

An Idiosyncratic Homer, *Iliad* A 361-391 (P.Yale I 4)

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Abstract

A single sheet of papyrus with a 33-line column from the first book of the *Iliad* which was not fortunate in its scribe, because he often wrote an iota after the long vowels *eta* and *omega*, both mid-word as well as word-end. A second mishap occurred for the papyrus when the modern possessor, intent on enhancing the sheet's value, detached a seven-line patch with four to six letters per line from the left side of the papyrus and inserted this into empty space above and to the right, wreaking havoc with the Greek at A 366-372, Thetis' first visit to Achilles.

Keywords

Iliad A, itacism, Greek transcript

P.Yale I 4 entered the University's collection of papyri nearly a century ago; its first publication coincided approximately with the initial opening of the Beinecke Library in the 1960s, where it came to reside with some fifteen other pieces of the *Iliad* on papyrus; it was the longest and largest, and in certain ways the strangest.¹ Its pre-eminent position at the head in the series of *Iliad* papyri depends, however, upon the fact its 33 lines derive from the first book, A 361-393, when Thetis strokes her son with her hand (χειρί τέ μιν κατέ]ρεξεν, l. 1, A 361), calls him by name, and asks him why he laments (τέκνον, τί] κλαίεις, l. 2 = A 362).² Her gesture and words recall for the young man his mother's comforting presence ever since he was young. Achilles is aware that his cries have reached his goddess-mother in the depths of the sea and alerted her to the present predicament, and although she invites him to tell her what has gone wrong, so that they both may know, he reminds her that she, in all likelihood, already knows, for she is a goddess. He none the less decides to give her his version of recent events, beginning with the Greeks' raid on the town of an ally of the Trojans, King Eëtion. The sack of Thebe occupies only four hexameter lines of text because the story is only tangentially

¹ Many thanks to Mark Custer, Ingrid Lennon-Pressy, Ellen Doon, and E. C. Schroeder for their help to me at the Beinecke Library. I shall be grateful to them always.

² Cf. Hanson 2003, 185-207. Dexter Brown notes some scholia defend Achilles' speech against Aristarchus.

of interest to Achilles: «We went to Thebe, sacred town of King Eëtion and sacked it; we brought the loot back here and divided it up. The Greeks gave as a prize from the sack the girl Chryseïs of the fair cheeks to Atreus' son, Agamemnon» (ll. 6-9, A 366-369). In the sixth book of the epic Andromache will speak movingly and at length about that same raid, even though she had not witnessed the slaughter herself, having already left her natal home to live at Troy as Trojan Hector's bride (Z 414-439). Achilles wants his mother to learn his version of the events that followed the raid and the dividing up of booty, eventually causing Agamemnon to pay no honor to her son, «best of the Achaians» (A 412). He coaches his mother on what she might now do on his behalf, reminding her of help she once gave Zeus and hinting that Zeus may now owe Thetis a favor in return, such as giving temporary victory to Trojans so that Greeks suffer as payback for Agamemnon's mistreatment of him.

Producing a transcript for P.Yale I 4 is not difficult for the first five lines on the papyrus, A 361-365, nor again for lines 13-33, A 373-393 to the end of the sheet, when heralds are escorting Achilles' war-prize Briseïs away from his tent, in order to compensate Agamemnon for his loss of Chryseïs, already returned to her father Chryses, priest of Apollo. The scribe has written the poem's Greek in a legible book-hand, attractive, but not impressively calligraphic. The scribe's excessive writing of *iota* after the long vowels *eta* and *omega* was noted by the first editor and is already on display from the end of l. 3, ἐξάυδα, μὴ κεῦθε νόωι ἴνα εἶδομεν ἄμφω{ι}, with the otiose *iota* enclosed within pointed brackets in the transcript, to mark it as a superfluous character. At the same time at the line's midpoint the *iota* mutum on νόωι properly marks the dative singular. The 22 instances of otiose *iota* on the sheet are: ἄμφω{ι} (l. 3, A 363; προσέφη{ι} and ὦ{ι}κός (l. 4, A 364); ἀγορεύω{ι} (l. 5, A 365); Ἡ{ι}ετίωνος (l. 6, A 366); ἦ{ι}γομεν (l. 7, A 367); καλλιπάρη{ι}ον (l. 9, A 369); ἐκη{ι}βόλου (l. 13, A 373); σκή{ι}πτρωι (l. 14, A 374); δύω{ι} and κοσμή{ι}τορε (l. 15, A 375); ἐπευφή{ι}μη{ι}σαν (l. 16, A 376); ἱερῆ{ι}α (l. 17, A 377); ἦ{ι}κουσεν and ἦ{ι}εν (l. 22, A 381); κῆ{ι}λα (l. 24, A 383), πρῶ{ι}τος (l. 26, A 386); δῆ{ι} (l. 28, A 388); κλι]σίη{ι}θεν (l. 31, A 391); βρισ]ῆ{ι}ος (l. 32, A 392); ἐῆ{ι}ος (l. 33, A 393). Other examples of adscript signaling dative singular also occur where appropriate, such as σὺν νηὶ θεῆι, l. 29, A 389. His enthusiasm for *diaeresis* which he places above *iota* in ll. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 26, 29, 32 is sporadic; surface damage may conceal additional examples.

