How Do You Read Homer? Ethics, Epistemology, and the Self in Homeric Scholarship

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In twelfth-century Constantinople, Eustathios of Thessalonica wrote a series of monumental commentaries on Homer's epics. Eustathios saw the bard's poetry as a "beautiful spectacle" that was beyond scorn; the role of the Homeric scholar for Eustathios was to glean pearls of wisdom, rhetorical tools that could be admired and employed for modern ends — not least, to write more effective propaganda for the Byzantine court that employed him. To read Homer in this way, Eustathios drew on more than one and a half millennia of Homeric scholarship. At the same time, Eustathios was chronologically closer to modern Homeric scholarship than to any of these ancient precedents. Indeed, he was only three centuries removed from the first stirrings of Renaissance humanism, and only a few centuries further from the philhellenism of Enlightenment Germany.

When Friedrich August Wolf published his *Prolegomena to Homer* in 1795 — the first major work of modern textual criticism — he engaged directly with Eustathios and classical scholars. But Wolf broke with Eustathios over how to appropriately admire Homer. Although Eustathios was "universally acknowledged to be the best interpreter of Homer," Wolf wrote that "he deserves less praise than he commonly enjoys" because "he admired in Homer only the beauty of the poetry" (Wolf, 48, 54.). Wolf, as a German philhellene of the Enlightenment, admired Homer just as much as Eustathios. But he faulted the Byzantine scholar because he *only* admired the beauty of Homer's poetry. Wolf's approach to Homer, by contrast, was inflected by the rise of objectivity as a distinctly modern epistemic virtue. To enjoy Homer for Eustathios was to be a spectator removed from the verse's gore and occasional infelicities. The reader of Homer (no less than the scholar) should approach the *Iliad* by cultivating himself as a "sagacious listener." For Wolf, by contrast, to appropriately admire Homeric verse is to engage in ascetic practices that sharpen one's critical faculties. When reading Homer, Wolf himself is said to have sat up "the whole night in a room without a stove, his feet in a pan of cold water, and one of his eyes bound up to rest the other" (Sandys, 51). In short, Eustathios and Wolf both belong to a long, continuous line of scholars devoted to admiring Homer's verse. Where they differ is on what practices of the self are epistemologically and ethically necessary to approach this task of admiring Homer. In this paper, I ask: What mental and physical regimes of inquiry — and

hence what profile of the scientific or scholarly self[1] — do Eustathios and Wolf explicitly describe and implicitly demand in their Homeric scholarship?

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Answering this question is a significant undertaking, but one might question whether such an arbitrary comparison is worthwhile. After all, everything changed between twelfth-century Byzantium and nineteenth-century Germany — so of course the way people read Homer was different! What I believe makes this study especially interesting is the paradoxical juxtaposition of rupture with continuity. Eustathios and Wolf are part of a long, uninterrupted tradition of studying Homer from Aristotle, through the Hellenistic Alexandrian scholars, to Byzantium, to Wolf (Daston and Galison, 18.). All these scholars admired Homer; many also engaged in ascetic practices of the self in order to study his verse. The emergence of the scientific self is often told as a story of modernity; the epistemic virtue of objectivity blinks into existence with the onset of a disenchanted, rational world. But when looking at Homeric scholarship, we must tell a story that is characterized by much stronger continuity between the premodern world and the Enlightenment.

To sketch a history of the self that produces knowledge about Homer is not, then, to tell the familiar history of modernity. The scholarly self does not exist in one stable form for Eustathios and a different one for Wolf — a shift that could easily be explained by their vastly different contexts. Instead, the self is constantly being made under the slowly shifting constellations of epistemic virtues. The shift from Eustathios to Wolf should not be read as the sudden appearance of a liberal subject. Rather, telling a history of the self with Wolf and Eustathios means being attentive to the continuous fashioning of the self as one epistemic virtue (objectivity) comes to supplement, not supplant, another (the "beautiful spectacle"). As Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison put it:

> This history is one of innovation and proliferation rather than monarchic succession. … Instead of the analogy of a succession of political regimes or scientific theories, each triumphing on the ruins of its predecessor, imagine new stars winking into existence, not replacing old ones but changing the geography of the heavens.(Daston and Galison, 18.)

Objectivity becomes another celestial aid for the mariners trying to navigate through verse. Admiration of Homer remains the North Star; both Eustathios and Wolf work their way through his texts by following their deep liking of Homer. Objectivity is a constellation that blinks into existence as part of the broader institutional and intellectual transformation of the Enlightenment. Wolf still orients himself by the North Star, but has an irreversibly different

1. I use these two terms interchangeably, recognizing that "scientific" and "scholarly" are both anachronistic.

experience of the night sky and navigation than Eustathios. To put it a different way,

> this is a history of dynamic fields, in which newly introduced bodies reconfigure and reshape those already present, and vice versa. The reactive logic of this sequence is productive. You can play an eighteenth-century clavichord at any time after the instrument's revival around 1900 — but you cannot hear it after two intervening centuries of the pianoforte in the way it was heard in 1700. Sequence weaves history into the warp and woof of the present: not just as a past process reaching its present state of rest — how things came to be as they are — but also as the source of tensions that keep the present in motion. (Daston and Galison, 19.)

