

# “She turns about in the same spot and watches for Orion”: Ancient Criticism and Exegesis of *Od.* 5.274 = *Il.* 18.488

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**O**DYSSEUS SAILS from the island Ogygia, the abode of the nymph Calypso, in the night (*Od.* 5.271–277):

οὐδέ οἱ ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτε  
Πληϊάδας τ' ἐσορῶντι καὶ ὄψε δύνοντα Βοώτην  
Ἄρκτον θ', ἦν καὶ ἄμαξαν ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν,  
ἢ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ' Ὀρίωνα δοκεύει,  
οἷη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὀκεανοῖο·  
τὴν γὰρ δὴ μιν ἄνωγε Καλυψώ, διὰ θεάων,  
ποντοπορευέμεναι ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χειρὸς ἔχοντα.

Sleep never fell upon his eyelids as he watched the Pleiades and late-setting Boötes, and the Bear that men also call the Wagon; she turns about in the same spot and watches for Orion, and she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean. Calypso the goddess had told him to keep her on his left hand in his sailing.

Keeping the northern constellation of the Bear on his left indicates that Odysseus took the easterly course; on the eighteenth day he reached Scheria, the land of the Phaeacians.

1.

This is the only passage in the entire Homeric corpus that contains a reference to stellar navigation. At the same time, a closer examination shows that the kind of stellar navigation it implies is somewhat problematic. This becomes clear as soon as we compare the *Odyssey* passage with the following passage from

Aratus' *Phaenomena* (26–27, 36–44):<sup>1</sup>

δύω δέ μιν ἀμφὶς ἔχουσαι  
 ἼΑρκτοι ἅμα τροχόωσι· τὸ δὴ καλέονται ἼΑμαξαι.  
 ...  
 καὶ τὴν μὲν Κυνόσουραν ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσι,  
 τὴν δ' ἐτέρην Ἑλίκην. Ἑλίκη γε μὲν ἄνδρες ἸΑχαιοὶ  
 εἰν ἀλὶ τεκμαίρονται ἵνα χρὴ νῆας ἀγίνειν,  
 τῇ δ' ἄρα Φοίνικες πίσυνοι περώωσι θάλασσαν.  
 ἀλλ' ἢ μὲν καθαρὴ καὶ ἐπιφράσασσθαι ἐτοίμη  
 πολλὴ φαινομένη Ἑλίκη πρώτης ἀπὸ νυκτός·  
 ἢ δ' ἐτέρη ὀλίγη μὲν, ἀτὰρ ναύτησιν ἀρείων·  
 μειοτέρη γὰρ πᾶσα περιστρέφεται στροφάλιγγι.  
 τῇ καὶ Σιδόνιοι ἰθύντατα ναυτίλλονται.

On either side of it [the northern pole] two Bears wheel in unison, and so they are also called the Wagons ... Now one of the Bears men call Cynosura by name, the other Helice. Helice is the one by which Greek men at sea judge the course to steer their ships, while Phoenicians cross the sea relying on the other. Now the one is clear and easy to identify, Helice, being visible in all its grandeur as soon as night begins; the other is slight, yet a better guide to sailors, for it revolves entirely in a smaller circle: so by it the Sidonians sail the straightest course.

According to a firmly established tradition, it was not before Thales the Milesian (*ca* 600 B.C.) that the Little Bear, also called Cynosura, became known to the Greeks.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it remained so strongly associated with the Phoenician way of navigation that it was even given the name "Phoenice."<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup>Text and translation of D. Kidd, *Aratus. Phaenomena* (Cambridge 1997).

<sup>2</sup>See J. Martin, *Scholia in Aratum vetera* (Stuttgart 1974; hereafter "Martin") 72.3–4 (MQDΔVA on 26–27), διτταὶ γὰρ εἰσιν, ὧν τὴν μὲν μείζονα Ναύπλιος εὔρε, τὴν δ' ἐλάττονα Θαλῆς ὁ σοφός; 89.1–2 (MQDΔVUA on 39), ὁ γὰρ εὔρετῆς αὐτῆς Θαλῆς εἰς Φοίνικας ἀνάγει τὸ γένος. Cf. also nn.5 and 7 *infra*. Thales was believed to have written a *Maritime Astronomy* (Ναυτικὴ ἀστρολογία), 11 B 1–2 D.-K.