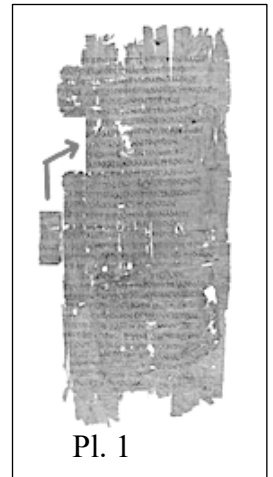
Close examination of the seven lines A 366-372 lays bare a deliberate intervention on the papyrus, apparently perpetrated after the papyrus was unearthed in modern times but prior to 1931 when Professors M. I. Rostovtzeff and C. Bradford Welles purchased it for the Yale collection. If one gives but a cursory glance at the papyrus, one would suppose that, except for the first line where fourteen letters are lost along the left margin, it would seem that along the entire left margin thereafter in each and every hexameter line some eight to eleven letters are missing, creating a straight margin from top

to bottom at left as well as at right. The transcript of lines 366-372, however, belies such an assumption and reveals the possessor/finder of the papyrus in modern times performing minor surgery on these seven lines prior to offering the papyrus for sale, hopefully for a higher price, since he was filling a gap and smoothing out the text's left margin. What he brought about is illustrated by Plate 1.³ That is, a small fragment, seven lines long and four to six letters wide loosely joined at ll. A 375-381 remained at left and apparently at no other point along the left side. The possessor of the papyrus repositioned the fragment so that it filled a hole of similar shape some nine lines up and to the right. When this patch was inserted into the empty space, the partial lines that were moved from A 375-381 now precede what remains of ll. A 366-372.

Thus, «son of Atreus» from l. A 375 is now positioned before the Greek of l. A 366, «sacred city of Eëtion», and similarly from this point onward to the juxtaposition of the «old priest's praying» in l. A 381 in front of the «countless gifts he brings» for his daughter's ransom in l. A 372. Once inserted, the patch

turns each of these seven lines into nonsense. At the same time, because the patch is written by the same scribe who writes the remainder of the papyrus, the presence of the patch is not immediately obvious, and perhaps was never noticed during the nearly ninety years the papyrus has been housed in the Yale collection. Because I was unable to find a transcript for this papyrus elsewhere, I decided to write up the one that appears here, and in the process of transcribing I discovered the patch and the alterations it brought to ll. A 366-372.

P.Yale I 4 measures 11.5 x 26.18 cm.; the verso is blank. The first editor assigned a date in the second cent. A.D. and such a date can be bolstered by any number of papyri published more recently, including P.Oxy. LXXXII 5292, also assigned a date in the second cent. A.D. At the same time, the Oxyrhynchus scribe writes his uncials with far greater confidence and concentration than does the scribe of P.Yale I 4; the latter's ambition is to write in the style of the calligraphic uncials of the Hawara Homer. Such a goal is probably beyond his reach.