Homeric scholars continued to play the clavichord, rather than switching to fashionable "modern" objects of study. But the sound was unmistakably, irrevocably inflected by the emergence of objectivity as a supplemental epistemic virtue. In other words, this is not a story of the general rupture in scholarship produced by modernity, of which a different approach to Homer is merely an epiphenomenon. Instead, the 2500-year history of Homeric scholarship is primarily about self-conscious, durable continuity where the regimes of inquiry always included admiration of Homeric verse and meticulous, ascetic attentive practice. This paper sketches the heavens at the time of Eustathios to then demonstrate how the scientific self changed with the appearance of a new star in the sky — objectivity.

This paper's primary object is therefore to describe in some detail the two different profiles of the scientific self in Eustathios and Wolf. In addition, this project makes two important interventions that will resonate beyond historians of Homeric scholarship. First and most simply, my work demonstrates how the history of the scientific self can be usefully and convincingly expanded to include other kinds of scholarship. In this case, I focus on the history of classical philology — but much the same project can be imagined for literature or for history itself. Second, my project suggests some stronger assertions about the ontology of the self. The guiding theorist for many historians of the self is Foucault. His work demonstrates how ethics and epistemology are joined at the hip by looking back to the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) practiced by Greeks and Romans in the first centuries CE. My work critically responds to Foucault's theoretical paradigm, not least because discussing the history of Homeric scholarship involves touching on some of the same sources Foucault himself treated. Instead of the self as a given waiting to be shaped in different ways by Eustathios and Wolf, I maintain that the self is constantly in the making — it is never a completed object, and hence always ready to change with the stars.

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In my analysis of Eustathios and Wolf, I am focusing on the self shaped by mental and physical practices, in part because this usefully imbricates ethics and epistemology. A particularly persuasive history of a scholarly self is found in the seminal 2007 work by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity*. Beginning with the recognition that epistemology has an ethics, Daston and Galison provide a critical history of objectivity by tracing the shifting epistemic virtues against which the emergent scientific self is formed. By elucidating this history of the self, Daston and Galison tell us why descriptions of scientific practice and scientific personae tend to moralize. Daston and Galison give us a tight triad of *morals*, *ethics*, and *virtues* — the latter of which "earn their right to be called virtues by molding the self, and the ways they do so parallel and overlap with the ways epistemology is translated into science" (Daston and Galison, 41). Thus, ethics and epistemology are joined at the hip through the *self*, which operates as both the knower (epistemological subject) and moral person (ethical subject). In other words, a history of the self is not only another way of recognizing Eustathios' and Wolf's scholarly approaches to Homer. Rather, these scholarly approaches are recognized as *practices* that have as much of an effect on the self as on the knowledge produced. To read Eustathios and Wolf with a theoretical approach drawn from Daston and Galison is to ask what kind of knower is expected — and thus both what kind of knowledge and what kind of self.

In their work, Daston and Galison lean into the insights elucidated by Michel Foucault. Foucault's late preoccupation with the care of the self can be seen as a continuation of his longstanding concerns with power and knowledge. But by focusing on ethics and epistemology, Foucault shifts our attention to the self's constitution from the ground up, rather than from the top down. As in his earlier work, Foucault gives a powerful account of morality as:

> a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies such as the family (in one of its roles), educational institutions, churches, and so forth. (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 25)

But Foucault now recognizes ethics as the process:

> in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 28)

Ethics, in other words, encompasses the practices of the self undertaken in response to prescriptive morality. As scholars, we should look for morality not

just in codes, or even in conduct, but in all practices that shape the self — including the practice of reading Homer. After all, there is

> no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without "modes of subjectivation" and an "ascetics" or "practices of the self" that support them. (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 28)

One practice involved in the "self-formation as an 'ethical subject'" is how you read and how you produce knowledge (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 25). To be ethical is to engage in the care of the self, which

> came to constitute a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions. And it gave rise, finally, to a certain mode of knowledge and to the elaboration of a science. (Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, 45)

Care of the self, then, lies at the foundation of both ethics and epistemology. For ethics is about moral conduct of the self with respect to moral codes; equally, epistemology is about the conduct of a knowledge-making subject with respect to epistemic virtues. Foucault tells us that ethics is the formation of the self in response to society, which is identical to the practices of knowledge production. We read the practices of knowledge production elaborated by Eustathios and Wolf, and can now recognize that these are identical to practices of ethics.