<sup>3</sup>Martin 74.11–12 (Q on 27), ἢ δὲ μικρὰ ἼΑρκτος ὑπὸ τῶν πλείστων Φοινίκη λέγεται; cf. 90.8–10 (Q on 37–44; quoted n.9 *infra*); Eust. IV 223.13–17 van der Valk (on *Il.* 18.489: n.5 *infra*). Cf. also Call. fr.191.53–55; Str. 1.1.6; Kidd (*supra* n.1) 189–190.

Greeks for their part continued to steer their ships by the less accurate but more conspicuous sign of the Great Bear, also called Helice.<sup>4</sup> The association of the latter with the Greek way of navigation was so strong that even the Homeric expression ἐλίκωπες Ἀχαιοί was often interpreted as “those who fix their eyes on Helice.”<sup>5</sup> It is this traditional Greek way of navigation that is evoked, for example, in the following verses of Apollonius Rhodius, obviously alluding to *Odyssey* 5.274: οἱ δ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ | ναῦται εἰς Ἑλίκην τε καὶ ἀστέρας Ὠρίωνος | ἔδρακον ἐκ νηῶν (“and on the sea the navigators from their ships looked towards Helice and the stars of Orion”).<sup>6</sup>

It is however far from clear which of the Bears the *Odyssey* passage actually addresses. Although it is reasonable to suppose that it is on the “Greek” constellation of the Great Bear, presumably the only one known to Homer, that Odysseus would fix his eyes while sailing on his raft,<sup>7</sup> ἢ τ' αὐτοῦ

<sup>4</sup>Martin 87.3–5 (MQDΔVUA on 37), τὴν μείζονα Ἄρκτον Ἑλίκην παρὰ τὰς ἑλικᾶς καὶ συστροφᾶς αὐτῆς. μείζους γὰρ ἔχει τὰς περιφορὰς τῆς Κυνοσοῦρας. Cf. Kidd (*supra* n.1) 188 (on *Phaen.* 37), “This name [Helice] for the Great Bear is presumably derived from its conspicuously wheeling movement round the pole.” Cf. also J. B. Hainsworth, in A. Heubeck *et al.*, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* I (Oxford 1988) 276–277: “If he used the northerly stars of Ursa Major as a fixed beacon, a navigator would be off course to the maximum extent of c. 13°, hardly a serious matter for a single night's voyage amid the vagaries of wind and current. Ursa Major therefore continued to be the Greek guide.”

<sup>5</sup>Martin 87.8–10 (MQDΔVUA on 37), τινὲς δὲ λέγουσι καὶ ἐλίκωπας ἐντεῦθεν τοὺς Ἑλληνας ὀνομασθῆναι ὅτι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλίκην ἔχουσι τοὺς ὄπας πλείοντες; 89.2–7 (MQDΔVUA on 39), οἱ δὲ Ἕλληνες ἐν ἀγνωσίᾳ τῆς μικρᾶς ὄντες πρὸς τὴν Ἑλίκην ὀρῶντες ὡς μείζονα διέπλεον καὶ πλέουσιν, ὅθεν [αὐτοὺς] Ὅμηρος ἐλίκωπες Ἀχαιοί ὡς εἰς αὐτὴν τοὺς ὄπας ἀνατείνοντες. οἱ δὲ λέγοντες εὐοφθάλμους τοὺς ἐλίκωπας ἀμαρτάνουσι. παρθένων γὰρ τὸ ἐπίθετον; Eust. IV 223.13–17 van der Valk, οὐ δύνει εἰς Ὠκεανὸν οὔτε αὐτὴ ἢ καὶ μεγάλη καλουμένη καὶ Ἑλίκη, πρὸς ἣν οἱ Ἕλληνες, ὡς εἴρηται, ναυτιλλόμενοι ἐλίκωπες δι' αὐτὴν ἐλέγοντο, οὔτε ἡ Κυνοσοῦρα ἢ ἐγγὺς αὐτῆς ἢ μικρά, ἥτις μεθ' Ὅμηρον ὑπὸ Θαλοῦ τοῦ Μιλησίου εὔρηται, πρὸς ἣν Φοίνικες ἐπλεον.

<sup>6</sup>Ap. Rhod. 3.744–746. Cf. Kidd (*supra* n.1) 188 (on *Phaen.* 37): “A.R. in 3.745 recalls the Homeric scene in ε 272, but replaces Homer's Ἄρκτος with Aratus' Ἑλίκη.”

