρ τις μέτα τοῖος ἀνήρ ἐν τοίδοις πᾶσιν = Od. 21.93
line 7 ναυτον = οἰκὸς ὀδυσσευτικὸς ἑκέν ἐγὼ δὲ μῖν αὐτὸν ὁποῖα = Od. 21.94
line 8 ο βαῖλ = cannot be identified with any verse in the vicinity of Od. 21.1–200.

I have adopted Brashhear’s suggestions for line 6, where the final letter may be an iota. Furthermore, the final letter of line 3 is too mutilated to be useful.

The Getty verso presents some interesting divergences from the text of Homer as we find it today. The most obvious difference is the omission of Odyssey 21.90. In addition, line 8 of the Getty verso cannot be identified with any verse in the immediate context of the passage Odyssey 21.1–200, although subsequent examination of the verso text offers some suggestions for a tentative reconstruction. We also find that verso line 7 departs from the text in our current editions of Homer (see note 6). In the verso text the pronoun αὐτόν qualifies the Ionic form of the third person singular pronoun μι, a frequent occurrence in Homer. Thus, this departure from our modern editions may represent a true variant to the text of this passage. The only other attested instance of Odyssey 21.91–94 is a parchment codex of the third century A.D. listed as Papyrus Rylands I.53 (= Pack no. 1106), in which the text of these specific lines has been extensively restored by the editors.

What precisely the situation presented in the verso may be, is difficult to decide. However, a tentative interpretation of the text featured in the Getty verso may be offered. If we are dealing with a so-called subliterary text, as I suspect we are, then all but one of the discrepancies (i.e., the variant reading αὐτόν for αὐτός) between the text of the Getty verso and the textus receptus of our modern editions can be explained. Precisely which type of subliterary text this may be cannot be determined, since all types of subliterary texts (i.e., hypomnemata, scholia, lexicia, and summaries) provide formats pertinent to a complete description of the verso text.

A salient feature of the Getty verso is the blank space at line 4. Blank spaces occur frequently in papyri in a variety of circumstances in subliterary texts. For example, blank spaces set off the lemma from the surrounding commentary. An excellent example of this
use of blank space is found in E. G. Turner's collection, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1971), no. 61 (= Oxyrhynchus Papyri 31.2536). Here, in the hypomnema (scholarly commentary with lemma), the direct quote from the text excerpted for comment is set off by blank space. Or, the blank space may be used to punctuate the lemma, as in *Papyrus Michigan* inv. 4852c col. I, line 6, and col. II, line 5.10 In this example, we find a paraphrase or summary of books 18 and 19 of the *Iliad* in which several quotes from the closing portions of book 18 and the opening of book 19 are incorporated into the summary.

Perhaps for our purposes the most instructive example of the use of blank space is found in a first-century-b.c. papyrus fragment, *POxy* 8.1086 (= Pack no. 1173). This extensive fragment (410 × 232 mm), reproduced in facsimile in Turner's collection as no. 5811 and first published in volume 8 of the *POxy* by A. S. Hunt, is particularly interesting for several reasons.12 First, according to Hunt, it marks an important stage in the transmission of the scholarly tradition concerning the text of Homer initiated by the famous Alexandrian scholar Aristarchos (217/215–145/143 B.C.). Second, it offers a format that shares several features with the Getty verso. In this text (*POxy* 8.1086) of a commentary on book 2 of the *Iliad*, lines 751ff., we find blank spaces used to set off words in the lemma, which are then the focus for subsequent comment. For example, in column I, lines 38 and 39, blank space is used to mark the focus of the explanatory comment on δέλτια = *Iliad* 2.777.

Again in column II, lines 51 and 53, spaces mark the verb συγγιγνέται (II. 2.784) and the comment on that word. Similarly, spaces at column II, line 56, mark the word ἀληθεύη (II. 2.787) and again in column III, line 91, the focus of the comment, κολονή, is set off by blank space.13 From these last examples it seems reasonable to conclude that the space at Getty verso line 4 is used to focus attention on the word immediately preceding the space, namely, the curious Greek adjective ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον.

Despite the ambiguity over what type of subliterary text we are dealing with, it seems reasonable to assume that at Getty verso line 4 the Homeric lemma continues after the blank space with οὐ γάρ ὅδε (Od. 21.91), for the subsequent lines, 5, 6, and 7, appear to quote an uninterrupted text (i.e., *Od*. 21.91–94). Thus, although the purpose of the space at Getty verso line 4 is ambiguous given its varied use in all types of subliterary texts, one is nonetheless tempted to conclude that the space indicates the focus of a commentary on verso lines 1–3 and 8, namely, the word ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον, in much the same way that blank space was used in *POxy* 8.1086.