Foucault draws this fundamental insight — ethics as care of the self — from the ancient Greek idea of επιμέλεια εαυτού, which he translates as *souci de soi-même*.[2] He writes that

> moral conceptions in Greek and Greco-Roman antiquity were much more oriented toward practices of the self and the question of *askesis* than toward codifications of conducts and the strict definition of what is permitted and what is forbidden. (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 30)

Just what are these practices? One might make the analogy to techniques a potter would use to shape clay. By dieting or "depriving oneself of pleasure or by confining one's indulgence to marriage or procreation," one *makes* the self (Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, 41). But although *epimeleia heautou* is indeed about *making* the self, the self is never *made* — it is never a finished clay vessel, not to be altered by what gets put in it.

2. Note that the translation "care of the self" inserts a definite article where neither the Greek nor the French has one; it might be more accurate then to speak of "care of self."

Rather than an object to be described, I follow James Porter in arguing that for the ancients the self is "whatever answers to, *without answering*, the kind of problem that searching for one's self poses whenever it arises"[3] (Porter, 114). This means a history of the self is not a history of any sort of object, but rather a history of repeated, shifting answers to a common problem. Rather than thinking of the self as a lump of clay, "a given waiting to be shaped and elaborated," we should think of the care of the self as the "dangerous experience of becoming who one is" (Porter, 116, 133). Porter criticizes Foucault for failing to acknowledge that the self is at *ontological risk*. For Porter, selves do not *emerge* in antiquity; "they are ongoing *emergencies*, ongoing experiments in living on the edge and *in extremis*, the aim of which is to find an ethical relationship not in the first instance not to one's self, but rather to the unfathomable dimensions of the world in all its absolute and irrevocable necessity. … The experience of the self is that of a never-ending crisis" (Porter, 133). Eustathios and Wolf explicitly describe and implicitly demand physical and mental regimes of inquiry in studying Homer. These regimes of inquiry are not wholly dependent on their context; in their work, Eustathios and Wolf themselves are searching for one's self by studying Homer. In asking what these two profiles of the scientific self look like, we should also recognize the agency Eustathios and Wolf have in responding to this problem.

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In what follows, I aim to isolate the profile of the scientific or scholarly self sketched in Eustathios' Homeric commentaries. One form this self takes is as the reader demanded by Eustathios' commentary on a famously problematic Homeric passage. At the end of the fourth book of the *Iliad*, Homer is in the midst of describing a brutal battle scene — the first in the entire poem. The violence of war is on full display:

> Antilochus thrust first, speared the horsehair helmet
> right at the ridge, and the bronze spearpoint lodged
> in the man's forehead, smashing through his skull
> and the dark came whirling down across his eyes —
> he toppled down like a tower in the rough assault.
> (Homer, 160)

The battle scene rages. Then, Homer takes a step back. He realizes that describing more messy melees would just numb his audience to the horrific violence of war. So, instead, he writes about what a spectator might feel who was thrust into this fight (4.539–544):

> no man who waded into that work could scorn it any longer,
> anyone still not speared or stabbed by tearing bronze
> who whirled into the heart of all that slaughter—

3. My italics.

not even if great Athena led him by the hand,
flicking away the weapons hailing down against him.
That day ranks of Trojans, ranks of Achaean fighters
sprawled there side-by-side, facedown in the dust. (Homer, 163)

Ἔνθά κεν οὐκέτι ἔργον ἀνὴρ ὀνόσαιτο μετελθών,
There no more could a man who was in that work make light of it,

ὅς τις ἔτ' ἄβλητος καὶ ἀνούτατος ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ
one who still unhit and still unstabbed by the sharp bronze

δινεύοι κατὰ μέσσον, ἄγοι δέ ἑ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
spun in the midst of that fighting, with Pallas Athene's hold on

χειρὸς ἑλοῦσ', αὐτὰρ βελέων ἀπερύκοι ἐρωήν·
his hand guiding him, driving back the volleying spears thrown.

πολλοὶ γὰρ Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν ἤματι κείνῳ
For on that day many men of the Achaians and Trojans

πρηνέες ἐν κονίῃσι παρ' ἀλλήλοισι τέταντο
lay sprawled in the dust face downward beside one another.[4]

The spectator Homer conjures exists in a sort of liminal space; we are unsure what his ontological status is. In English, we need a subject for our verb. But Homer conjugates verbs in the potential optative mood and third person singular (δινεύοι, ἄγοι) to conjure a potential spectator without quite naming him. The spectator is not described as another character on the battlefield; but neither is he directly addressed as someone who exists outside of the narrative universe. Homer's turn of phrase makes the spectator live in a kind of liminal space. The observer is "a kind of embedded war-reporter who roams over the Trojan battlefield protected by Athena and can vouch for the intensity of the battles there fought" (de Jong, "After Auerbach: Ancient Greek Literature as a Test Case of European Literary Historiography," 125). Like a reporter in battle, "the liminal position of the observer, who is simultaneously present and absent, points to the liminal position of the audience in relation to the world of the story" (Myers, 39). As Jenny Strauss Clay paraphrases the passage, "if our anonymous observer were present and viewed the scene — and yet was not part of it, in fact, was able to traverse the battlefield unscathed — he would admire the vivid depiction of the intense battle fought long ago ('that day')" (Clay, 25). If this spectator (θεατὴς) were present, he "would not scorn the battle" (οὐκέτι … ὀνόσαιτο) — for he is being led by the hand not only of Athena but also, implicitly, of the poet.

