

Megaclides of Athens and the Homeric Exegesis between Aristotle and Aristarchus

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to investigate the influence of the Peripatus on the Alexandrian Homeric philology and exegesis. This relationship is examined through the study of the Homeric fragments of the Peripatetic Megaclides of Athens. In a fragment specifically dedicated to the poetic portrayal of Heracles, it is possible to observe a distinction between Homer and post-Homeric poets and a devaluation of the latter's renewal of Homeric themes. Both observations recur also in the Aristarchean exegesis, which indicates the post-Homeric poets with the derogatory expression *οἱ νεώτεροι*, perhaps already employed for this purpose by the Peripatus.

KEYWORDS

Aristotle, Megaclides, Aristarchus, Homeric exegesis, Heracles, *neoteroi*

In his *History of Classical Scholarship*, a milestone for generations of scholars, Pfeiffer did not sufficiently acknowledge the impact of the Peripatus on the Alexandrian philology and exegesis on the Homeric poems.¹ Only in recent times, more attention has been paid to the Peripatetic

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¹PFEIFFER, R.: *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*. Oxford 1968.

influence on the Alexandrian *studia Homerica*.² Indeed, several recent studies in the field of the ancient Homeric philology and exegesis have aimed to demonstrate continuity between the analytical methods and interpretation of texts from the Peripatus to the Alexandrian exegetes. Some scholars have made an attempt to identify an intermediary in the transmission of the Peripatetic scholarship to Alexandria, pointing to Demetrius of Phalerum, a pupil of Theophrastus and guest of Ptolemy I.³ Perhaps, however, there is no need to identify a single conduit, since an in-depth analysis of the texts highlights meaningful points of contact between the Homeric studies of both the Peripatetics and the Alexandrians. A case in point is the analysis of the Homeric fragments of a less studied, but no less important, Peripatetic scholar, Megacledes of Athens; several of his remarks are taken up and developed by the Alexandrian grammarians.

The Alexandrian philologists practiced their exegesis and textual criticism exclusively on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* among the literary productions attributed to Homer in antiquity, a choice that seems to have been influenced by Aristotle's claim that only these two epic poems were composed by Homer: this approach is also linked to the Aristotelian devaluation of the Cyclic poems (*Po.* 1459a37–b16, cf. 1448b38–1449a1). Thus, the aesthetic judgement of Aristotle became an integral part of the Alexandrian (and especially Aristarchean) exegesis, whose main mission was to search what was considered authentically 'Homeric' (τὸ ὁμηρικόν) for the interpretation and the *constitutio textus* of the Homeric poems. In turn, what was considered non-Homeric was viewed as an interpolation from later poets, and was therefore to be atheized.⁴

The devaluation of the Cyclic poems was based on clues relating to their content and on observations of the Homeric usage on a linguistic, historical and literary level (the ὁμηρικὴ συνήθεια). These were all tools employed by Alexandrian philologists to determine the superiority of the Homeric poems, as compared to the works of later poets. Closely connected to this was the principle (if not Aristarchean in form, at least almost certainly Aristarchean in substance) of the Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν (Porph. *Zet.* 297.16 Schrader), that is 'to clarify Homer through Homer'.⁵ However, the comparison does not only concern the 'Cyclic' poets (οἱ κυκλικοί), but also all those who came after Homer, soundly condemned when the imitation of the master was less than perfect. According to Aristarchean terminology, these poets were all

²The Peripatetic influence on the Alexandrian philologists was the main focus of the *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* of the Fondation Hardt edited by MONTANARI, F.: *La Philologie grecque à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, Tome XL. Vandœuvres–Genève 1994. See the more recent important contributions by BOUCHARD, E.: *Du Lycée au Musée. Théorie poétique et critique littéraire à l'époque hellénistique*. Paris 2016 and SCHIRONI, F.: *The Best of the Grammarians. Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Iliad*. Ann Arbor 2018, 413–443.

³See especially the studies by F. MONTANARI: Demetrius of Phalerum on Literature. In FORTENBAUGH, W.W. – SCHÜTRUMPF, E. (eds): *Demetrius of Phalerum. Text, Translation, and Discussion*. New Brunswick 2000, 391–411; Gli studi omerici di Demetrio Falereo. *Seminari Romani di Cultura Greca*, IV/1 (2001) 143–157; Dal Peripato ad Alessandria. In TULLI, M. – MAGNANI, M. – NICOLOSI, A. (edd.): *ΦΛΑΙΑ. Dieci contributi per Gabriele Burzacchini*. Bologna 2014, 79–102.