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Paus. 8.3.7, ἄρκτον μεγάλην, ἣς καὶ Ὅμηρος ἐν Ὀδυσσέως ἀνάπλω παρὰ Καλυψοῦς μνήμην ἔσχε· “Πληιάδας τ' ἐσορῶντα καὶ ὄψε δύνοντα Βοώτην ἄρκτον θ', ἣν καὶ ἄμαξαν ἐπικλησιν καλέουσιν”; D on *Il.* 18.487, [ἡ Κυνοσοῦρα] ἣς Ὅμηρος οὐ μεμνηται ὡς ὕστερον εὔρεθείσης ὑπὸ Θαλοῦ τοῦ Μιλησίου.

στρέφεται, “she turns about in the same spot,” at 5.274 firmly points in the direction of the Little Bear. Consider again Aratus’ description of the latter: “the other is slight, yet a better guide to sailors, for it revolves entirely in a smaller circle.” The scholiasts are even more explicit:<sup>8</sup>

τῆ Κυνοσούρα τῆ μικρᾶ· βραχεῖα γὰρ οὖσα ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ στρέφεται, καὶ ἔστι μᾶλλον εὐσύνοπτος, οὐ τῆ λαμπήδονι (ἀμυδρὰ γάρ), ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ στρέφεσθαι.

and Cynosura the Little [Bear]; for since it is short it turns about in the same spot; it is also more easily observable—not on account of its shine (for it is dim), but because it turns about in the same spot.

ἡ δὲ Κυνόσουρα τῷ φωτὶ μὲν ὀλίγη, ἔστι γὰρ ἀμυδροτέρα, τοῖς δὲ ναυτιλλομένοις ἐπιτηδειότερα. καὶ ἐπιφέρει ὅτι ἐλάττονι στροφῇ χρήται καὶ περιφορᾷ, ὥστε ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ στρεφομένη εὐσύνοπτός ἐστιν.

although Cynosura is not conspicuous by its light—as a matter of fact it is dim—it is nevertheless more serviceable for sailors; and he [Aratus] adds that it revolves sooner and its orbit is shorter, so that turning about in the same spot it is easily observable.

It was thus a matter of common knowledge that, whereas the “Greek” constellation of the Great Bear followed the orbit that ran around the entire polar circle, the “Phoenician” Little Bear turned in the same spot around the pole.<sup>9</sup> It is not difficult to discern that this is exactly the kind of motion implied by ἡ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται at *Odyssey* 5.274.

2.

The expression ἡ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται was also, in a somewhat different context, taken by ancient commentators as implying

<sup>8</sup>Martin 88.13–89.1, 89.13–90 (MQDΔVUA on 39 and 42); cf. also 87.3–7, 90.7–10, 90.21–91.2 (MQDΔVUA on 37; Q on 37–44, 44).

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Martin 87.6–7 (MQDΔVUA on 37), ἡ μὲν γὰρ Κυνόσουρα περὶ τὸν πόλον ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅλον βόρειον κύκλον; 90.8–10 (Q on 37–44), καὶ τὴν περιστροφὴν ποιῶσα περὶ τὸν πόλον αὐτόν, βεβαίαν καὶ ἀπλανῆ τὴν τήρησιν παρέχει τοῖς Σιδωνίοις, οὐκ ἐπὶ πολλὰ μέρη νεύουσα ταῖς περιφοραῖς.

another anachronistic idea, that of a spherical earth and universe. I mean the opening passage of Homer's description of the Shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.483–489), where vv. 487–489 correspond exactly to 273–275 of the *Odyssey* passage:<sup>10</sup>

ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,  
 ἠέλιόν τ' ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθουσσαν,  
 ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντα, τὰ τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται,  
 Πληϊάδας θ' Ὑάδας τε τό τε σθένος Ὀρίωνος  
 Ἄρκτον θ', ἣν καὶ ἄμαξαν ἐπὶ κλήσιν καλέουσιν,  
 ἣ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ' Ὀρίωνα δοκεύει,  
 οἷη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο.

On it he made the earth and sky and sea, the tireless sun and the moon growing full, and all the constellations that the heaven has around it as a crown, and Pleiades and Hyades, and the mighty Orion, and the Bear that men also call the Wagon; she turns about in the same spot and watches for Orion, and she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean.

