

Casey DUÉ and Mary EBBOTT
"As Many Homers As You Please": An Online Multitext of Homer

This presentation introduces the CHS multitext editions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that scholars are developing in association with the [Center for Hellenic Studies](#) in Washington, D.C., and the [Stoa Consortium](#); various aspects of the project will be demonstrated using a laptop computer and a data projector. The multitext of Homer is envisioned as a combination Alexandrian edition and Venetus A for the twenty-first century. The complete edition will include known variants from papyri, scholia, mediaeval manuscripts, and quotations. As a teaching tool, the CHS multitext offers an easy access to this wide range of sources and commentary in one cooperative system. In sum, the multitext of Homer provides a prototype for developing holistic and historically contextualized approaches to ancient texts.

Homeric scholarship has not yet succeeded in achieving a definitive edition of either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. A significant problem is that there is as yet no consensus as to the criteria for determining an edition to be "definitive." Ideally, such an edition should encompass the full textual tradition as it evolved from the pre-Classical through the mediaeval eras. Ongoing disagreements reflect a wide variety of answers to many serious questions that remain about Homer and Homeric poetry. Homeric quotations by ancient authors, the papyri of the Ptolemaic and Roman eras, and the scholia in mediaeval manuscripts suggest possible Homeric texts during the Classical and Hellenistic eras that are quite different from our own received texts. There are numerous verses that seem to intrude upon the mediaeval vulgate—the so-called 'plus' verses—and others that are absent—'minus' verses. Equally prevalent is a variation of phraseology within individual verses. In most cases the variation is of a demonstrably formulaic nature in which one Homeric formula is present in place of another, and the superiority of one or the other reading cannot be assumed.

Instead of choosing between variants and plus verses in an attempt to recover the ipsissima verba of Homer, we include them in a multitext format that embraces the fluidity of the textual traditions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The ideal medium for a multitext of Homer is not a traditional printed text but an electronic, web-based edition. Unlimited in its ability to handle complex sets of variants, an electronic multitext offers critical readers of Homer the opportunity to consider many possible texts at various stages of transmission. It allows the reader to select and navigate between multiple modes of transmission, and to recover a more accurate and accessible picture of the fluidity of the textual traditions in their earliest stages.

The CHS multitext edition of Homer will eventually include multitexts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Greek texts and English translations of the lives of Homer, Proclus' summaries of the Epic Cycle, the fragments, and the Homeric Hymns. The multitext will also be linked to supplementary materials, including information about Alexandrian and Pergamene libraries, scholars, and scholarship. Collations with the main texts will include the Homeric papyri, the Venetus A, known readings of Aristarchus and Zenodotus, the various so-called 'city editions', quotations of Homer in fifth- and fourth-century BC

authors, as well as other important editions and manuscripts. A major contribution of the project is that it offers an unprecedented access to the scholia contained in the Venetus A by means of high resolution digital images of the manuscript, an electronic edition of the Greek text, as well as a translation (a translation of the Homeric scholia has never been published).