Transcript for P.Yale I 4 = P.CtYBR inv. 489qua = MP³ 603.2 = TM 60607 = LDAB 1731

- 1 A 361 χειρι τε μιν κατε]ρεξεν επ[ο]ς τ εφρατ εκ τ ονομαζε
- 2 A 362 τεκνον τι] κλαιεις τι δε σε φρενας ικετο πενθος
- 3 A 363 εξ αυδα, μη] κευθε νοωι ινα ειδομεν αμφο{ι}
- 4 A 364 την δε βαρυ] στεναχων προσεφη{ι} ποδας ω{ι}κυσ Αχιλλευς
- 5 A 365 οισθα τη το]ι ταυτα ιδυειη παντ αγορευω{ι}

³ Niek Janssen, a Doctoral Candidate in Yale's Classics Department completing his dissertation, discussed the papyrus with me on several occasions and generously contributed Plate 1 to this project.

- 6 A 375 + 366 Ατρεί]δα δε μν ἴερην πολιν Η{ι}ετιωνος
7 A 376 + 367 ενθ αλ]λοι μμεν τε και η{ι}γομεν ενθαδε παντα
8 A 377 + 368 αιδεισθ]αι ἴερηαντο μετα σφισιν υἱες Αχαῖων
9 A 378 + 369 αλλ ουκ] Ατρει Χρυσηῖδα καλλιπαρη{ι}ον
10 A 379 + 370 αλλα κ]ακως εκατηβολου Απολλωνος
11 A 380 + 371 χωομ]ενος δας Αχαιων χαλκοχιτωνων
12 A 381 + 372 ευξαμ]ενου υγατρα φερων τ απερισια αποινα
13 A 373 στεμματ εχ]ων εν χειρσιν εκη{ι}βολου Απολλωνος
14 A 374 χρυσει ανα] σκη{ι}πτρωι, καὶ ελισσε`το` παντας Αχαιους
15 A 375 Ατρειδα δε μ]αλιστα δυω{ι} κοσμη{ι}τορε λαων
16 A 376 ενθ αλλοι με]ν παντες επευφη{ι}μη{ι}σαν Αχαιοι
17 A 377 αιδεισθαι ιε]ρη{ι}α και αγλαα δεχθαι αποινα
18 A 378 αλλ ουκ Ατρει]δηι Αγαμεμονι ηνδανε θυμωι
19 A 379 αλλα κακως] αφειι, κρατερον δ επι μυθον ετελλε
20 A 380 χωομενος] δ ο γερων παλιν ωιχετο τοιο δ Απολλων
21 A 381 ευξαμενου] η{ι}κουσεν επει μαλα οι φιλος η{ι}εν
22 A 382 ηκε δ επ Αργ]ειοις κακον βελος οι δε νυ λαοι
23 A 383 θνησκον ε]πασσυτεροι τα δ επωχετο κη{ι}λα θεοιο
24 A 384 παντηι ανα σ]τρατον ευρυν Αχαιων αμμι δε μαντις
25 A 385 ευ ειδως ἀ]γόρ]ευε θεοπροπιας εκατοιο
26 A 386 αυτικ εγω] πρω{ι}τος κελομην θεον ἴλασκεσθαι
27 A 387 Ατρειωνα δ ε]πειτα χολος λαβεν αιψα δ αναστας
28 A 388 ηπειλησε]ν μυθον ο δη{ι} τετελεσμενος εστιν
29 A 389 την μεν γαρ] συν νηι θοηι ελῖκωπες Αχαιοι
30 A 390 ες Χρυσην πε]μπουσιν αγουσι δε δωρα ανακτι
31 A 391 την δε νεον κλι]ση{ι}θεν εβαν κηρυκες αγωντες
32 A 392 κουρην Βρισ]η{ι}ος την μοι δοσαν υἱες Αχαιων
33 A 393 αλλα συ ει δυν]ασαι γε περισχεο παιδος εη{ι}ος

Commentary

1. A 361: ὀνομάζεν West, ονομάζε pap.

3. A 363: perhaps a diaeresis over the iota mutum in νοῶϊ.

5. A 365: ἰδυῖηι West, ἰδυειηι pap.

6-12. For the patch whose insertion begins here at l. A 375 + 366 and ends with l. A 381 + 372, see Plate 1, above.