According to the A scholia on *Il.* 18.485, rather than τὰ τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται, which gives the line in question the sense “(the constellations) that the heaven has around it as a crown,” Zenodotus read τὰ τ' οὐρανὸν [οὐρανῶ?] ἐστήρικται,<sup>11</sup> “(the constellations) that are fixed in the heaven,” and Aristarchus read τὰ τ' οὐρανὸν ἐστεφάνωκε, “(the constellations) that garland the heaven.”<sup>12</sup> As J. I. Porter has recently argued, Aristarchus' object was to block the possibility of construing the Homeric text to the effect that Homer envisaged the constella-

<sup>10</sup>For the critical apparatus see M. L. West, *Homerus. Ilias II* (Munich/Leipzig 2000) *ad loc.*

<sup>11</sup>*Cf. Hymn.Herm.* 11 οὐρανῶ ἐστήρικτο, *Il.* 4.443 οὐρανῶ ἐστήριξε, 11.28 ἐν νέφεϊ στήριξε.

<sup>12</sup>Interestingly, Aristarchus' ἐστεφάνωκε appears in Wolf's list of “inept readings,” which he “would rather assign to Zenodotus or one of the earlier editors than to Aristarchus”: F. A. Wolf, *Prolegomena to Homer*, transl. A. Grafton *et al.* (Princeton 1988) 197–198 and n.29. According to the A scholia on *Il.* 18.483, Zenodotus athetized vv. 483–608, that is, the entire description of the Shield of Achilles; for discussion see M. J. Apthorp, *The Manuscript Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* (Heidelberg 1980) 187–188.

tions as forming a crown shaped by the vault of heaven and circling above and below the horizon—an interpretation which would contradict the flat-earth view characteristic of the Homeric poems; this editorial activity was presumably directed against Aristarchus’ contemporary and rival Crates of Mallus, who famously claimed that Homer entertained the idea of a spherical earth and universe.<sup>13</sup> Not only ἐστεφάνωται at *Iliad* 18.485 but also στρέφεται at 488, identical to *Odyssey* 5.274 which is the starting point of this discussion, communicates this idea. Compare indeed this remark by the scholiast: “That heaven is shaped as a circle (κυκλοτερής) is shown by ‘turns about’ (στρέφεται), as well as by ‘is crowned’ (ἐστεφάνωται).”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, as against one problematic line in *Odyssey* 5, *Iliad* 18 provides two: 18.485, which contains the idea of a spherical earth and heaven; and 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274, which contains Homer’s knowledge of the Little Bear, and, again, the idea of a spherical earth and heaven. At the same time, it is difficult to avoid the impression that it is the *Odyssey* rather than the *Iliad* passage that is more appropriate to the context in which it appears. While the picture of the starry sky introduced in *Iliad* 18 is too general to require such a detailed description of one of the constellations, Odysseus’ directing his course by a constellation which “turns about in the same spot” and “has no share in the baths of Ocean” fits remarkably well with the figure of a lonely sailor making his way in unknown waters.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>J. I. Porter, “Hermeneutic Lines and Circles: Aristarchus and Crates on the Exegesis of Homer,” in R. Lamberton and J. J. Keaney, *Homer’s Ancient Readers, The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic’s Earliest Exegetes* (Princeton 1992) 91–93. On Crates see H. J. Mette, *Sphairopoia. Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des Krates von Pergamon* (Munich 1936); on Aristarchus and Crates see also M. van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad I* (Leiden 1963) 465–467.

<sup>14</sup>T on *Il.* 18.488; cf. Porter (*supra* n.13) 93. See also Eust. IV 221.10 van der Valk, ἤγουν κύκλω περιέχει καὶ στρέφει σφαῖρα ὣν αὐτός [*sc.* οὐρανός]. On Eustathius’ interpretation of Homer see van der Valk (*supra* n.13) 106 n.84; N. Richardson, “Homer and His Ancient Critics,” in *The Iliad. A Commentary VI* (Cambridge 1993) 38.

<sup>15</sup>For discussion see G. Danek, *Epos und Zitat. Studien zu den Quellen der Odyssee* (Vienna 1998) 128–129 (with bibliography).

3.