⁴On the concept of ὁμηρικόν, see SIEBENBORN, E.: *Die Lehre von der Sprachrichtigkeit und ihren Kriterien. Studien zur antiken normativen Grammatik*. Amsterdam 1976, 90–92; SCHIRONI (n. 2). On the Alexandrian devaluation of the Cyclic poems, see BLUMENTHAL, H. J.: Callimachus, Epigram 28, Numenius Fr. 20, and the Meaning of κυκλικός. *CQ* 28.1 (1978) 125–127; FANTUZZI, M.: The Aesthetics of Sequentiality and Its Discontents. In FANTUZZI, M. – TSAGALIS, CH. (eds): *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception: A Companion*. Cambridge 2015, 405–429, in part. 410–429.

⁵On this principle, see NÜNLIST, R.: What does Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν Actually Mean? *Hermes* 143 (2015) 385–403.



grouped together (with no distinction) under the category of the *νεώτεροι*,⁶ this category included the *κυκλικοί*, but it is in fact much broader, as stated by Severyns,⁷ as it also includes contemporaries of the Alexandrian philologists.

Aristarchus used the condemnation of the *νεώτεροι* to justify the athetesis of presumed non-Homeric verses, therefore considered as interpolations. The main targets of Aristarchus' criticism were those exegetes (like, for instance, his predecessor Zenodotus), who interpreted the Homeric myths in light of the mythological references found in later poetry. In fact, through careful analysis of the Homeric poems, Aristarchus was able to reject a particular myth, claiming that the poet could not have been aware of that mythical version, which was elaborated only by later poets. For instance, at the beginning of *Iliad*, Aristarchus closely connected the accomplishment of Zeus' will (v. 5 Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή) to the struggle between Achilles and Agamemnon (vv. 6–7 ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε/Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς), due to Zeus' promise to Thetis to honour Achilles, offended by Agamemnon, during his absence from the battlefield. In doing so, the philologist of Samothrace rejected the interpretation of the *νεώτεροι*, according to whom Zeus' will was to be identified in his decision to solve the problem of overpopulation through the Trojan war (*schol. Ariston. Il. I 5–6 A*). This interpretation found confirmation in the possible connection of the temporal clause in *Il. I 6–7* (ἐξ οὗ) to *Il. I 1*, which would leave *Il. I 5* isolated. Zeus' will could have been sought in an extra-Homeric story; what the *A* scholium calls τὰ παρὰ τοῖς νεωτέροις πλάσματα is largely explained by *schol. D Il. I 5 ZYQAU*, who explicitly ascribed the story to the *Cypria* (= fr. 1 Bernabé), rejecting τὰ . . . παρὰ τοῖς νεωτέροις ἱστορούμενα in favour of the Aristarchean and Aristophanean interpretation mentioned above (κατὰ τὴν Ἀριστάρχειον καὶ Ἀριστοφάνειον δόξαν).⁸ According to the philologists, this myth was unknown to Homer, and whoever interpreted *Il. I 5* in this way, (wrongly) based his interpretation on later poems, misunderstanding the true Homeric thought.

Just as Aristarchus' condemnation of the *κυκλικοί* has an antecedent in Aristotle's devaluation of the Cyclic poems, the category of the *νεώτεροι*, even though not systematized and technically codified, could also be traced back to a Peripatetic praxis. In this regard, a link between the Aristotelian and Aristarchean exegesis is represented by Megacledes of Athens, a Peripatetic scholar who lived in the second half of the 4th century BC (fr. 2 Janko = Tat. *Or.* 31. 2 = Eus. *PE* X 11. 3).⁹ Athenaeus (XII 512e–513a = Megacled. fr. 9 Janko) transmits a fragment,

⁶For the *νεώτεροι* as post-Homeric poets, see LEHR, K.: *De Aristarchi studiis Homericis*. Königsberg 1882³ (1833¹). Lehrs argued against D. HEINSIUS: *Hesiodi Ascræi quae extant. Cum Graecis scholiis, Procli, Moschopuli, Tzetzae in Έργα καὶ Ημέρας*. Io. Diaconi & incerti in reliqua. Leiden 1603, 80 (according to whom they were “non . . . recentiores grammatici . . . sed Homero posteriores poetae”). On the Aristarchean condemnation of the *νεώτεροι*, see NUNLIST (n. 5) 389–396; NAGY, G.: *Aristarchus and the Epic Cycle*. In *Classics@ 6* (ed. E. Karakantza, The Center for Hellenic Studies of Harvard University; online edition of December 20, 2010); SCHIRONI (n. 2) 357–358, 652–708.