6. One expects l. 6, A 366, to read $\omega\chi\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\theta' \acute{\epsilon}\varsigma \Theta\acute{\eta}\beta\eta\nu \iota\epsilon\rho\eta\nu \acute{\rho}\acute{o}\lambda\iota\nu \text{H}\{i\}\epsilon\tau\acute{\iota}\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma$, but at the beginning it does not, due to the patch, for which, see Plate 1 (above). The first letters visible at left are $\delta\alpha\delta\epsilon\mu$, to be articulated $\text{Ἄτρείδῃ} \delta\acute{\epsilon} \mu\lbracket$, deriving from l. A 375, $\text{Ἄτρείδα} \delta\acute{\epsilon} \mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\alpha \delta\acute{\upsilon}\omega \kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\acute{\eta}\tau\omicron\rho\epsilon \lambda\alpha\omega\nu$. There is no trace of other letters from $\mu\lbracket\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\alpha$ after the initial $\mu\lbracket$ from A 375, nor are their traces of $\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma \Theta\acute{\eta}\beta\eta\lbracket\gamma$ from A 366 prior to the right side of the final $\lbracket\gamma$, but some, or all, the remainders of both lines seem to have been lost in the process of attaching the patch, or may have been left behind on purpose: in any case the μ - is immediately followed by the $-\gamma$, from the right side of the $-\gamma$ of $\Theta\acute{\eta}\beta\eta\lbracket\gamma$ onward, l. A 366 reads as one expects to the end of the line. The remains of a diaeresis over the now-lost initial *iota* of $\iota\epsilon\rho\eta\nu$, the word that follows $\Theta\acute{\eta}\beta\eta\lbracket\gamma$, underscores the fact that A 366 supplies all the other letters. In any case, the insertion of the patch transforms the Greek into nonsense, although the patch does straighten out and prettify the papyrus's left margin. All seven lines from A 366 to A 372 are distorted at their beginnings in similar fashion, because the seven-line patch containing four to six letters per line and drawn from A 375-A 381, not only furnishes inappropriate Greek once inserted, but the Greek of the patch A 375-381, precedes in each individual line text that is from a few lines earlier in the epic at A 366 to A 372.

7. One expects l. 7, A 367, to read $\tau\acute{\eta}\nu \delta\acute{\epsilon} \delta\iota\epsilon\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \tau\epsilon \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \eta\gamma\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$, but at the beginning it does not so read. Instead, the second line of the patch brings with it the four letters $\lambda\omicron\iota\mu$, to be articulated $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta' \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lbracket\lambda\omicron\iota \mu\lbracket$, from the full l. A 376 $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta' \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lbracket\lambda\omicron\iota \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\upsilon\phi\acute{\eta}\mu\eta\sigma\alpha\nu \text{Ἀχαιοί}$, while l. A 367 begins to contribute its text with the $-\mu\epsilon\nu$ from the end of $\delta\iota\epsilon\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$, placing it immediately after the μ - of $\mu\lbracket\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ in A 376, such that two $\mu\mu$'s appear juxtaposed, one μ - from l. A 376, and one $-\mu$ from the $-\mu\epsilon\nu$ in l. A 367. See also the juxtaposition of two *sigmas*, below, l. 10, A 379 + 370. It seems important to suggest as well that the modern finder of the papyrus also responds to the similarity between the $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ of A 376 and the $-\mu\epsilon\nu$ of A 367, suggesting that he possesses a rudimentary ability to recognize ancient Greek letters, no doubt abetted by the very readability of this papyrus. Another slight indication that the possessor of the papyrus in modern times prior to 1931 is responding to Greek letters without actual knowledge of the language itself, may come from the prominence of the «son(s) of Atreus» on the sheet (A 369 Ἄτρείδῃ , A 375 Ἄτρείδα , A 378 Ἄτρείδῃ , A 387 Ἄτρείωντα), perhaps guiding him as he searches the empty spaces for an attractive place to insert the patch he has isolated.