4. Greek text from Thomas W. Allen, *Homeri Ilias* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931). Interlinear text from Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

As even this short discussion makes clear, it remains uncertain what exactly is going on in this passage. In other words, Homer poses the self as a problem; using negation and the optative tense maintains the ontological ambiguity of the observer. This ambiguity has provided fertile ground for Homeric scholars since at least the Alexandrian period.[5] In other words, this passage at the end of book 4 of the *Iliad* is a fruitful site for author upon author to discuss the self. Eustathios has something particularly interesting to say about the problem of the self posed by *Iliad* 4.539–44:

> Such a spectator [θεατὴς] might have been the audience [ἀκροατής, lit. *listener*] of the poet, who experiences none of the evils of war, but who enjoys in his mind the beautiful spectacle [καλοῦ θεάματος] of the war narratives, visiting different parts of the battle without any risk of danger, and without having to scorn [ὀνόσασθαι, the same lemma Homer uses in 4.539] or disparage or blame any of the Homeric verses — and all the more so, if the Homeric Pallas [Athena] should lead him [by the hand], the truly systematic genius of writing, the mother of wisdom according to the ancients, who turns the pages of the Homeric book with her hand, and in this way fends off the blows of the weapons. This same Pallas leads the reader by the hand, avoiding danger, through every detail of Homer's poetry, making him an understanding audience [συνετὸν ἀκροατήν, lit. *sagacious listener*].[6]
>
> τοιοῦτος δ᾽ ἂν εἴη θεατὴς ὁ τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἀκροατής, ὃς οὐ τῶν τοῦ πολέμου κακῶν μετέχει, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τῶν πολεμικῶν διηγήσεων κατὰ νοῦν ἀπολαύει καλοῦ θεάματος, ἀκίνδυνος τὴν μάχην περιϊὼν καὶ μηδέν τι ἔχων τῶν Ὁμηρικῶν ὀνόσασθαι, ἤτοι ἐκφαυλίσαι καὶ καταμέμψασθαι, καὶ μᾶλλον, εἴπερ ἄγοι αὐτὸν ἡ Ὁμηρικὴ Παλλάς, ἡ τοῦ γράφειν δηλαδὴ μεθοδικὴ δεινότης, ἡ τοῦ φρονεῖν μήτηρ κατὰ τοὺς παλαιούς, χειρὸς ἑλοῦσα τὰς πτύχας ἀνελιττούσης τὰς τῆς Ὁμηρικῆς βίβλου καὶ οὕτω βελέων ἀπερύκουσα ἐρωήν. ὃν καὶ χειραγωγεῖ ἀκινδύνως ἡ τοιαύτη Παλλὰς εἰς τὰ καθέκαστα τῆς Ὁμηρικῆς ποιήσεως οἷα συνετὸν ἀκροατήν. (van der Valk, 802)

For Eustathios, the spectator in Homer's passage is a model of how the audience of Homer should behave. The spectator should not wallow in the violence of Homer; he should grasp the hand of Pallas Athena instead, so as to remain

5. See Irene J. F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner Pub. Co, 1987), 58–60. See also G. S. Kirk, ed., *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 1, *Books 1–4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 397–99, where Kirk expresses "serious doubt over whether these verses are completely authentic."

6. My translation, amended from Porter, Cullhed, Pizzone, and de Jong.

"unspeared and unstabbed" (ἄβλητος καὶ ἀνούτατος) by the bronze spears thrown in battle. Indeed, Athena not only guides the observer through the tumult of battle but also lets *the reader* rise above the fray of Homeric verses. Just as Homer says that the potential observer would not scorn the battle (οὐκέτι … ὀνόσαιτο), Eustathios writes that the ideal reader of Homer would not "scorn [ὀνόσασθαι] or disparage or blame any of the Homeric verses." Indeed, just as Athena "turns the pages of the Homeric book with her hand," it is "*in this way* [that she] fends off the blows of the weapons. This same Pallas leads the reader by the hand, avoiding danger, through every detail of Homer's poetry, making the audience [ἀκροατής, lit. *listener*] understand it all."[7] There is a slippage here between the spectator conjured by Homer (who already inhabits a liminal space) and the reader Eustathios addresses: our attitude *towards Homer's verse* should be like that of the potential observer of battle *in Homer's poem*.