⁷SEVERYNS, A.: *Le cycle épique dans l'école d'Aristarque*. Liège–Paris 1928.

⁸On the scholium, see SCHIRONI (n. 2) 515, 662–663.

⁹Megacledes was author of a *Περὶ Όμήρου* (fr. 3a, 4a–b, 5 Janko) in at least two books, in which he dealt with exegetical and historical-antiquarian questions and discussed some textual variants (cf. frr. 12–13 Janko). On Megacledes, see BUX, E. in *RE* XXV/1 (1931) 124–125, s.v. *Megakleides* (n. 1); DAMSCHEN, G. in *NP* VII (1999) 1133, s.v. *Megakleides*; JANKO, R.: *Philodemus On Poems Book 1*. Oxford 2000, 138–143; PAGANI, L. in *LGGA* (2006–2009), s.v. *Megacledes* (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2451-9278_Megacledes_it).



in which Megaclides dealt with the problem of the representation of Heracles in Homer and Hesiod on the one hand, and in post-Homeric and post-Hesiodic poets on the other.

Ath. XII 512e–513c διόπερ καὶ Μεγακλείδης ἐπιτιμᾷ τοῖς μεθ' Ὀμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον ποιηταῖς ὅσοι περὶ Ἡρακλέους εἰρήκασιν ὡς στρατοπέδων ἡγεῖτο καὶ πόλεις ἤρει· ὅς μεθ' ἡδονῆς πλείστης τὸν μετ' ἀνθρώπων βίον διετέλεσε, πλείστας μὲν γυναικας γήμας, ἐκ πλείστων δὲ λάθρα παρθένων παιδοποιησάμενος. εἴποι γὰρ ἂν τις πρὸς τοὺς οὐ ταῦτα παραδεχομένους· ὅθεν, ὦ οὔτοι, τὴν περὶ τὰς ἐδωδὰς αὐτῷ σπονδὴν ἀνατίθετε, ἢ πόθεν παρήλθεν εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὸ τῆς λοιβαίας κύλικος μηδὲν ὑπολείπεσθαι, εἰ μὴ τὰ περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς ἐδοκίμαζεν, ἢ διὰ τί τὰ θερμὰ λουτρά τὰ φαινόμενα ἐκ τῆς γῆς πάντες Ἡρακλέους φασὶν εἶναι ἱερά, ἢ διὰ τί τὰς μαλακὰς στρωμνάς Ἡρακλέους κοίτας εἰώθασιν καλεῖν, εἰ κατεφρόνει τῶν ἡδέως ζώντων; τοῦτον οὖν, φησὶν, οἱ νέοι ποιηταὶ [A rec. Kaibel: οἱ νεώτεροι E mal. Kaibel in apparatu, van der Valk] κατασκευάζουσιν ἐν ληστοῦ σχήματι μόνον περιπορευόμενοι, ξύλον ἔχοντα καὶ λεοντὴν καὶ τόξα· καὶ ταῦτα πλάσαι πρῶτον Στησίχορον τὸν Ἱμεραῖον (PMG 299). καὶ Ξάνθος δ' ὁ μελοποιός (PMG 699), πρεσβύτερος ὢν Στησιχόρου, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Στησίχορος μαρτυρεῖ, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Μεγακλείδης, οὐ ταύτην αὐτῷ περιτίθει τὴν στολήν, ἀλλὰ τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν.

Megaclides criticizes (ἐπιτιμᾷ), among post-Homeric and post-Hesiodic poets, those (ὅσοι) who represented Heracles as a warrior, commander of armies and destroyer of cities (ὡς στρατοπέδων ἡγεῖτο καὶ πόλεις ἤρει), in contrast with another image of a hedonistic Heracles, rather more characteristic of comedy.¹⁰ In order to demonstrate that Heracles was addicted to pleasure, Megaclides mentions some practices and costumes of his time explicitly connected to Heracles or named after him, such as the idea that nothing is to be left in a cup from which a libation has been poured (τὸ τῆς λοιβαίας κύλικος μηδὲν ὑπολείπεσθαι) and that warm springs (τὰ θερμὰ λουτρά) and soft beds (τὰς μαλακὰς στρωμνάς) are sacred to the hero. The term οἱ μεθ' Ὀμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον ποιηταῖ foreshadows here the difference between the Homeric/Hesiodic epic and post-Homeric/Hesiodic poetry that we will find in the Alexandrian (and Aristarchean) exegesis.¹¹ On the other hand, the specification ὅσοι suggests that there were two different representations of Heracles in later poetry: some poets, the targets of Megaclides' criticism, represented the hero as a warrior, while others, implicitly praised by the grammarian, portrayed him as a man addicted to pleasure.