8. One expects l. 8, A 368, to read $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \tau\acute{\alpha} \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \acute{\epsilon}\delta\acute{\upsilon} \delta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\omicron \mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha} \sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\sigma\iota\nu \upsilon\acute{\iota}\epsilon\varsigma \text{Ἀχαιῶ}\nu$, but instead the third line of the patch brings with it some six letters, $\alpha\acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\eta$, to be articulated $\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\lbracket\alpha\iota \acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\eta\lbracket$, but the connector $\tau\epsilon/\theta'$ joining the two words in l. A 377 may not appear. Most manuscripts display A 377 as $\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota \theta' \acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\eta\alpha \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \acute{\alpha}\gamma\lambda\alpha\acute{\alpha} \delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi\theta\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\iota\nu\alpha$. It also seems not impossible that the modern manipulator of the patch was aiming to juxtapose two alphas, one $-\alpha$ from the end of $\acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\eta\lbracket\{i\}\alpha$ from A 377, and the other from the point where l. A 368 begins to contribute with $-\alpha\nu\tau\omicron$. As elsewhere, the joining of A 377 and A 368 does not produce sensible Greek. While the diaeresis over the *iota* in $\upsilon\acute{\iota}\epsilon\varsigma$ is certain, there may have been another diaeresis over the *iota* in $\text{Ἀχαιῶ}\nu$.

9. One expects l. 9, A 369, to read $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa \delta' \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\nu \text{Ἄτρείδῃ} \text{Χρ}\upsilon\sigma\eta\acute{\iota}\delta\alpha \kappa\alpha\lambda\lambda\iota\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\eta\nu\omicron\nu$, but instead the fourth line of the patch brings with it some four letters, $\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon$ -, from what remained at the beginning of l. A 378 ($\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda' \omicron\upsilon\kappa \text{Ἀτρείδῃ} \text{Ἄγαμέμνονι} \acute{\eta}\delta\alpha\nu\epsilon \theta\upsilon\mu\omega\acute{\iota}$); this $\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon$ - is to be articulated $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda' \omicron\upsilon\kappa \text{Ἀτρείδῃ}$ with «to the son of

Atreus» truncated in the patch. The possessor of the papyrus may have considered his own work with the patch confirmed by the fact that he could see the same form, dative of Ἀτρείδηι, at approximately the same position in both lines A 378 and A 369, although the form in his patch, Ἄτρει- Χρύσης δ' αὐθ' ἱερεὺς ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλων, is truncated. But sensible Greek is not his aim when manipulating the patch.

10. One expects l. 10, A 370, to read Χρύσης δ' αὐθ' ἱερεὺς ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος, but instead the fifth line of the patch brings with it four letters ακωσ, which are to be articulated ἀλλὰ κ]ακῶς, derived from Line A 379 ἀλλὰ κακῶς ἀφίει κρατερὸν δ' ἐπὶ μῦθον ἔτελλεν. As above in l. 7, in which the final letter of the patch, μ-, is juxtaposed to another -μ from the earlier l. A 370 just as it begins to contribute, so here, the final sigma of κακῶς is immediately followed by another sigma, the final letter in ἱερεύ]ς, reading double *sigma*, on the papyrus. With regard to ἔτελλε/ἔτελλεν, see l. 19, A 379.

