

The aim of this paper is to show that there is a close affinity between Aristotle's theory of poetics and Aristarchus' methodology in editing and commenting on Homer.

A close analysis of the Poetics, focusing in particular on the four parts that tragedy has in common with epic: plot (*μῦθος*), character (*ἥθος*), thought (*διάνοια*), and language (*λέξις*) - leaving aside *μελοποιία* and *ὄψις*, proper to drama - will show that the criteria that Aristotle used to define and characterize these aspects of drama and epic are to be found in Aristarchus too. Especially the Aristarchean scholia dealing with *atheteseis* contain the same technical vocabulary and appeal to the same criteria and to the same standards that Aristotle outlined in the Poetics and in the Rhetoric. This Aristotelian way of 'judging' a line or a reading proposed by a predecessor (Zenodotus in most cases) distinguishes moreover Aristarchus from other critics and exegetes of Hellenistic times, like Crates of Pergamum and the so-called *κριτικοί*, who value sound effects (*λέξις* or *σύνθεσις*) over content (*διάνοια*) and do not seem to have been influenced by Peripatetic thought (but rather by Stoicism, at least in the case of Crates).

Moreover, the close affinity that can be detected between Aristotle and Aristarchus seems to fit what we know about the development of science and scholarship in Hellenistic times and especially at Alexandria, where, as Von Staden has demonstrated, medicine and mechanics were influenced by Aristotelian thought. Aristotle appears thus to be the forerunner and the 'father' of Hellenistic science and I suggest that we should look at Aristarchus' scholarship as part of this 'scientific' development. His affinity and theoretical debt to the Peripatetic school on the one hand, and his focused and severe methodology, which does not leave much space for 'abstract' speculations and criticism, on the other, make Aristarchus much closer to Herophilus or Euclid than to the *κριτικοί*, who were more concerned with 'judging' poetry than with a rigorous approach to the text.