The figure of Heracles occasionally appears in the Homeric poems, but these sporadic appearances only acknowledge his service to Eurystheus (*Il.* XV 639–640, XIX 132–133, *Od.* XI

¹⁰Heracles is a frequent subject of the Old Comedy, as fragments of Epicharmus, Hermippus, Cratinus, Plato, Aristophanes (see in particular *Nu.* 1044–1054, where the *Ἡράκλεια λουτρά* are mentioned) testify. In the 4th century BC several plays of the Middle and New Comedy are focused on Heracles: *Limos* of Alexis (fr. 140 Kassel–Austin), *Bousiris* of Antiphanes, Ephippus and Mnesimachus (fr. 66–68, fr. 2, fr. 2 Kassel–Austin respectively), *Antaios* and *Omphale* of Antiphanes (fr. 35, fr. 174–176 Kassel–Austin respectively), *Omphale* of Cratinus the younger (fr. 4–5 Kassel–Austin), *Kerkopes* of Eubulus (fr. 52 Kassel–Austin), *Auge* and *Heracles* of Philyllus (fr. 3–5, fr. 7 Kassel–Austin respectively), *Heracles* and *Amphitryon* of Rhinthon (fr. 3, fr. 1 Kassel–Austin respectively), *Pseudo-Heracles* of Menander (fr. 409–416 Kassel–Austin). On a hedonistic Heracles in the comedy, see GALINSKY, K.: *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century*. Totowa 1972, 81–100; STAFFORD, E.: *Herakles*. London – New York 2012, 105–117.

¹¹With the difference that, for Aristarchus, Hesiod was a νεώτερος, although in a particular position that distinguishes him from other post-Homeric poets. See SEVERYNS (n. 7) 39; SCHIRONI (n. 2) 695–703. On the passage, see also MONTANARI, F.: *Ancient Scholarship on Hesiod*. In MONTANARI, F. – RENGAKOS, A. – TSAGALIS, CH. (eds): *Brill's Companion to Hesiod*. Leiden–Boston 2009, 313–342, in part. 323–324.



620–622), the capture of Oichalia (*Od.* XXI 11–41), and the capture of Cerberus in Hades (*Il.* VIII 362–368, *Od.* XI 623–626) – the only one of Heracles’ twelve labours mentioned by the Homeric poems. Hesiod’s *Theogony*, on the other hand, refers to more labours, including his struggles against the giant Geryon, the Nemean lion, the Lernaean Hydra and Cerberus, as well as the episode of the garden of the Hesperides (*Th.* 289–294, 306–332, 517–531). Nonetheless, their narration is not continuous; for a real systematization of Heracles’ heroic labours we have to jump to art and literature of the 6th century BC, with the metopes of the temple of Zeus in Olympia and the *Ηρακλεία* by Pisander of Rhodes in at least two books. Pisander was also the first poet to attribute to the hero his traditional features, such as the club and the lion’s skin, as testified by fr. 1 and fr. 13 Bernabé.¹² Nevertheless, although neither the Homeric nor the Hesiodic poems represent Heracles as the warrior of the twelve labours, they do not depict the hero as a lover of pleasure and women, either. Megacledes may therefore have supported this particular representation of the hero in order to criticize the total opposite one promoted by later poets, guilty of having erroneously inferred from the Homeric and Hesiodic poems an idea of Heracles that does not, in fact, correspond to his real portrait in these epic poems.

Later in the fragment, *οἱ μεθ’ Ὀμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον ποιηταί* are mentioned again using the term *οἱ νέοι ποιηταί*. The Marcianus Graecus 447 (A) has the reading *οἱ νέοι ποιηταί*, while the Laurentianus Pluteus 60.2 (E), a manuscript of the Epitome, features the interesting term *οἱ νεώτεροι*, which may allow an even more direct comparison with the Aristarchean technical vocabulary. KAIBEL¹³ maintains *οἱ νέοι ποιηταί* in text, but expresses a preference for the Epitome reading, which is also preferred by VAN DER VALK,¹⁴ who observes that the reading *οἱ νεώτεροι* is a *lectio difficilior*. Megacledes, then, may not only have been the very predecessor of Aristarchus in the condemnation of the reuse of the Homeric myths by post-Homeric poets, but also have provided the philologist of Samothrace with the technical term at the basis of this criticism, namely *οἱ νεώτεροι*.

