Did Homer Nod Off? Aristotle and Homeric Problem-Solving

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1. Introduction

The Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are perhaps the most influential texts of antiquity. They were widely admired and used as a source of knowledge and teaching. Yet, already early on in history, Homer was criticized as well. He was first attacked on moral grounds. The earliest anti-Homeric voice is found in Xenophanes (6th-5th century BCE), who criticized the representation of the gods in Homer and Hesiod.¹ Similar criticism was voiced by Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 500 BCE).² The earliest defenders of Homer sought to meet these attacks by explaining the Homeric epics in an allegorical way. So the Theomachy in *Iliad* 20 and 21 was explained, for instance, as a conflict between physical elements (e.g. Hephaestus stands for fire, Poseidon stands for water, etc.) or between various conflicting states of the mind (e.g. Athena is wisdom, Ares is stupidity, Aphrodite is desire, etc.).³ The first who is known to have applied this method is Theagenes of Rhegium (sixth century BCE).⁴ This type of Homer exegesis was popular in the fifth century BCE with Metrodorus of Lampsacus the

¹ Xenoph. 21 B 11 DK = F 15 Gentili/Prato² = S.E. *M.* 9.193; Xenoph. 21 B 12 = F 16 Gentili/Prato = S.E. *M.* 1.288-289.

² Heraclit. 22 A 22 DK = Arist. *EE* 7.1.1235a, Simp. *in Cat.* 14a p. 412 Kalbfleisch and Numen. F 52 des Places = Chalc. *comm.* 297; Plu. *De Is. et Os.* 48.370d; Heraclit. 22 B 42 DK = D.L. 9.1; Heraclit. 22 B 56 = Hippol. *Haer.* 9.9.5.

³ See Porph. *ad Il.* 20.67-75 (I 240-243 Schrader ~ 240-242 MacPhail); Procl. *in R.* vol. 1 p. 91-95 Kroll. See Bernard (1990: 74-90); Richardson (1992: 316-317); Ramos Jurado (1999). See also X. *Smp.* 3, 6, where the interlocutor Niceratus is said to have learnt the 'deeper meaning' (ὁπρόνοιαι) of Homer from Stesimbrotus, Anaximander and many others.

⁴ Theagen. 8 F 2 DK = T 4 Biondi = Porph. *ad Il.* 20.67-75 (I 240-241 Schrader ~ 240 MacPhail). See Wehrli (1928: 88-91); Mosino (1961); Pfeiffer (1968: 9-11); Presta (1969); Buffière (1973: 101-105); Richardson (1975: 67-68); Pépin (1976: 97-98); Rispoli (1980); Rocca-Serra (1990); Ford (1999: 35-38); Ramelli in Ramelli - Lucchetta (2004: 53-55); Pontani (2005: 25-27); Martinho Dos Santos (2007); Domaradzki (2011); (2017); Biondi (2015); Fuentes González (2016).

Elder, who explained the *Iliad* in terms of the cosmology of his teacher Anaxagoras,⁵ and also with Democritus of Abdera.⁶

Such allegorical interpretations were explicitly rejected by Plato (*R.* 2.378d), who famously attacked Homer and Homeric ethics in the second and third books of his *Republic*. The anti-Homer trend peaked in the fourth century BCE, with the sophist Zoilus of Amphipolis, whose criticism of Homer earned him the nickname of “Homer-scourge” (Ὁμηρομάστιξ). Zoilus not only attacked Homer on moral grounds (like Xenophanes and Plato) but also criticized errors, inconsistencies and plot holes.⁷ In reply to such attacks, several writers suggested solutions for Homeric problems. The first writer known to have tackled such problems is the fifth-century BCE sophist Stesimbrotus of Thasus.⁸ Homeric problems were also treated by the Socratic Antisthenes, although it is unsure in what type of work or works Antisthenes made these comments.⁹ The most important writer on Homer in the fourth century, apart from Aristotle, was probably Heraclides Ponticus, Aristotle’s fellow student in the Academy, who wrote *Homeric Solutions* (Λύσεις Ὀμηρικαί) in two books.¹⁰

It is against this background that Aristotle, who greatly admired Homer,¹¹ wrote his work on Homeric problems. This work is variously cited as Ἀπορήματα Ὀμηρικά, Ὀμήρου ἀπορήματα, Προβλήματα Ὀμηρικά or Ὀμηρικὰ ζητήματα.¹² It seems to have originally

⁵ Metrodorus 61 F 3-6 DK. See Nestle (1907); Wehrli (1928: 92-94); Buffière (1973: 125-132); Richardson (1975: 68-70); Rocca-Serra (1990); Hammerstaedt (1998); Califf (2003); Fuentes González (2005); Martinho Dos Santos (2007).