There is no doubt that, aside from its morphology, ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον presents serious problems of interpretation. In the three known Homeric instances, a meaning appropriate to *Odyssey* 21.91 and 22.5 will not fit with *Iliad* 14.271. And none of these choices appears to fit with the occurrence of the word in Apollonius Rhodius.14 That these semantic difficulties were noticed early on in the scholarly tradition is no doubt reflected in the wealth of commentary on ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον, both ancient and modern (see below, note 16).

If this is the case (i.e., that the Getty verso represents an hypomnema on ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον), then we have here the earliest extant example of commentary upon a word that receives attention, to some extent, out of proportion to its five occurrences in extant Greek literature (see note 14). A later papyrus fragment in the British Museum, attributed by H. J. M. Milne to the atticing lexicographer Phrynichus Arabius (second century A.D.), focuses on another instance of ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον from Homer *Odyssey* 22.5.15 This latter instance of an hypomnema on ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον confirms the interest that the word has exercised on successive generations of scholars from the very beginnings of classical scholarship.16

This conjecture that the Getty verso represents an hypomnema is very attractive for several reasons. First of all, ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον, the conjectured focus of the hypomnema preserved on the Getty verso, still excites scholarly debate today, as it has in the past. Central to the discussions found in every period is the attempt to fix the derivation of this word and its related noun ἀτὴ (or ἀτητι as in Hesiod *Theogonia* 230). Throughout this tradition, from the ancient lexicographers to modern researchers in linguistics, different scholars provide different Greek verbs as the source of ἀτη/ἀτητι (usually peril, ruin, destruction) and its related adjective ἀδάτος/ἀδαότον.17

But etymology is not the only area where this word elicits debate. A consideration of its four occurrences in Greek—and I add a fifth, the variant reading of Apollonius Rhodius 1.803—reveals that no one metrical pattern will fit all occurrences. Indeed, *Iliad* 14.271 presents a scanion not shared by other examples: u–X versus u–a X for all other instances. Perhaps of significance is the fact that in *Iliad* 14.271 this strange word is used as the epithet of Styx's water, which according to the ancient mythological tradition
was the most sacred oath of the Gods on Mount Olympos (Hesiod *Theogonia* 400). Just as prosody and etymology present a confused picture, just so we note that all of the current, modern translations for even one of the occurrences of the word, *Odyssey* 22.5, offer renderings that are mutually exclusive:

"That match is played and won!" (E. V. Rieu, *Penguin Classics*, 1946, reprint 1964)

"At last, at last the ending of this fearful strain." (T. E. Lawrence, *Oxford*, 1969)


"This inviolable contest has been brought to an end." (A. Cook, *Norton*, 1967)

Thus it is very tempting to conclude that what we have here is indeed some sort of scholarly commentary on the word ἀόρατος/ἀόρατον in which a significant portion (three lines) of the surrounding text is quoted and incorporated into the commentary.

If, as I have suggested, the Getty verso is an hypomnema with *lemmata* quoted ad libitum similar to *PMich* inv. 4832c (second-first century B.C., see note 10), where *lemmata* are interspersed throughout the narrative, we may identify one additional line in our reconstruction, *Odyssey* 21.89 = Getty verso line 3.

As for the last line of the Getty verso, line 8, ἔργοι, some tentative but possible reconstructions may be brought forward. First, the letters ἔργοι are clearly related to the Greek noun for "king," βασιλεύς, and the adjective derived from that noun, βασιλικός, "royal." Both these words are found frequently in closures to hypomnemata, where the scribe, in citing either his own name or the name of the scholar quoted in the comment, presents the following format, as in *POxy* 47.3345, line 43:

ὁ τοῦ νομοῦ βασιλικός γραμματέως Ἀμμώνιος.

In some cases the formula in the genitive to denote time is used to date the document, as in *POxy* 46.3279, line 15:

Νικάνδροι βασιλικῷ γραμματέως.

As Brashear noted, the recto text appears to reach to the bottom margin of the papyrus roll, while
the verso text extends into the bottom margin. It still seems safe to conclude that Getty verso line 8, 9 ἑικόλ, is indeed the last line of the verso text and that our fragmentary text includes some form of the customary formula for closing hypommemata.