The condemned *νεώτεροι*, then, represented Heracles not only as a commander of armies and destroyer of cities (*ὥς στρατοπέδων ἡγείτο καὶ πόλεις ἤρει*), but also as a lonely bandit with club, lion skin and bow (*ἐν ληστοῦ σχήματι μόνον περιπορευόμενον, ξύλον ἔχοντα καὶ λεοντήν καὶ τόξα*). According to Megacledes, the first to have invented (*πλάσαι*) this outfit was Stesichorus of Himera, while his predecessor, Xanthus, did not represent Heracles as having this outfit, but instead with the traditional, Homeric, one (*ἀλλὰ τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν [scil. στολήν]*).¹⁵ Among the condemned *νεώτεροι*, the only one to be explicitly mentioned here is Stesichorus of

¹²For the systematization of Heracles’ heroic labours in the epic poem of Pisander, see HUXLEY, G. L.: *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis*. London 1969, 99–112; GALINSKY (n. 10) 20–21.

¹³KAIBEL, G.: *Athenaei Naucratis Dipnosophistarum libri XV*. Lipsiae 1887, 132.

¹⁴VAN DER VALK, M.: *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes. Ad fidem codicis Laurentiani editi I*. Lugduni Batavorum 1971, LXXXIII.

¹⁵For another criticism on the *στολή* of Heracles, see *schol.* *Od.* XI 568 TV (*ἀπὸ θανόν δὲ αὐτὸν ἔχειν καὶ τὴν σκευὴν . . . τὴν μὲν σκευὴν ἔχει κατὰ φαντασίαν*) and *Eust.* *Od.* 1702. 45–50, I 439. 41 – 440. 2 Stallbaum (*διαβάλλουσι δὲ καὶ τὸν τοιοῦτον τόπον οἱ Ὀμηρομάστιγες διὰ τὸ εἰπεῖν τὸν ποιητὴν . . . καὶ ὅτι ὅπλοφορεῖ*). The target of this criticism is *Od.* XI 606–614, where Heracles appears to Odysseus in Hades equipped with a bow and a dreadful baldrick. Significantly, these verses are part of *Od.* XI 568–627, a section athetized by Aristarchus (see *schol.* *Od.* XI 568 HT, *schol.* Pind. O. I 91a ACDEHQ). On the problem, see PETZL, G.: *Antike Diskussionen über die beiden Nekyia*. Meisenheim am Glan 1969, 6–43.



Himera, who wrote about Heracles in several works (*Geryoneis*, *Kerberos*, *Kyknos*) and often represented him with his military equipment (fr. 229 Davies, fr. S16.3 Davies),¹⁶ but probable targets of Megaclides' criticism must also have been Pisander of Rhodes and Creophilus of Samos, as detected by Janko.¹⁷ As already observed, in the view of the ancients, it was the Rhodian poet who was particularly responsible for having spread a militaristic representation of Heracles.

Megaclides' preference for an anti-military Heracles in the Homeric and Hesiodic poems as displayed here in the passage by Athenaeus is nevertheless not isolated; this fragment could be closely linked to *schol. ex. Il. V 640 bT* (= fr. 8 Janko), which contains another remark by the Peripatetic grammarian on the representation of Heracles in *Il. V 638–642*.

schol. ex. Il. V 640 ὅς ποτε δεῦρ' ἐλθών...Μεγακλείδης [Russo, rec. Janko : Μεγακλῆς Müller (FHG IV 443), Maass, Bux : Μενεκλῆς bT, Jacoby (vd. FGtHist 270 F 11, sed Jacoby 1943: 228), Erbse] δέ φησιν ἐψεῦσθαι τὴν ἐπὶ Ἰλιον στρατείαν (scil. Ἡρακλέους). b(BCE³E⁴)T

In these verses, Tlepolemos brags in front of Sarpedon about his famous father, Heracles, who once conquered Troy single-handedly. According to Megaclides, Heracles' expedition against Troy was a fake (ἐψεῦσθαι). Janko¹⁸ traces fr. 8 back to a wider discussion about the heroic exploits and weaponry of Heracles in post-Homeric poetry, and associates it with fr. 9 (Ath. XII 512e–513c).