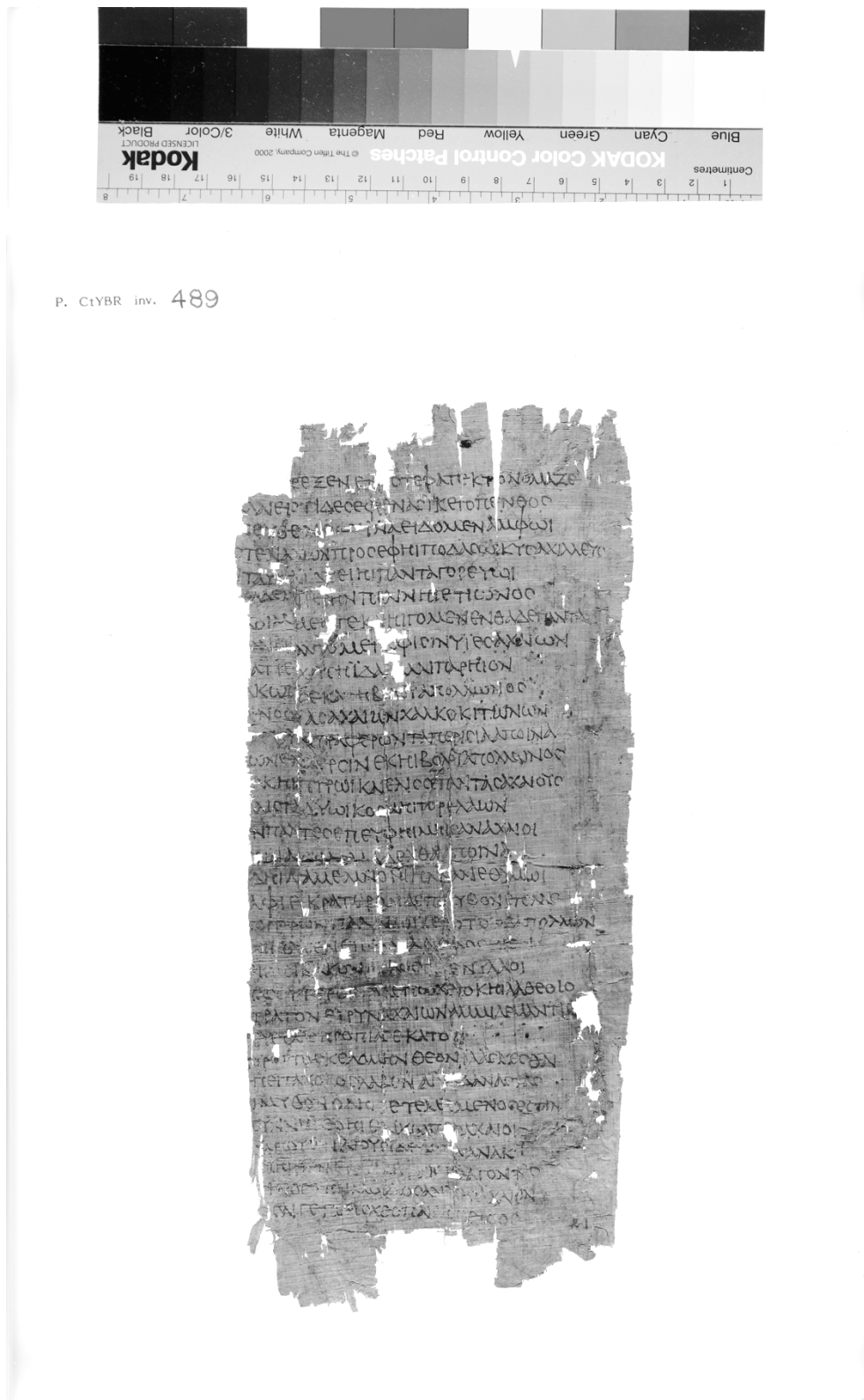
11. One expects l. 11, A 371, to read ἦλθε θεὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων, but instead the sixth line of the patch brings with it the five letters ενοσδ, to be articulated as χωόμε]ενος δ', from l. A 380, χωόμενος δ' ὁ γέρον πάλιν ὄιχετο τοῖο δ' Ἀπόλλων. Line A 371 apparently begins to contribute with the ας of νῆ]ας directly following the δ', to produce δας, followed by «of the bronze-armored Achaians» at the end of the hexameter.

12. One expects l. 12, A 372, to read λυσόμενός τε θύγατρα φέρων τ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα, but instead traces of the four letters εγνου seem to have been carried over by the patch from l. A 381, to be articulated εὐξαμ]έγνου, the full line of which, A 381, reads εὐξαμένου ἦκουσεν ἐπεὶ μάλα οἱ φίλος ἦεν. This end of the patch is read only tentatively, and the traces of -υγατρα juxtaposed after]έγνου compels me to think that l. A 372 is already contributing its text immediately after the]έγνου from l. A 381:]υγατρα φερων τ απερισια αποινα. Most manuscripts read the text of l. A 372 as ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα, while the papyrus offers the itacistic form of the adjective and neglects to elide the alphas between the last two words απερισια αποινα, wreaking havoc with the hexameter as well.

14. At first writing, the scribe omitted -το after ελίσσε- for the imperfect deponent in l. A 374, but added the -το subsequently in the upper margin between ελίσσ- and πάντας. West's text reads λίσσετο.

19. The ν-moveable at the end of ἔτελλεν in other manuscripts and in West's text does not appear here in l. A 379.

28. The ἐστίν in τετελεσμένος ἐστίν at the end of l. A 388 appears to have first been written as εσπιν and then written over to correct to εστιν.



Pl. 2

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