Eustathios explicitly describes the ideal reader Homer by discussing a self that exists in a liminal space between the reader and the narrative. Eustathios provides ethical injunctions: the reader of Homer should enjoy the beautiful spectacle of verse; the reader should not scorn the bard's writing. These are mental states in which one must be to read Homer. The reader, the scientific self Eustathios conjures, responds to this moral code with his own practices. In other words, in glossing Homer Eustathios gives us an example of an epistemic virtue: enjoying Homer as a beautiful spectacle as a way of knowing the verse. As Aglae Pizzone notes, Eustathios' imagination of the self as a sagacious listener enjoying the beautiful spectacle is present in a number of his other works, as well. (Pizzone, 238–43.) The self is both an ethical subject, responding to Eustathios' moral code, and an epistemological one; you generate knowledge about Homer by fashioning your self in response to Eustathios' moral injunctions to enjoy the beautiful spectacle of Homer and avoid criticizing his verses. Thinking of the self as a problem lets us go a step further. Not only do we recognize the ethics and epistemology created by the practices of the self Eustathios advocates; we also note how Eustathios maintains the self in an ambiguous ontological space. The self is not a historical given, waiting to be shaped according to Eustathios' wishes. Instead, the self here is precisely what "answers to, *without answering*, the kind of problem that searching for one's self poses whenever it arises"[8] (Porter, 114.). The self is constantly being made, in this case in response to the epistemic virtue of uncritical admiration. This is the mental regime of inquiry into Homer that Eustathios explicitly describes in his scholarship.

To give a full portrait of the scientific self for Eustathios, we should also consider his intended audience. Eustathios wrote his commentary for

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7. Note that Eustathios uses both *listener*/*audience* (ἀκροατής) and *spectator* (θεατὴς), but not *reader*; the reference to different senses reminds us of how Homeric poetry was received, orally.

8. My italics.

students of rhetoric who were trained to read and comment on Homer for a public audience. In the introduction to his commentary on the *Iliad*, Eustathios explicitly describes his intended readership:

> Since it has been established that he who toils over Homer is not completely laughable [γελοῖος], it remains for me to do what I intended — that is, not to further commend the poet but to do what I have been commanded, not by some important patron [μεγιστάνων] whom the literati [κομψοί] serve, but by my dear disciples [φίλων ὁμιλητῶν] who think well of me. It was their desire to go through the Iliad and draw out useful elements for the novice [διεξοδεύοντι] — in other words, not for the learned man [ἀνδρὶ λογίῳ] (for in all likelihood none of these [elements] would escape his notice) but for the youth just beginning his studies [νέῳ ἄρτι μανθάνοντι] and perhaps for those who have learned but are in need of reminding.[9]
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> Λείπεται δὴ ἡμῖν, ἐπεὶ ἀποπέφανται μὴ γελοῖος εἶναι πάντῃ ὁ πονησάμενος περὶ τὴν Ὁμήρου ποίησιν, γενέσθαι οὗ ἐσκοπήσαμεν καὶ μὴ ἐπὶ πλέον συνιστᾶν τὸν ποιητήν, ἀλλὰ ποιεῖν ὅπερ εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ πρὸς μεγιστάνων τινῶν ἐπετάχθημεν, ὁποῖά τινα πλάττονται οἱ κομψοί, ἀλλὰ πρὸς φίλων ὁμιλητῶν, οἷς ὑπολήψεώς τι χρηστῆς περὶ ἡμῶν ὕπεστιν. ἦν δὲ τὸ φιλικὸν θέλημα διὰ τῆς Ἰλιάδος ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐκπορίσασθαι τὰ χρήσιμα τῷ διεξοδεύοντι, οὐ λέγω ἀνδρὶ λογίῳ, ἐκεῖνον γὰρ οὐδὲν ἂν τῶν τοιούτων εἰκὸς λανθάνειν, ἀλλὰ νέῳ ἄρτι μανθάνοντι· τυχὸν δὲ καὶ μαθόντι μέν, δεομένῳ δὲ ἀναμνήσεως. (van der Valk, 3)

The profile of the scientific self includes not just a “sagacious listener” but also the student who reads Homer to become sagacious. Indeed, Eustathios intends his commentaries to provide a general education for such students. As Eric Cullhed writes,

> Any aspiring intellectual needed to know how to make use of the epics in a manner characterized by wittiness, rhetorical virtuosity and polymathy. … Eustathios commentaries are in

9. My translation, adapted from the translations in Eustathios, *Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey. Volume 1: On Rhapsodies A–B*, ed. Eric Cullhed, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 17 (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2016), 9* and Eustathios, “Critical Remarks on Homer’s Iliad: Introduction,” trans. David Jenkins, David Bachrach, and Darin Hayton, 2002, http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp01f7623c69h. Cullhed translates ὁμιλητῶν as *disciples* where Jenkins has *friends*; this is the definition given in the *Liddell-Scott-Jones* dictionary but by modern Greek the word has come to mean rather *speaker* or *lecturer*. The argument for *disciple* is strengthened by the following sentence, which uses διεξοδεύοντι, or *one who exits*, *novice*.

