*Iliad* 8 Scholia on Mythological Geography

This post will be the first of a series of posts adapted from my senior thesis on the scholia of *Iliad* 8 in the Venetus A and Escorial Y.1.1 manuscripts. Over the course of a year, working primarily with fellow Holy Cross students, Brian Clark and Rebecca Musgrave, I produced editions of the scholia of *Iliad* 8 in both manuscripts. The Venetus A is a 10th century Byzantine manuscript and our oldest, most complete source for the *Iliad*. The Escorial Y.1.1 is an 11th century Byzantine manuscript. These two manuscripts offer two separate but related transmissions of ancient Homeric scholarship dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE. The material in these manuscripts is at time similar, but the manuscripts also posses material not contained in the other. This divergence in material makes a comparison of the two manuscripts fruitful for studying issues such as scribal practices and sources. Using the digital photography and the luxury of time, I was able to conduct this comparison in a way never previously possible.

While I was editing the scholia of the Venetus A, it became apparent almost immediately that they contained unusual and hitherto unrecorded content on the Greek concepts of the heavens and the Underworld. The first folio of Book 8 in the Venetus A (100v) contains a simple diagram of an orb divided into four regions: αιθηρ (aether), ἀήρ (air), αἰδης (Hades), and τάρταρος (Tartarus) [embed Image 1]. The presence of a diagram presented a new issue in how we marked up the text for the digital edition of the scholia. What we clearly had was not just a drawing but a figure that included textual elements. Therefore we introduced a new element to our list of acceptable TEI markup: “figure.” This markup allows us to embed other features such as a description of the figure (in the element “figDesc”) as well as the textual elements (in the element “floatingText” etc). [embed Image 2] There are no other diagrams in the rest of Book 8, nor in the entire Venetus A. The Υ.1.1, while marked with the occasional drawing or “doodle,” has no such diagrams either. The Venetus A diagram appears in conjunction with a scholion commenting on line 8.12. The text of the scholion, we have transcribed as follows:

ὡς τὰ οὐράνια τρία διαστήματα ἔξει ἀέρα μεχρι νεφελῶν, εἰτα αἰθέρα μέχρι τῶν φαινομενων· οὕτως καὶ ἀπο γῆς εἰς ἄδου· ἀπὸ δὲ ἀδου εἰς Τάρταρον· ἐναντίος δὲ Ὀλύμπω ὁ Τάρταρος· ὁ μὲν γὰρ “οὔποτ’ ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται· οὐδέ ποτ’ ὄμβρῳ” ὁ δὲ καὶ τετάρακται καὶ ψυχρὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ γοῦν τὸ σφόδρα ῥιγοῦν ταρταρίζειν φασίν. καὶ ὁ μὲν ὅλος καταλάμπεται· ὁ δὲ ἠερόεις ἐστίν

“Since heaven has three distinct parts: the lower air spans up until the clouds, then the aether spans up until the visible places. In a similar way so it goes both from earth to Hades and from Hades to Tartarus, Tartarus is in opposition to Olympus. For the one, “never shook with winds, nor with heavy rain” (*Odyssey* 6.43). And the other seemed to be both chaotic and cold, indeed they say that to fall into Tartarus is to be violently cold. The former is wholly shone upon. The latter is murky” (urn:cts:greekLit:tlg5026.msA:8.6). [Link Image 3]

It is obvious from the content of the scholion that the diagram is meant to serve as a visual aid, but, of all shapes, why is the diagram a sphere? The text of this particular scholion only explains the ordered stacking of the regions. The issue is explained on the next folio (101r) in a scholion commenting on line 8.16. I transcribed the text of this scholion as follows:

τόσσον ἔνερθ' Ἀΐδεω:

τοσοῦτον φησὶ τὸν Τάρταρὸν. ἀφεστᾶναι τοῦ Ἅιδου ὅσον οὐρανος τῆς γῆς. δια δὲ τούτων σφαιροειδῆ τὸν κόσμον συν ἵστησι κέντρου λόγον ἐπέχουσαν εἰσαγαγῶν τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰς ἁπ αυτῆς. ἐμβαλλομένας εὐθείας εἰς εκὰτερα τὰ περατα ἴσας λέγων εἶναι⁑

“All the way down to Hades:

He says that Tartarus stands as far from Hades as Ouranus is from the earth. And through these [references] he makes the cosmos spherical; he has introduced the earth in the relation of the center [of the cosmos], he says that [going] straight from the earth to each opposite side is equidistant” (urn:cts:greekLit:tlg5026.msA:8.14). [Link Image 4]

This scholion makes the issue of the sphere obvious. We have no idea if these two commentaries were from the same original source, but they complement each other. The first discusses the divisions between the different parts of heaven and hell with earth in between and the second looks at the relationship between Tartarus and Ouranus in a geographic and mathematical context (see Euclid *The Elements* Book 11 Definition 16, Book 1 Definitions 15, 16, and 18).

The question of sources becomes more complex when we look at the comparable scholia in the Υ.1.1. The Y.1.1 also divides the contents of these scholia into two separate comments, but its organizing principles are different. Commenting on line 8.13, the Y.1.1 reads:

ἐναντίος Ὀλύμπῳ ὁ Τάρταρος· ὁ μὲ`ν γὰρ. "οὔποτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται· οὐδέ ποτ' ὄμβρῳ"· οὗτος δὲ τετάρακται· καὶ ψυχρὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ· ὅθεν καὶ τὸ σφόδρα ῥιγοῦν ταρταρίζειν φασίν· καὶ ὁ μὲ`ν ὅλος καταλάμπεται ὁ δὲ` καὶ ἠεροειδής ἐστιν⁑

“Tartarus is opposite to Olympus. For the one, "never shook with winds, nor with heavy rain" (*Odyssey* 6.43). And the other is chaotic and it seems to be cold, from which they say that to fall into Tartarus is to be violently cold. And the one is wholly shone upon and the other is cloudy” (urn:cts:greekLit:tlg5026.e3:8.13) .[Link Image 5]

In this scholion, the scribe of the Y.1.1, or whichever sources he was copying from, extracts the material discussing the physical conditions of Ouranus and Tartarus and puts it on line 8.13 instead of 8.12. A few scholia later, the scribe includes this commentary on line 8.16:

τὰ οὐράνια ὥς φησι τρία διαστήματα ἔχει· ἀέρα μέχρι νεφελῶν· εἶτα αἰθέρα μέχρι τῶν φαινομένων· καὶ τῆς Διὸς ἀρχῆς· οὕτω καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς εἰς Ἅδου, ἀπὸ δὲ Ἅδου εἰς τὸν Τάρταρον· δῆλον δὲ ὡς τὸ μέσον κέντρον ἲν ἡ γῆ· ἔδει δὲ εἰπεῖν "τόσσον ἔνερθε" γῆς. ὅσον ἀπ' αὐτῆς εἰς οὐρανόν· τάχα οὖν τὸ Ἀΐδεω ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Ἅδου φησίν⁑

“The heavens, as he [the poet] says, have three distinct parts. The lower air spans up to the clouds. Then the aether spans up to the visible places and the realm of Zeus. And in a similar way so it goes from the earth to Hades, from Hades to Tartarus. And so the earth is clearly as the middle center point. And it is right to say that it is as far beneath the earth as the earth is from heaven. And indeed perhaps he [the poet] calls it Hades because of the rulership of Hades” (urn:cts:greekLit:tlg5026.e3:8.16). [Link Image 6]

There are a few different points to be made about scribal choices in these scholia. First, the scribe of the Y.1.1 or his sources seem to group scholia contents by different themes than the scribe of the Venetus A. The first Y.1.1 scholion on line 8.13, as already stated, handles the physical conditions of Ouranos and Tartarus and their status as opposites. The second scholion explains both the concept of the four stacked regions and the concept of the universe in which the earth is the center point. Notably the direct reference to the cosmos as a sphere is absent in the Y.1.1 scholia. Another notable point is the differences in how similar contents of the scholia correspond to different lines of the *Iliad* in each manuscript. The first scholion from the Venetus A appears on 110v which contains the first fourteen lines of Book 8. Scholia always appear on the same folio as the lines they comment on and line 8.12 mentions Tartarus. Despite the fact that this scholion does not possess a lemma--that is, a quoted section of the *Iliad* that connects a scholion to the section of text it comments on--it is fairly reasonable to suppose that this reference is correct. If anything we can say for certain that in the Venetus A, this scholion is not commenting on anything after line 8.14. However, the Y.1.1 includes this content on line 8.16. There is no ambiguity here. The scholia of the Y.1.1 are linked to the text through Greek numerals and occasionally non-numerical symbols above the specific words in the line the scholion comments on, working like modern footnotes. The second scholion from the Venetus A does appear on line 8.16. The different choices in positioning the material can give us a glimpse into scribal practices in the 10th and 11th centuries. The scribe of the Y.1.1 or his source believed the commentary on 8.12, explaining the divisions of heaven and hell, belonged with the discussion of earth being the center point between Olympus and Tartarus, whereas the scribe of the Venetus A or his source believed it belonged in a separate entry on a different line. Similarly the scribes or their sources differed on where to place the material on the environmental conditions of Olympus and Ouranus: the Venetus A places this material on line 8.12 and the Y.1.1 on line 8.13.