The condemnation of Heracles' representation as a warrior, perceived as characteristic of the νεώτεροι, recurs significantly in the Alexandrian, and in particular Aristarchean, exegesis on Homer. An interesting remark by Strabo (XV 1. 8–9) transmits a fragment of Alexandrian Homeric exegesis;¹⁹ Strabo speaks about the warrior Heracles as one of Alexander's models for his Indian expedition, and relates a note about the Indian population of the Sibi. The Sibi would be the descendants of the soldiers who took part in Heracles' expedition. Strabo referred that they used to wear animal skins and wielded clubs, just like Heracles (καθάπερ τὸν Ἡρακλέα). However, this note is rapidly refuted as a similar equipment (στολή) was thought to be an invention of later poets, the νεώτεροι, in particular the authors of Ἡράκλειαι, among whom Pisander is explicitly mentioned.

Strab. XV 1. 9 καὶ ἡ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους δὲ στολή ἡ τοιαύτη πολὺ νεώτερα τῆς Τρωικῆς μνήμης ἐστί, πλάσμα τῶν τὴν Ἡράκλειαν ποιησάντων, εἴτε Πείσανδρος ἢν εἴτ' ἄλλος τις· τὰ δ' ἀρχαῖα ξάνα οὐχ οὕτω διεσκεύασται.

¹⁶On the *Geryoneis*, *Kerberos*, *Kyknos* see DAVIES, M. – FINGLASS, P. J.: *Stesichorus. The Poems*. Cambridge 2014, 155–156, 230–298.

¹⁷JANKO (n. 9) 143.

¹⁸JANKO (n. 9) 142.

¹⁹Strabo is an important source of the Alexandrian Homeric exegesis, thanks to his close contacts with the Alexandrian school. Indeed, he was a pupil of Aristodemus, son of Menecrates, a direct disciple of Aristarchus. For this contact, see DUECK, D.: *Strabo of Amasia. A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome*. London – New York 2000, 31–40; LIGHTFOOT, J. L.: *Man of Many Voices and of Much Knowledge; or, In Search of Strabo's Homer*. In DUECK, D. (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to Strabo*. London – New York 2017, 251–262; TRACHSEL, A.: *Strabo and the Homeric Commentators*. In DUECK: *The Routledge Companion to Strabo* 263–275. For this reason, SEVERYNS (n. 7) 58 mentions Strabo as an important source for the Aristarchean polemic against the νεώτεροι, because he preserved several fragments which could be traced back to the exegesis of Aristarchus.



Several points of contact with Megacles' criticism lead us to hypothesize that the observations of the Peripatetic were taken up and assimilated into the Alexandrian exegesis. The adjective *νεωτέρα* brings us back to the term *οἱ νέωτεροι* attested to by Athenaeus; significantly, it refers to Heracles' equipment (*στολή*), called *πλάσμα*, an invention of the authors of the *Ἡράκλειαι*.²⁰ In fact, the term could be another parallel with Megacles' fragment, in which the verb *πλάσαι* is used to indicate the 'new' Heracles invented by Stesichorus. The (false) image of Heracles criticized by Strabo is in contrast with that of the ancient poems on the Trojan war; the term *τῆς Τρωικῆς μνήμης* clearly alludes to the Homeric poems, which stand in stark contrast to the image of the martial Heracles characteristic of the *νεώτεροι*.

Strabo's remark may have been derived from Aristarchean observations on the topic. The parallel of *schol. D Il. V 397 ZYQXUI* could indeed explicitly reveal the position of Aristarchus on the military exploits of Heracles considered an invention of later poets, a *πλάσμα τῶν νεωτέρων*.

schol. D Il. V 397 ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσιν· ὁ μὲν Ἀρίσταρχος “τὸν πύλον” ἀκούει κατὰ μεταπλάσμον ἀντι τοῦ “πύλην” ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ “πολύαρνι” (*Il. II 106*) “πολυάρνῳ”. καὶ τὸ ἐν νεκύεσσι κυρίως ἀκούει “ἔνθα αἱ τῶν τετελενητῶν ἀναχωροῦσιν ψυχαί”. **ZYQXUI** καὶ τὸν Αἰδονέα τρωθῆναι ὑπὸ Ἡρακλέους· εἰκὸς περὶ τὴν τοῦ Κερβέρου ἀναγωγὴν τετοξεῦσθαι ἐμποδῶν γινόμενον αὐτῷ καὶ κωλύοντα, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐν ἑτέροις τῆς ἱστορίας ταύτης μέμνηται ὁ ποιητὴς λέγων “εὔτε μιν εἰς Αἶδαο πυλάρταο προὔπεμψεν / ἔξ’ Ἑρέβους ἄξοντα κύνα στυγεροῦ Αἶδαο” (*Il. VIII 367–368*). οἱ δὲ νεώτεροι Ὅμηρον ποιηταὶ τὸ ἐν Πύλῳ κυρίως “περὶ Πύλον τὸν Μεσσηνιακὸν” ἤκουσαν τοῦτο πεπονθέναι αὐτόν, καθ’ ὃν χρόνον Ἡρακλῆς ἐπόρθησεν Πύλον, καὶ προσεμυθεύσαντο ἴδιον διήγημα, ὅπερ ἀνωτέρω εἴπομεν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἡρας ἐν τῇ πρὸ ταύτης ἱστορίᾳ (see *schol. D Il. V 392 ZYQXUI*). **Z**