> fact wide-ranging anthologies organized not by themes … but by the Homeric epics. The rhapsodies and verses [of Homer], deeply familiar to any educated person of the time, are used as a series of hooks to facilitate the interplay between memory and archive in organizing the diversified mass of knowledge required to qualify as *logios* [learned] in the textual life of middle Byzantium. (Cullhed, introduction to Eustathios, *Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 4*)

Eustathios explicitly describes certain regimes of inquiry for the reader of Homer. Because his work is directed at students, these explicit descriptions are also implicit demands. By reading Homer as Eustathios wants them to, Byzantine students shape themselves. Against the background of epistemic virtues Eustathios identified for them, the scientific self is constantly being made by reading Homer. And indeed, Eustathios was enormously successful: at his death, Michael Choniates hyperbolically claimed that "the leaders of almost each and every church in the Roman [Byzantine] empire had been educated by him."[10]

We have already seen what kind of self Eustathios conjures in his commentary on the *Iliad*, and what kind of readers he explicitly addresses in his work. To get an even better sense of the scientific self that Eustathios imagines, we should take a further step back to consider his context and reception. Eustathios' commentaries helped his students perform appropriately to win commissions from the Komnene royal family. As Marina Loukaki puts it, these students sought to become "professional writers" hired to "exalt the diverse members of the imperial family and their exploits, in diverse circumstances."[11] Indeed, René Nünlist argues that Eustathios was explicitly providing Homeric quotations that future speechwriters for empire could mine as needed. In his commentary, Nünlist says, Eustathios "singles out a remarkably large number of particular passages that the students can reuse when they develop their own rhetorical skills by modelling them after Homer's" (Nünlist, 508). Eustathios thus writes that

> Homer's dexterity is to provide to students [ὁμιληταῖς] numerous artful [τεχνικῶς] passages [τόπους] of blame and praise.[12]

10. Quoted in ibid., 10*–11*.

11. "écrivains professionnels, exalter les divers membres de la famille impériale et leurs exploits, en diverses circonstances." Marina Loukaki, "L'univers homérique dans les éloges impériaux du XIIe siècle à Byzance: notes sur Théophylacte d'Achrida, Nicéphore Basilakès et Eustathe de Thessalonique," in *À l'école d'Homère: la culture des orateurs et des sophistes*, ed. Sandrine Dubel, Estelle Oudot, and Anne-Marie Favreau-Linder, Études de littérature ancienne 24 (Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2015), 249–50.

12. My translation, adapted from Nünlist, n. 33.

> Ὁμήρου δὲ καὶ ταῦτα δεξιότης, τόπους τινὰς πολλαχοῦ παραδιδόντος τεχνικῶς ψόγων τε καὶ ἐπαίνων τοῖς ὁμιληταῖς. (Stallbaum, 316)

In other words, Eustathios sees Homer as a source for passages that orators can mine for use in their careers. Eustathios sees his own role as facilitating this mode of reading Homer.

Finally, the way Eustathios addresses the problem of the self is but one example of many at his time. Homeric scholarship proliferated after the Komnene rise to power in 1081. To quote Cullhed again:

> The new aristocracy and its patronage of the arts effected a professionalization of education and literary production in the capital. … The son of Alexios I [Komnenos], Isaac Porphyrogennetos, wrote treatises on the epics and scholiated the *Iliad*. His sister, the famous Anna Komnene, entitled the history of their father *Alexias* — like Homer's *Ilias* — and wished to describe her husband in her work "as Homer extolled Achilles among the Achaeans." For writers who depended on their patronage and favor, Homer was the obvious model to express the military ideology of the Komnenians. (Cullhed, 1*–2*)

It is interesting to note here the role of Anna Komnene; elite women were also patrons of Homeric scholarship in Constantinople, and "not a few appeared to read at least summaries and paraphrases of the epics, if not the originals" (Emmanuel Bourbouhakis, personal communication to author, 19 December 2019). Perhaps there was room in Eustathios' scientific self for a "she" as well as a "he." Many of Eustathios' contemporaries participated in this vigorous economy of Homeric scholarship: John Tzetzes (c. 1110–70) wrote a *Theogony* and *Homeric Allegories* dedicated to Komnene royals, and Michael Psellos (c. 1018–1078) provided the model for both Eustathius and Tzetzes in his Homeric commentaries. This was scholarship that should be pursued by all learned people of Byzantium, even if in so doing the reader must endure poverty and misery; in his letters to the Emperor Komnene, Eustathios complains of trudging through snow and eating rodent-ridden food.[13] All these Byzantine Homeric scholars articulate similar ways the scientific self should approach Homer: the "sagacious listener," the learned Byzantine man, should enjoy the "beautiful spectacle" of Homer without "scorning" his verse.