Note now that *Od.* 5.274 = *Il.* 18.488 is the only line that prevents us from unreservedly taking both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* passages as referring to the Great Bear. Although both the unspecified *arktos* at *Od.* 5.273 = *Il.* 18.487 and “she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean” at *Od.* 5.275 = *Il.* 18.489 would fit either constellation (*cf.* Arat. *Phaen.* 48, “Ἀρκτοὶ, κυανέου πεφυλαγμένοι ὠκεανοῖο), the emphatic “alone” (οἴη) in the latter strongly suggests that it is the Great Bear that would be meant here, the only one generally believed to have been known to the Greeks at the time of Homer. Furthermore, the name *Hamaxa*, “Wagon,” in *Od.* 5.273 = *Il.* 18.487, was commonly regarded as the exclusive designation of this constellation; in fact, Aratus, in the passage quoted above, was the first to apply the name “Wagon” to both Bears.<sup>16</sup>

The line οἴη δ’ ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο (*Il.* 18.489 = *Od.* 5.275) was known to Aristotle, who quoted it in the *Poetics* as an example of metaphor: although the Bear is not the only constellation which never goes down below the horizon, it is the most conspicuous one; later commentators preferred to take this Homeric line as referring to the star-groups actually mentioned in the passage.<sup>17</sup> Aristotle does not specify whether it was the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* passage that he had in mind, but the very fact of his referring to it makes clear that the line in question

<sup>16</sup>Martin 77.8–10 (MQDΔVUA on 27), κυρίως γὰρ ἡ Ἑλίκη ἄμαξα λέγεται· οἱ γὰρ ἐπὶ αὐτῆς ἀστέρες ἀμάξης τύπον ἔχουσιν. *Cf.* D on *Il.* 18.487, ἄρκτοι δύο δείκνυνται ἐν τῷ Βορείῳ κλίματι, αὕτη δὲ ἡ μεγάλη ἢ καλουμένη καὶ ἄμαξα, διὰ τὸ εἰς ἀμάξης τύπον κατηστερίσθαι καὶ ἡ ἐγγὺς ἐκείνης ἢ μικρὰ ἢ Κυνόσουρα καλουμένη κτλ. *Cf.* Kidd (*supra* n.1) 182 (on *Phaen.* 27): “Originally this [*Hamaxa*] was a name for the Great Bear only, but Aratus now applies it, with Ἀρκτοὶ, to the Little Bear also. Callimachus then uses it of the Little Bear by itself in fr. 191.54.”

<sup>17</sup>*Poet.* 1461a21. *Cf.* b on *Il.* 18.489, τὸ οἴη οὐκ ἔχει τὴν σύγκρισιν πρὸς ἅπαντα τὰ ζῴδια, ἀλλὰ πρὸς μόνον τὰ ἐντετυπωμένα τῇ ἀσπίδι; Porph. *Quaest. Hom. ad Il.* 226.4 Schrader; Eust. IV 224.1–3 van der Valk. See, however, Ap. Soph. 29.10–14 s.v. ἄμμορον· “οἴη δὲ ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο.” λέγει δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἄρκτου. τοῦτο δὲ εἴρηκεν μὴ γινώσκων ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα οὐ δύναται ἢ πρὸς τὰ προειρημένα τὴν σύγκρισιν ποιεῖται. ὁ δὲ Ἡλιόδωρος φησι βέλτιον λέγειν ὅτι ἡγνῶναι.

was part of Homer's text in his time.

According to Strabo, Crates of Mallus (II B.C.) tried to emend this line by reading οἶος instead of οἴη; Crates' object in changing the gender of the noun *arktos* was to make it designate the entire arctic circle, that is, the circumpolar zone on the celestial sphere, rather than the constellation of the Bear as such. Yet, as Strabo's discussion shows, this correction was hardly necessary, for those who wished to credit Homer with advanced astronomical knowledge read the *arktos* of this passage as referring to the arctic circle anyway:<sup>18</sup>

That is, by the terms "Bear" and "Wagon" he [Homer] means the "arctic circle"; for otherwise he would not have said of the Bear that "she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean," since so many stars revolve in that very region, which is always visible ... Therefore Crates is not correct when, in trying to avoid what need not be avoided, he writes "and it alone (οἶος) has no share in the baths of Ocean."

On the other hand, Apollonius Sophista (*ca* A.D. 100) says that Crates read the line in question as ἡ δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο.<sup>19</sup> This would obviously be at variance with Strabo's report.

Proceeding from Crates' well-attested activity concerning *Il.* 18.489, Porter suggested that the Pergamene scholar also tampered with the description of the Bear in the preceding line: "Crates' hand can be felt here [in *Il.* 18.488] (as in the next line,

<sup>18</sup>Strab. 1.1.6; *cf.* Hainsworth (*supra* n.4) 278 (on *Od.* 5.275). It is probable that the source of this passage is Posidonius, see G. Aujac, *Strabon. Géographie* I.1 (Paris 1969) 176 n. (with bibliography).