The scholium makes reference to the Aristarchean interpretation of the expression ἐν πύλῳ in *Il. V 397*. Dione tries to soothe her daughter Aphrodites, wounded by the mortal Diomedes, and brings examples of other gods wounded by mortals. After the story of Ares being locked up by Otus and Ephialtes and the story of Hera being wounded in the breast by Heracles, is mentioned the episode of Hades being struck by Heracles' arrow, ἐν πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσιν. The scholium relates two different interpretations of this expression. The first is the Aristarchean one, in which ἐν πύλῳ is understood as an equivalent of ἐν πύλῃ, 'by the door'. The philologist of Samothrace explained this phenomenon as a metaplasma (κατὰ μεταπλάσμον, see also *schol. Ariston. (?) Il. V 397 T*), the passage of a substantive from the feminine declension in -α to the thematic declension of masculine and neutral names. According to this interpretation, ἐν νεκύεσσιν is closely linked to ἐν πύλῳ in the meaning of 'by the door of Hades' ("beim Eingang (der Unterwelt) unter den Toten"),²¹ the place of the dead.²² The second interpretation belongs to the νεώτεροι Ὅμηρον ποιηταί, who read ἐν πύλῳ as a proper noun (κυρίως) – an ethnic

²⁰On the concept of *πλάσμα*, see MEIJERING, R.: *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia*. Groningen 1987, 84–87; NÜNLIST, R.: *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia*. Cambridge 2009, 260.

²¹Vlachodimitris in *Lfgre III* (2004) 1646, s.v. Πύλος.

²²On the Aristarchean reading ἐν πύλῳ, see. *schol. ex. Il. V 395–7 bT*, *schol. ex. Il. XVI 203 bT*, *schol. Od. XIV 318 B*, *schol. Pind. O. IX 44a ACDEHQ*, *schol. Apoll. Rh. I 1350 L*, *Eust. Il. 563. 27–28*, *Il 106. 14–15 Valk*. The expression has the same meaning in *Od. XII 383* (δύσσομαι εἰς Αἶδαο καὶ ἐν νεκύεσσιν φαείνω).



name referring to the Messenic city of Pylos. In this case the meaning would be ‘in the battlefield full of corpses by Pylos’ (“auf dem von Toten übersäten Schlachtfeld bei Pylos”).²³

The interpretation of ἐν πύλῳ is important to place the episode in Heracles’ deeds. According to the Aristarchean interpretation, the wounding of Hades by Heracles might have happened during the expedition by the hero to collect Cerberus in the realm of the dead, a deed mentioned also in *Il.* VIII 367–368. On the other hand, Aristarchus criticized post-Homeric poets, who, relying on the particular interpretation of the expression ἐν Πύλῳ, invented (προσεμυθεύσαντο) Heracles’ expedition against the sons of Neleus, the king of Pylos; on that occasion, in the slaughter of the battle (ἐν νεκύεσσι), Heracles may have wounded Ares himself.²⁴ The same criticism can be found in *schol. Ariston. Il.* XI 683a A, probably derived by Aristarchus, in which the murder of Neleus by Heracles is a myth ascribed to the νεώτεροι, whereas according to Homer (καθ’ Ὀμηρον), the king of Pylos was still alive during the war against the Eleans, dated after the presumed sack of Pylos by Heracles.²⁵ The slaughter of Neleus’ sons and the capture of Pylos paint a picture of a martial Heracles, a warrior and destroyer of cities, similar to that mentioned by Megacrides, as characteristic of post-Homeric and post-Hesiodic poets. The kidnapping of Cerberus, on the other hand, even though one of the heroic labours that was later fully codified, must have been perceived as more in line with the traditional Homeric image of Heracles (not fully militarized), as already mentioned in the poem. Therefore, the first image is rejected by Aristarchus, who explicitly ascribed the creation of this myth to the νεώτεροι Ὀμηρον ποιηταί and explained it as a misinterpretation of Homeric expressions.