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Friedrich August Wolf is firmly situated in the context of the German Enlightenment. Schiller's enchantment with Greek antiquity is only matched by

13. See Foteini Kolovou, *Die Briefe des Eustathios von Thessalonike: Einleitung, Regesten, Text, Indizes* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006). A compendium of such self-referential passages by Byzantine Homeric scholars has sadly yet to be compiled.

the dominance of philhellenism in the German educational system. As Suzanne Marchand puts it, "the founders of [the University of Berlin and the *Gymnasien*, classical secondary schools] shared Schiller's admiration for the ancients and his belief in the possibility of human self-transformation through the cultivation of the arts and sciences; they simply put the emphasis on scholarship (*Wissenschaft*) as the proper means to understand and appreciate the Greeks" (Marchand, xvii). This emergence of scholarship or systematic knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) is the background for Wolf's scholarship. He placed classics (*Altertumswissenschaft*) on a firm textual-critical foundation, ready to take its place alongside the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaft*) in the modern research university. Wolf placed philology above theology to transform humanist classicism into nascent *Altertumswissenschaft*, realizing what Wilamowitz would call the "conquest of the ancient world by scholarship."[14] This undertaking by no means meant abandoning the admiration of Homer so valued by Eustathios. Indeed, Wolf's scholarship is founded precisely in this earlier Homeric scholarship. After all, Wolf said, Eustathios "is universally acknowledged to be the best interpreter of Homer" (Wolf, 48). But Wolf's work did come as part of a sea change in scholarship: the emergence of objectivity as the prime epistemic virtue.

This new objectivity valued the knower's self-effacement and disciplined, diligent labor — by contrast with earlier truth-to-nature, which valued the probity and *Bildung* (formation) of the knower. Indeed, the very notion of objectivity is defined by the suppression of the *subject*. Earlier truth-to-nature scorned hard labor as unworthy of the gentleman-scholar; by the mid-nineteenth century, the objective scientist must cultivate an ethic of self-effacement that requires copious amounts of precisely such hard labor. Thus Victorians praised Newton for his "diligent application and perseverance" and Humphrey Davy and Michael Faraday for their "industry and patient thinking" (Daston and Galison, 229). Why would an English gentleman aspire to *industry*, the characteristic of the day laborer? The answer, Daston and Galison argue, lies in an *ethics* of sacrifice and self-denial. For the Enlightenment philosopher, man's distinguishing capacity was his *judgement*. By the mid-nineteenth century, the scientific self had been transformed from a rational individual trusted to make judgements in attempting to elucidate true causes in nature — and thus necessarily involved in the process of knowledge-making — to a laborer valued for his diligence, whose hard-working self-effacement is valued precisely as a way to get out of the business of knowledge-making.

This self-effacement took the form of ascetic practices of the self. Take, for instance, the work of Charles Bonnet. In 1745, Bonnet wrote the *Traité d'insectologie, ou, Observations sur les pucerons* based on detailed and exacting observations of caterpillars. For over a month, Bonnet watched "a single aphid confined in a jar every day for over a month from *circa* 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM"

14. Quoted in Marchand, 18.

(Daston and Galison, 238). He cataloged births by date and hour, and left an asterisk to mark that he did not witness the birth, having momentarily left his watch; he was reportedly "disconsolate when one fine June day he lost sight of" the aphid that was giving birth (Daston and Galison, 241). Bonnet certainly exercises the "self-respect … as concerns one's rational nature" through "depriving oneself of pleasure" that Foucault speaks of. In other words, Bonnet's is an ethical response to a moral code that yields knowledge. Bonnet imposed this regimen on himself to produce knowledge about the caterpillars. Later on, even he would recognize the consequences of his observational regimen, which apparently left him blind (Daston and Galison, 239). But even this response is framed in terms that are at once ethical and epistemological. His critics cast aspersions on "the very detail and quantity of the observations," which, "imprinted upon the soft-wax sensorium of the observer, threatened to dissolve the object of observation into a swarm of sensations" (Daston and Galison, 238.). These ascetic practices are at once ethical and epistemological, because they involve the formation of the scholarly self.

Wolf and his contemporary classical scholars exercised very similar practices of the self as Bonnet. As a child, Wolf is said to have sat up "the whole night in a room without a stove, his feet in a pan of cold water, and one of his eyes bound up to rest the other." Once this "severe ordeal ended with his removal to the university of Göttingen," Wolf nonetheless "spent only three minutes in dressing, and cut off every form of recreation." By the end of his first year at university, Wolf "had nearly killed himself" (Sandys, 51–2). It is worth acknowledging that these reports come from a 1908 history of classical scholarship, and so reflect the dominant epistemic virtues in 1908 as much as in Wolf's own time. Yet even if these reports are less than perfectly accurate, the fact remains that prominent classicists of the late eighteenth century are often lauded for their punishing self-discipline and abnegation. The life of Wolf's teacher, Christian Gottlob Heyne, was described as "exemplary in its frustration and servitude." In order to read "all the ancient authors in chronological order," Heyne at university "slept only two nights a week, and naturally enough fill ill of a fever." After graduating from Leipzig, Heyne "was given floor-space by a licentiate in divinity and slept with folios for his pillow; often his only meal in the day was peapods" (Constantine, 84–85). Time and again, scholars of Homer were idolized for their sacrifices in service of objectivity. These ascetic practices, in short, constitute the regime of inquiry that is implicitly demanded of young Homeric scholars. These biographical anecdotes explicitly describe the profile of the scientific self found in Wolf's work.