<sup>19</sup>Ap. Soph. 29.14–15 *s.v.* ἄμμορον· ὁ δὲ Κράτης οὕτως ἀναγινώσκει "ἡ δ' τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ' Ὠρίωνα δοκεύει," μέχρι τούτου καταλέγων· "ἡ δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο," ἵνα τὸ συμβεβηκὸς αὐτῇ καὶ ἑτέροις τῶν ἄστρον ἀκούηται. According to the correction proposed by H. Helck, the unmetrical ἡ of this passage should be emended in such a way as to make Crates responsible for the attempt, attested in Porph. *ad Il.* 225.25, to divide οἴη at *Il.* 18.489 into οἶ on the one hand and ἡ on the other; *cf.* Mette (*supra* n.13) F 25b; M. W. Haslam, "The Homer Lexicon of Apollonius Sophista: I Composition and Constituents," *CP* 89 (1994) 5.

which he emended to his own liking; Strabo 1.1.6)."<sup>20</sup> Yet, although it seems likely that *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 was emended or even interpolated in full, a closer examination shows that Crates can not be held responsible for it. First, we saw that long before Crates Apollonius Rhodius almost certainly alluded to *Od.* 5.274 in his *Argonautica* (*supra* 233). Second, its vivid representation of the Bear (*cf. infra*) is distinctly at variance with Crates' interpretation of the *arktos* of this passage as an abstract noun designating the entire arctic circle. Third, the very manner in which Apollonius Sophista quotes Crates' reading of *Il.* 18.488–489 (*supra* n.19) shows that *Il.* 18.488 as we know it was already present in Crates' text of Homer.<sup>21</sup> Finally, while ἢ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται at *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 is part of the text of Homer as we have it, Crates' οἶος at *Il.* 18.489 = *Od.* 5.275 is not. All this strongly suggests that Crates did not exert any influence on *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 either.

The same must also be true of οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται at *Il.* 18.485, another Homeric expression introducing the idea of a spherical earth and heaven.<sup>22</sup> We have seen indeed that, a hundred years before Aristarchus and Crates, Zenodotus gave his own version of it (*supra* 235), and it goes without saying that Aristarchus' οὐρανὸν ἐστεφάνωκε cannot be studied separately from Zenodotus' οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται. We cannot be absolutely sure that the line that Zenodotus and Aristarchus had before their eyes was identical to ours. But if this was the case and if

<sup>20</sup>Porter (*supra* n.13) 93.

<sup>21</sup>If correct, this reference to Crates would be the earliest external attestation of *Il.* 18.488. The line also appears in Strabo (*supra*) and in the papyri of the Roman period that cover this part of the *Iliad*. For the list of the latter see M. L. West, *Studies in the Text and Transmission of the Iliad* (Munich/Leipzig 2001) 88–138 (nos. 9, 11, 239).

<sup>22</sup>The phrase τὰ τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται also appears in Hes. *Th.* 382, where it concludes the list of the children of Dawn and Astraeus. However, it is omitted in *P.Oxy.* XXXII 2643, the only papyrus text at our disposal that contains this *Theogony* passage.

indeed Zenodotus’ successor Apollonius already knew *Od.* 5.274, it would mean that the person who tampered with the text of Homer, with the intention of crediting the poet with knowledge of the Little Bear and the spherical universe, must have been a contemporary of Zenodotus (first half of the third century B.C.) at the very least.<sup>23</sup>

## 4.

In the entire history of the ancient reception of Homer Plato seems to have been the only one who actually recommended systematic interference with the text of the poems: thus, in Books 2 and 3 of the *Republic* he approaches the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in accordance with the principle “what they do well we must pass and what not, reject” (377C, καὶ ὄν μὲν ἄν καλὸν [μῦθον] ποιήσωσιν, ἐγκριτέον, ὄν δ’ ἄν μή, ἀποκριτέον). According to Richard Janko, it is not out of the question that Zenodotus applied Plato’s principles in his work.<sup>24</sup> Another tendency was represented by those who, like Crates of Mallus and probably also others before him, tried to amend Homer’s text so as to make it fit the scientific views of later epochs. The standard, however, was set by Aristarchus, who was mainly preoccupied with the *numerus versusum*, trying to purge the Homeric poems of meaningless repetitions that had accumulated in the course of time, and was not in the habit of deleting Homeric lines on account of their content; when he wanted to cast doubt on a line or a passage he simply athetized