As far as the physical disposition of the verso text as a whole is concerned, the verso lemma, arranged verse by verse (καπεια ὁτιεον) and in continuous script (i.e., no word divisions except for the space at line 4), occupies approximately the same position in the column as the recto text, and, similarly, preserves initial portions of the second hemistich (i.e., second half of the verse). 18

A consideration of the verso script confirms Brashear’s statement that the slightly larger letters of the verso (0.65 cm vs. 0.47 cm) may stem “from the same hand especially if one compares the letter forms of tau, epsilon and rho in the last lines of the recto with the same letters on the verso. Upsilon on both sides is similar.” 19 In comparison with other hands, ligatures 20 of tau/omicron at verso lines 6 and 7 (and possibly recto line 7) appear similar to those found in another first-century B.C. papyrus, \( \text{POxy} 8.1086. \)

Similarly, alphas at Getty verso lines 5 and 7 and \( \text{POxy} 8.1086. \), col. II, lines 75 and 79, form their left members in one looped sequence 22 and suggest the conclusion that the two texts are contemporary.

When we consider the Getty papyrus fragment as a whole, the fact that one hand may have written both the recto and verso has important implications for our description of this papyrus fragment. The firm upright capitals of the recto script share certain palaeographical features with another first-century B.C. papyrus fragment, also of Homer (II. 8.332–336 and 362–369), from the Fayum in Egypt (\( \text{PFayum 4} \), see note 1). The similarities in letter forms suggest that the same scribe may have written each of these three texts.

In his analysis of the Getty recto, Brashear 23 noted “the heterogenous letter forms of tau (line 1) formed with two strokes, one horizontal and one vertical, and tau (line 7) with one curved stroke as the left half of the cross bar and vertical hasta and another horizontal stroke for the right half of the cross bar.” Similarly, \( \text{PFayum 4} \) presents heterogenous tauts. In \( \text{PFayum 4} \) (lines 2 and 7) tauts are written as in the Getty recto (line 7), with one curved stroke forming the left portions of the letter while a second horizontal stroke completes the right half of the crossbar. Another form of tau, again similar to tauts in the Getty recto (line 1), at \( \text{PFayum 4.3, 6} \), (possibly 9), and 11 is formed with two strokes: vertical hasta capped by a horizontal bar, which in \( \text{PFayum 4.3 and 6} \) and Getty recto line 1 exhibit serifs on the horizontal left member.

Interestingly enough tauts of the Getty verso text lines 5, 6, and 7 are also presented as a curved stroke forming left portions while the right member is a horizontal stroke, which, as was noted by Brashear, 24 suggests that the hands of the Getty recto and verso may be the same despite the larger letters of the verso text.

Serifs are a regular feature of letters in both the Getty and the \( \text{PFayum 4} \) papyrus fragments. Upsila, similarly formed in all, are decorated with serifs on the base of the vertical stroke at \( \text{PFayum 4.11} \), Getty recto line 1, and Getty verso line 7. Likewise gammas at \( \text{PFayum 4.10} \) and Getty recto line 2 appear very similar and again exhibit serifs decorating the base of the vertical strokes. Nus are well formed, again with decorative serifs at the heads and bases of left vertical strokes in \( \text{PFayum 4.3 and 11} \), and Getty recto lines 1, 6, and 7. Nus in the Getty verso text possibly exhibit the same characteristics as the recto and \( \text{PFayum 4} \) but the rougher texture of the verso makes certain identification difficult.

Like the well-formed nus, the letter forms for alpha, delta, and lambda of both the Fayum papyrus and the Getty recto tend to be aligned along a vertical axis with equilateral sides. Compare deltas in \( \text{PFayum 4.6} \) with Getty recto lines 3 and 4. Compare alphas in \( \text{PFayum 4.3} \) with the Getty recto lines 2 and 3. Alphas, partially missing in the Getty verso text, however, appear completely different: Left members are formed by a narrow loop slanting upward to the right; the letter as a whole tilts to the left in stark contrast to alphas of \( \text{PFayum 4} \) and the Getty recto, which are aligned along a vertical axis. However, the rougher texture of the verso may have dictated this variation from the pleasing symmetrical alphas of the Getty recto and \( \text{PFayum 4} \).

Epsilas in the Getty recto lines 3 and 7 and \( \text{PFayum 4.3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 12} \) receive similar treatment. In all examples a tendency toward angularity is modified by smooth curves where horizontal members meet the vertical shaft. Isolated examples, however, in \( \text{PFayum 4.10 and 11} \), are the clearly squared epsila pointed out as a “remarkable palaeographical feature” by Grenfell and Hunt. 25 Compare epsila in the Getty recto text lines 1 and 3, where a tendency toward angularity can be observed.

