A DEFENCE OF SOME SUSPECTED PASSAGES IN
THE SCUTUM HESIODI

BY

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The Scutum Hesiodi, one of the few remnants of archaic poetry, deserves our special interest, because it is the oldest poem known to us which shows a close acquaintance with the Iliad and often imitates it 1). The poem is the more important, since unlike Hesiod's Theogony and Opera the Scutum treats of a similar subject as the Iliad. Consequently, a comparison of the two poems may give us a better understanding of the character and style of the Iliad and its special characteristics. In these pages we will concern ourselves mainly with the lines athetized by modern critics. First of all, however, it will be necessary to get an idea of the mentality and the style of the poet of the Scutum in order to pronounce a proper judgement on the passages in question. For we shall see that passages which seem offensive and unauthentic, in reality show the specific characteristics peculiar to this poet. However, at the beginning of this study I wish to stress the fact that I, too, am convinced that interpolations occur in this poem 2). I only think that the number of passages which have been condemned by modern critics must be restricted. No atheteses of ancient critics have been preserved, which may be due to the fact that the Scholia are relatively scanty so that no remnants of Alexandrian criticism have survived 3). Modern critics have been more active here. Wilamowitz 4) drew the attention

1) The fact that the Scutum is posterior to the Iliad has been proved convincingly by F. Schwarz, De Scuto quod fertur Hesiodi, Thesis, Berlin, 1932. Cf. e.g. Schwarz, 40 on Scut. 455 f., a clumsy imitation of E 854.
2) E.g. Scut. 293-5 (condemned by Wilamowitz, Hermes 40, 117; Cook, Class. Quart. 1937, 211, Mazon and Russo, 283). F. Dornseiff, Die archaische Mythenerzählung, 50 f. wrongly thinks that no interpolations occur in the Scutum.
3) It is also possible that Aristarch did not take much notice of offending passages, because his teacher Aristophanes had said that the Scutum was not the work of Hesiod. For a remnant of ancient criticism, cf., however, Pap. 3 (Russo, Ed. p. 51).
4) Hermes 40 (1905), 116-122.
to a number of passages, and argued that the Scutum has been interpolated by doublets, expansions, etc. This view has prevailed since then and has also been followed by the most recent editor of the Scutum, Dr. C. F. Russo \(^1\).

We may note with satisfaction that to-day the poet is no longer condemned as a mere hack-writer, as former scholars used to do \(^2\). Dr. Russo has rightly combated this view and has drawn attention to some characteristics of the poet such as his taste for the horrible, for hyperboles, his mannerism \(^3\). We may add that preference for the horrible is also found in Hesiod, especially in the *Theogony*. On the other hand, style and composition of the Scutum are often unwieldy, unattractive and sometimes even make a clumsy impression. It seems as if in this domain the poet has no special artistic gifts. A typical and telling instance is offered by l. 392. Though in 370 ff. Herakles and Kyknos have descended from their chariots and rush on each other, l. 392 again narrates that Herakles descends from his chariot. Awkward though the fact may be, we can detect what reasons have guided the poet here. He especially tries to embellish this part of the poem in which the combat between the two adversaries takes place. Therefore, he gives no less than five similes (374-411). We will deal here with the first two similes. In the former the two adversaries, rushing upon each other, are compared with great stones (374-9), where-upon Herakles is compared with a boar (386-392). We must compare the combat between Ares and Herakles (425 ff.) which also contains two similes, viz. a comparison of Herakles with a lion (426-433), of Ares with a great stone (437-442). In this passage each of the two adversaries is given a simile, because Ares, though being an enemy of the hero, is a god. Kyknos, however, is only a human adversary and therefore gets no separate simile. Accordingly, the poet first had to describe the two heroes and then Herakles separately, which caused the clumsy composition. It may

2) Cf. e.g. Cook, *l.l.*, 205.