The Venetus A contains another scholion of a similar variety on line 8.13 that reads:

Τάρταρος:

τὸ ὑπὸ τὴν γῆν ἐσκοτισμένον. μέρος κατώτατον τοῦ Ἅδου· καὶ ἐν βαθuτάτῳ κείμενον τόπῳ. ἢ τὸν χαλεπὸν καὶ δυσχερῆ λέγει. ὠνόμασται δὲ. δια τὸ ἐκτετάχθαι καὶ συγκεχύσθαι τὰ ἐν αυτῷ πάντα· οἱ δὲ τὸ ἀφώτιστον τῆς οἰκουμένης μέρος ἀπεδέξαντο⁑

“Tartarus:

The shadowy place below the earth, it is the bottommost portion of Hades. And he says that it lies in the deepest region or that it is difficult and vexatious. And it is so named because of the drawing out and the confounding of everything in itself. But others understand it as the unlit region of their inhabitance” (urn:cts:greekLit:tlg5026.msA:8.13). [Link Image 7]

This material is not found in the Y.1.1. It indicates a difference in the scribal sources or scribal choices. That is, the scribe of the Venetus A either had access to materials the scribe of the Y.1.1 did not, or the scribe of the Y.1.1 was more selective about the kinds of commentaries he wished to include. These scholia and accompanying features in the manuscripts illustrate differences in scribal practices and choices in the 10th and 11th centuries that we will also examine in forthcoming posts.

Images

1] <http://amphoreus.hpcc.uh.edu/fcgi-bin/iipsrv.fcgi?OBJ=IIP,1.0&FIF=/project/homer/pyramidal/VenA/VA100VN-0603.tif&RGN=0.1857,0.8148,0.1511,0.1049&WID=8000&CVT=JPEG>

2] Screenshot of New Markup

3] <http://amphoreus.hpcc.uh.edu/tomcat/chsimg/Img?request=GetIIPMooViewer&xslt=zoomomatic.xsl&urn=urn%3Acite%3Ahmt%3Achsimg.VA100VN-0603%3A0.1875%2C0.7784%2C0.715%2C0.1427>

4] <http://amphoreus.hpcc.uh.edu/tomcat/chsimg/Img?request=GetIIPMooViewer&xslt=zoomomatic.xsl&urn=urn%3Acite%3Ahmt%3Achsimg.VA101RN-0102%3A0.1767%2C0.1802%2C0.625%2C0.0531>

5] <http://amphoreus.hpcc.uh.edu/tomcat/chsimg/Img?request=GetIIPMooViewer&xslt=zoomomatic.xsl&urn=urn%3Acite%3Ahmt%3Achsimg.E3-97bisv-98r%3A0.5067%2C0.7055%2C0.3233%2C0.0545>

6] <http://amphoreus.hpcc.uh.edu/tomcat/chsimg/Img?request=GetIIPMooViewer&xslt=zoomomatic.xsl&urn=urn%3Acite%3Ahmt%3Achsimg.E3-97bisv-98r%3A0.498%2C0.75%2C0.3293%2C0.0805>

7] <http://amphoreus.hpcc.uh.edu/tomcat/chsimg/Img?request=GetIIPMooViewer&xslt=zoomomatic.xsl&urn=urn%3Acite%3Ahmt%3Achsimg.VA101RN-0102%3A0.178%2C0.1539%2C0.626%2C0.0491>