<sup>23</sup>The *diorthōsis* of the *Odyssey* by Aratus—a Stoic, an expert in astronomy, a scholar, and an epic poet in full command of the Homeric style—comes to mind in this connection. See *Vit. Arat.* I, καὶ τὴν Ὀδύσειαν δὲ διώρθωσε, καὶ καλεῖται τις διόρθωσις οὕτως Ἀράτειος ὡς Ἀριστάρχειος καὶ Ἀριστοφάνειος. τινὲς δὲ αὐτὸν εἰς Συρίαν ἐληλυθέναι φασὶ καὶ γεγονέναι παρ’ Ἀντιόχῳ καὶ ἤξιῶσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ὥστε τὴν Ἰλιάδα διορθώσασθαι, διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ πολλῶν λελυμάνθαι; *Suda* Ἀρατος ... Διόρθωσιν Ὀδυσσεΐας (Martin 8.18–24, 22.18). On Aratus see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic age* (Oxford 1968) 120–122; A. Rengakos, *Der Homertext und die hellenistischen Dichter* (Stuttgart 1993) 10–11, 165–166.

<sup>24</sup>R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary IV* (Cambridge 1992) 23.

it.<sup>25</sup> It was in all probability Aristarchus' work that brought about the standardization of the Alexandrian text of Homer, and Aristarchus' text was also "the last of the personal texts of which we hear. The authority of his recension was so great as to preclude, or consign to oblivion, any later attempt to compete with it."<sup>26</sup>

In the centuries that followed, the tendency to avoid altering the received text of Homer became the dominant one. What was offered instead were various methods of interpretation.<sup>27</sup> To borrow the terms introduced by Moshe Halbertal in his discussion of the reception of the Hebrew Bible, "textual closure" of the Homeric corpus was accompanied by "hermeneutical openness" towards it—a sure sign of the canonical status that the poems of Homer had acquired.<sup>28</sup> This attitude to the text of Homer guaranteed that, in spite of the problems of interpretation that some of them created, the lines and passages that had been interpolated in earlier epochs were not questioned. The reception history of *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 was no exception.

While the image of the Bear keeping a watchful eye on Orion the hunter was generally admired and referred to as "graceful" and "elegant,"<sup>29</sup> this is not yet to say that the problem arising

<sup>25</sup>According to Plutarch *Mor.* 26F, Aristarchus deleted "out of fear" four lines from Phoenix's speech in *Iliad* 9 (458–461), which described how Phoenix considered killing his father in revenge for the curse put on him. Yet, as Stephanie West argued recently, the lines in question, known to us only from Plutarch's quotations, should rather be taken as belonging to one of the Cyclic poems: "Phoenix's Antecedents: A Note on *Iliad* 9," *SCI* 20 (2001) 1–15; cf. Janko (*supra* n.24) 27–28.

<sup>26</sup>M. L. West (*supra* n.21) 67.

<sup>27</sup>See M. Finkelberg, "Homer as a Foundation Text," in M. Finkelberg and G. G. Stroumsa, edd., *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (Leiden 2003) 91–96.

<sup>28</sup>See M. Halbertal, *People of the Book. Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1997) 32–40, esp. 32–33: "Canonizing a text results in increased flexibility in its interpretation, such as the use of complex hermeneutical devices of accommodation to yield the best possible reading."

<sup>29</sup>See e.g. bT on *Il.* 18.488, ἢ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καί τ' Ὀρίωνα δοκεύει· ἅμα μὲν χαριέντως ὡς κυνηγόν, ἅμα δὲ ὅτι καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν κίνησιν αὐτῷ

from its being described as turning about in the same spot passed unnoticed. Several lines of interpretation were proposed to meet the difficulty. One, represented in the bT Scholia to the *Iliad* (the so-called "exegetical scholia"), concentrated mainly on attempts to identify patterns of language and style in Homer and other poets that would allow the noun *arktos* to stand for both Bears.<sup>30</sup> Another continued the tendency, first introduced by Crates, of understanding the Homeric *arktos* as referring to the entire arctic circle. This is neatly reflected in Strabo (1.1.6):

Accordingly, by "the Bear," which he also calls "the Wagon," and describes as watching for Orion, Homer means the "arctic circle" ... And when he says that the Bear turns about in the same spot having no share in Ocean he knows that the arctic circle is over the most northerly point of the horizon.