In conclusion, Aristarchus refused to countenance a representation of a martial Heracles as non-Homeric, but instead characteristic of post-Homeric poets, as qualified by the derogatory designation of νεώτεροι.²⁶ The same judgement is expressed in the Homeric exegesis by the Peripatetic Megacrides of Athens, in a fragment transmitted by Athenaeus. What Megacrides condemned was therefore the gradual transformation of Heracles into a martial hero in later epic poetry; this would be incompatible with the image of a pacific Heracles, which too, however, does not find confirmation in either Homer or Hesiod, but was supported by Megacrides as a reaction to the ‘new’ image of Heracles, maybe influenced by the coeval Middle and New Comedy. However, it is not possible to say with certainty whether Megacrides’ observation aimed at comparing the (correct) Homeric and Hesiodic representation of Heracles from that

²³VLACHODIMITRIS (n. 21). On the myth of the νεώτεροι, see *schol. ex. Il.* II 581–6 b, *schol. ex. Il.* V 329–4a¹ T, *schol. ex. Il.* V 329–4a² b, *schol. ex. Il.* XI 671–761 bT, *schol. ex. Il.* XI 690a² b, *schol. D Il.* XI 690 b ZQXAUIG. On the passage, see KIRK, G. S.: *The Iliad. A Commentary. Vol. 2: Books 5–8.* Cambridge 1990, 101–102; VAN THIEL, H.: *Aristarch, Aristophanes Byzantios, Demetrios Ixion, Zenodot: Fragmente zur Ilias gesammelt, neu herausgegeben und kommentiert. Band I: Einleitung, Ausgabe und Kommentar Buch A–H.* Berlin–Boston 2014, 443–444.

²⁴This interpretation is also mentioned by *schol. ex. Il.* V 392–4a¹ T and by *schol. ex. Il.* V 392–4a² b. The expression has the same meaning as in *Il.* X 349–350 (ὥς ἄρα φωνήσαντε παρὲς ὁδοῦ ἐν νεκύεσσι/κλυθήτην).

²⁵The opposition between the νεώτεροι and Homer (καθ’ Ὀμηρον/Ὀμηρος) recurs frequently in the Aristarchean remarks: see e.g. *schol. Ariston. Il.* II 596 A, *schol. Ariston. Il.* II 730 A, *schol. Ariston. Il.* II 862a¹ A, *schol. Ariston. Il.* III 184a A, *schol. Ariston. Il.* V 670a A, *schol. Ariston. Il.* VI 199 A.

²⁶A clue to this ‘Alexandrian’ interpretation of Heracles can be detected in vv. 159–161 of the *Hymn to Artemis* of Callimachus, where Heracles is represented as a glutton. Thus, the *poeta doctus* could have hinted at the real Homeric representation of the hero, according to the Peripatetic and Alexandrian interpretation.



(incorrect) of later poets, or was instead a specific criticism of Homeric or Hesiodic passages in which a non-Homeric or non-Hesiodic Heracles was represented, questioning their authenticity, as Aristarchus would later go on to do.²⁷ What is interesting to observe is the probable use of what would become the Aristarchean technical term to indicate post-Homeric poets, the *νεώτεροι*. This category is largely employed and systematized by Aristarchus, but Slater²⁸ persuasively demonstrated that it was not, in fact, an Aristarchean creation; critical allusions on the use of post-Homeric poets to interpret Homer are already ascribable to Aristophanes of Byzantium (fr. 308 Slater). It may be possible then to backdate the use of the term *νεώτεροι* to the Peripatus, and perhaps to Megaclides himself, whose master, Aristotle, may have already provided the tools and terminology for the discrimination of the *ὁμηρικόν* from the products of later poets. Although a minor figure in the panorama of the Peripatetic *studia Homerica*, Megaclides nevertheless represents an important link between Aristotle and the Alexandrian philology. A careful study of his fragments, recently re-edited by Janko²⁹ in his edition of the fragments of the first book of *Philodemus' On Poems*, could eventually reveal new surprises to this end, adding new evidence for assuming a strong Peripatetic influence on Alexandrian philology, and in particular on Aristarchus' scholarship.

²⁷On Megaclides' occasional criticism to Homer, see BUX (n. 9) 125.

²⁸SLATER, W. J.: *Aristophanis Byzantii Fragmenta*. Berlin – New York (1986) 103.

²⁹JANKO (n. 9).