Such regimes of inquiry were also described by Wolf and his colleagues in their scholarly publications. Wolf's *Prolegomena* begins with a description of how scholars should edit Homer. One approach to emendation

> entails more effort and, I might almost say, misery; the other, more leisurely delight. Each, if rightly applied, is useful; but

> one is more useful. Take someone, even someone poorly equipped with the best aids, who gives us a writer restored to a more correct form, either by conjecture or by the use of a few manuscripts; even if he removes just thirty warts, and leaves a hundred, no one will deny that he has rendered service to literature. (Wolf, 43)

This reader of Homer should still admire verse; indeed, his work is in service to literature. But no longer is it proper to delight in Homer's beautiful verse. The proper reader of Homer

> must emulate the prudent custom of a good judge, who slowly examines the testimony of the witnesses, and gathers all the evidence for their truthfulness, before he ventures to put forward his own conjecture about the case. (Wolf, 45)

Wolf also describes the ascetic practices involved in his recension of Homer, implicitly demanding similar work of other scholars of Homer:

> By no means, then, will I complain about the vast amount of trouble I endured in preparing such a varied stock of equipment, in reading through so many writers … I am far from boasting of my industry; I do not wish to be praised, if I have either worked at it in an inappropriate way, or omitted anything that could have helped toward a true emendation. (Wolf, 56)

Wolf explicitly describes a mental state of critical acuity for readers of Homer; with reference to his own practices, he implicitly demands a physical state of abnegation and diligent labor. The scientific self that is made under the star of objectivity has distinct characteristics even as it continues to put admiration of Homer first.

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In this paper, I have isolated the scientific or scholarly self in Homeric scholarship by Eustathios of Thessalonica and Friedrich August Wolf. To do so, I have shown how the self is explicitly described in the authors' commentaries; how ascetic practices are implicitly demanded by reference to their and their colleagues' discipline and abnegation; and how this scientific self resonated beyond their own work, whether through the pervasive prestige of Homer in Constantinople or the widespread ideal of objectivity in Enlightenment Europe. The ideal reader of Homer changed markedly between Eustathios and Wolf, primarily due to the rise of objectivity as a new epistemic virtue in the eighteenth century in Europe. Yet perhaps as intriguing as these changes are what remained the same. Despite their vastly differing contexts, both Eustathios and Wolf endured poverty and misery and were driven by a deep admiration of

Homer's verse. Tracing the contours of these profiles of the scientific self has helped us to tell not just a story of modernity, a fundamental rupture in the practice of scholarship; it has also helped us appreciate the strong continuity between seemingly "ancient" and recognizably "modern" scholars. By broadening our project of tracing the scientific self to encompass Homeric scholarship, we can tell a richer story of how the self is continually made and remade under the influence of constantly shifting constellations of epistemic virtues.

Considering the history of philology as a history of the scientific self gives us a richer understanding of how ethics and epistemology have shifted historically. Furthermore, describing distinct profiles of the self involved in philology points us to a more capacious ontology of the self. For Eustathios and Wolf, as for their contemporaries in the natural sciences, the scientific self was implicitly demanded (especially in pedagogical materials) and explicitly described (for instance, in biographical anecdotes). But natural scientists do not generally encounter the problem of the self. In reading Homer, Eustathios and Wolf had to themselves tackle the status of the self as a reader, author, narrator, and even conjured spectator. When writing a history of the scholarly self that exceeds the boundaries of the natural sciences, it behooves us to recognize all these ways that scholars outline their profile of the scholarly self.

Such an approach ultimately enables a rich account of the different profiles of the scientific or scholarly self in Eustathios and Wolf. Most transparently, this account details different ways of coming to know Homer — that is, different epistemologies. But I have shown how telling a story of reading practices implies a story of how one should live one's life — that is, an ethics. And intertwined in this history of regimes of inquiry and the self, markedly so in the case of Homeric scholarship, are concerns about the fundamental constitution of the self as a fictional device, as a reader, and ultimately as the problem of what selfhood even is — that is, concerns with ontology. Eustathios and Wolf are valuable touchstones for answering these questions in ways that gesture towards rich histories of the scholarly self beyond the natural sciences.

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