Obviously, as soon as *arktos* comes to represent all the circumpolar stars rather than the constellation of the Great Bear alone, the difficulty arising from its being described as revolving in the same spot disappears. A similar approach, found for example in the scholia to Aratus, was to take the Homeric counterpoising of the Bear and Orion as allegorical of the northern and the southern constellations respectively.<sup>31</sup>

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ποιείται. Cf. Eust. IV 227.7–10 van der Valk: χαριέντως εἶπεν ὁ ποιητῆς τὸ "ἢ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ' Ὀρίωνα δοκεύει," ἀληθῶς μὲν, διότι τὴν αὐτὴν ἢ ἄρκτος τῷ Ὀρίωνι ποιείται κίνησιν, ἀστείως δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὸν μῦθον, διότι δέδιεν ὡς ἄρκτος τὸν κυνηγέτην, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πρὸς τὸ τοῦ Ὀρίωνος ἀπονεύει ἄστρον. Cf. M. W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary* V (Cambridge 1993) 212–213.

<sup>30</sup>See bT, T on *Il.* 18.488. On the exegetical scholia see van der Valk (*supra* n.13) 414–535; N. Richardson, "Literary Criticism in the Exegetical Scholia to the *Iliad*: A Sketch," *CQ* 30 (1980) 265; G. Nagy, "Homeric Scholia," in I. Morris and B. Powell, edd., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997), esp. 103 n.8 and 106 n.18 (with bibliography); M. L. West (*supra* n.21) 77–78; M. Schmidt, "The Homer of the Scholia: what is explained to the reader?" In F. Montanari, ed., *Omero tremila anni dopo* (Rome 2002) 170–176.

<sup>31</sup>Martin 236–237 (MDΔUA on 322). For the distinction of northern and southern constellations, with Orion first among the southern, see Arat. *Phaen.* 319–323.

It is of course immaterial whether or not Homeric Greeks actually “knew” only the Great Bear. The only thing that matters is that Homer’s commentators were unanimous in thinking that this was indeed the case, and this is why the line in question presented a problem in their eyes. Yet, although it was only rarely that *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 was regarded as unproblematic,<sup>32</sup> ancient commentators consistently avoided casting doubt on it. A from the apologetic treatise *De Homero*, incorporated in full into the *Odyssey* scholia, seems especially illuminating in this respect:<sup>33</sup>

καὶ τὴν Ἄρκτον τὴν ἀεὶ στρεφομένην περὶ τὸν ἀειφανῆ πόλον τὸν βόρειον καὶ διὰ τὸ μετέωρον μὴ ἀπτομένην τοῦ ὀρίζοντος, ὅτι ἐν ἴσῳ χρόνῳ ὅ τε μικρότατος κύκλος, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν Ἄρκτος, καὶ ὁ μέγιστος, ἐν ᾧ Ὠρίων, στρέφεται ἐν τῇ τοῦ κόσμου περοφορᾷ.

He [Homer] also knew the Bear that always turns around the permanently visible north pole star and never passes below the horizon, because of its elevation. He knew that the smallest circle, that of the Bear, and the largest, that of Orion, turn in the revolution of the cosmos in exactly the same time.

It goes without saying that “the smallest circle, that of the Bear” could only refer to the constellation of the Little Bear, and that the phrase “he also knew the Bear that always turns around the permanently visible north pole star”<sup>34</sup> makes especially good sense if taken as alluding to Homer’s knowledge of this particular constellation. Yet, even if the author of *De Homero* did discern which of the two constellations the Homeric line actually addressed, neither he nor any other ancient commentator ever attempted to explore the implications that this conclusion might have for the text of Homer. It was by

<sup>32</sup>As e.g. in D on *Il.* 18.488, ἡ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται· ἀντὶ τοῦ περὶ τὸν αὐτὸν τόπον, ὡς μὴ καταδυομένη.

<sup>33</sup>[Plutarch] *De Homero* 106 = E on *Od.* 5.272; transl. after J. J. Keaney and R. Lamberton, *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* (Atlanta 1996).

<sup>34</sup>The reference here is to the star that a few ancient astronomers held to be near the Northern pole; see Kidd (*supra* n.1) 179–180.

validating the received text rather than by interfering with it <sup>35</sup>  
that the reception of the Homeric poems normally proceeded.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Such interpretative generosity is a typical hermeneutical attitude developed in any given society towards the canonical text. Cf. Halbertal (*supra* n.28) 29: "the degree of canonicity of a text corresponds to the amount of charity it receives in its interpretation. The more canonical a text, the more generous its treatment." See also Finkelberg and Stroumsa (*supra* n.27) 6–7.

<sup>36</sup>I am grateful to the anonymous referee and the Editor for their constructive comments.