Overall both fragments, \( \text{PFayum 4} \) and the Getty recto, offer such striking similarities in their upright, well-formed letters that one is tempted to assign the
hand of the same scribe to both texts. In addition, the same hand may also have executed the Getty verso
text, given the similar execution of nu, upsilon, tau, and rho, as Brashear has already noted.

Thus what at first glance appeared to be a rather unremarkable fragment of ancient Greek writing has been shown to have implications for three separate disciplines. First, as a hypomnema on the rare Greek
adjective οὐτός, our little fragment represents one of the earliest extant comments on a word that has received constant attention throughout the scholarly tradition relating to Greek literature. Second, this hypomnema may be assigned to the same hand as another extant fragment of Homer (PFayum 4), previously published by Grenfell and Hunt in a collection of papyri from the Fayum (see note 1). Last, the Getty verso presents an otherwise unattested variant to the text of this passage in our modern editions, namely, οὐτός for the modern οὐτός.

California State University
San Jose

NOTES

Abbreviations:
1. Malibu 76.41.56. The size of the fragment is 4.4 × 1.9 cm.
2. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, *Fayum Towns and Their Papyri* (London, Egypt Exploration Fund, 1900), no. 4. v. (second-first century b.c.) = Pack no. 830. *PFayum 4* has been identified as portions of *Iliad* 8.332–336, and in the second column portions of 362–369, a facsimile of which is reproduced in plate V. Corrigendum: The text accompanying the description of no. 4, p. 89, incorrectly lists the facsimile plate as VI.
3. The recto text was identified by J. Frel (*Antiquities in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, pamphlet 2 [Malibu, 1977]), as *Odyssey* 10.397–403. I would like to thank Dr. Frel for giving me the opportunity to study the fragment and for putting Brashear’s article at my disposal.
15. *Iliad* 10.803 (“Iliad 1.803 [ἐν δὲ τί προεκδόοιε]... καὶ τὸ ἔπος’ ἀνά δήμου ἄποτος ἐπέτει λόγος...
And then 'not subject to Ate' Madness fell upon the people.” (Olcott tr.)
16. Lexicographical:
1. T. Gaisford, ed., *Etymologicon Magnus* (Amsterdam, 1867), s.v. οὐτός (quotes Methodius)

Scholia:
2. M. van der Valk, ed., *Eustathii Commentarii ad Homerii Iliadem Pertinentes* (Leiden, 1971), section 985.15
3. Eustathii Commentarii ad Homer’ Odyssen (Leipzig, 1825), sections 618.40, 749.20, and 770.30
4. C. Wendel, rec., Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium Vetera (Berlin, 1958), to Argonautica 1.459; 2.77; 2.232
5. See also Argonautica 1.801–804. See critical apparatus to Fränkel (above, note 14).

Modern:
6. A. Moorhouse, "CCCCUQT and Some Other Negative Compounds," CQ n.s. 11 (1961), pp. 10–17

17. On derivation of the related noun ὀφθη as:
1. ὀφθη = "to blast," see Francis (above, note 16), pp. 74–121
2. ὀφθη = "blindness, infatuation," see Doyle (above, note 16)
3. ὀφθη = "to sate," see Wyatt (above, note 16) and Moorhouse (above, note 16)
4. ὀφθη = "ruin," see Dawe (above, note 16)

18. It is tempting to conclude that the recto lower margin is the bottom margin of the roll. However, broad bands appear to interrupt Homerian texts usually at the end or beginning of a book. See the so-called Harris Homer (British Museum Papyri 126 = Pack no. 634 [later third century A.D.]) in Turner (above, note 11), pl. 14. But POxy 2535, pl. IV (late first century A.D.), uses a broad band to precede an hypomnema and an historical epitaph. In POxy 2536 (second century A.D.) the band interrupts the lemma (1.26) of an hypomnema by Theon to Pindar, Pythian Odes (Turner [note 11], pl. 61).

19. Brashar, p. 159. "The larger letters (0.65 cm) of the verso side appear at first glance to be different from the ones of the recto side. Yet the case can be made for their stemming from the same hand, especially if one compares the letter forms of tau, epsilon and rho in the last line of the recto with the same letters on the verso."

20. I would like to thank Professor Susan Stephens of Stanford University for confirming this fact and for her help and advice in the preparation of this article.

22. Turner (above, note 11), p. 98, on pl. 58 (POxy 8.1086). "Alpha is often large and pointed; its first movements in one looped sequence."
23. Brashar, p. 159.
24. Ibid.