⁶ Democr. 68 B 25 DK = Eust. *Od.* 12.65 vol. 2 p. 11 Stallbaum. See Pépin (1976: 101-103).

⁷ Zoilus *FGrHist* 71 F 1-19. His work was entitled *Against the Poetry of Homer* (Κατὰ τῆς Ὀμήρου ποιήσεως): see *FGrHist* 71 T 1 = Suid. s.v. Ζώϊλος ζ 130. See Spindler (1889), Friedländer (1895: 1-46), Apfel (1938: 250-252); Buffière (1973: 22-25); Gärtner (1978).

⁸ Stesimbr. *FGrHist* 107 F 23-25. See Buffière (1973: 132-136); Richardson (1975: 71-74).

⁹ Antisth. F 51-58 Decleva Caizzi = *SSR* V A 187-194. See Apfel (1938: 247); Decleva Caizzi (1966: 105-109); Pfeiffer (1968: 36-37); Richardson (1975: 77-81); Pépin (1976: 105-109); Rankin (1986: 175-178); Giannantoni (1990: 331-346); Döring (1998: 278-280); Navia (2001: 39-52); Pontani (2005: 28-31); Prince (2015: 584-677).

¹⁰ See D.L. 5.88 (Λύσεις Ὀμηρικαί α' β'); F 99-104 Schütrumpf. See Wehrli (1969: 121-122); Heath (2009: 255-263).

¹¹ See McGuire (1977).

¹² The title Ἀπορήματα Ὀμηρικά is found in D.L. 5.26 and *Vita Aristotelis Menagiana* n° 106 p. 86 Düring = p. 14 Rose³ = p. 27 Gigon. The variation Ὀμήρου ἀπορήματα is used in Phryn. *Eclogae* s.v. βασιλίσσαν 231 Fischer = F 179 Rose³ = F 404.1 Gigon and Antiatticista β 16 Valente, s.v. βασιλίσσα (*AB* vol. 1 p. 84) = F

comprised six books¹³ but now survives only in about forty fragments.¹⁴ Almost all of these are transmitted through Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* (Ὅμηρικὰ ζητήματα),¹⁵ which is itself preserved mainly as excerpts in the scholia on Homer.

2. Poetics 25

179 Rose³ = F 404.3 Gigon; schol. Hom. *Il.* 21.390a Erbse cites the work as Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν Ἀπορήμασιν (without Homer in the title). Προβλήματα Ὅμηρικὰ recurs in *Vita Aristotelis Menagiana* n° 147 p. 87 Düring = p. 16 Rose³ = p. 28 Gigon. Finally, Ὅμηρικὰ ζητήματα is attested in *Vita Aristotelis Marciana* 4 p. 97 Düring and *Vita Aristotelis vulgata* 3 p. 132 Düring.

¹³ See D.L. 5.26 (Ἀπορημάτων Ὅμηρικῶν α' β' γ' δ' ε' ζ') and *Vita Aristotelis Menagiana* n° 106 p. 86 Düring = p. 14 Rose³ = p. 27 Gigon (Ἀπορημάτων Ὅμηρικῶν ζ'). According to the appendix in the *Vita Aristotelis Menagiana* n° 147 p. 87 Düring = p. 16 Rose³ = p. 28 Gigon (Προβλημάτων Ὅμηρικῶν ι') and Ptolemaios al-Ġarīb n° 101 p. 439 Hein = n° 98 p. 230 Düring = n° 91 p. 22 Rose³ = n° 104 p. 45 Gigon, by contrast, the work consisted of ten books. See the discussion in Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 2).

¹⁴ The authenticity of the *Homeric Problems* was rejected by Lehrs (1833: 226-227) = (1882: 218-219), Ritter (1839: 263-266) and Rose (1863: 148-154). Lehrs' main arguments are that the solutions are supposedly unworthy of Aristotle and that the work was not known to any writer, except Porphyry. However, the close connection with chapter 25 of the *Poetics*, where similar solutions are found, refutes this skepticism. So already Heitz (1865: 267) and Vahlen (1867). Indeed, most scholars today accept the work as genuine. Moreover, apart from the *Vitae* of Aristotle, Phrynichus and Antiaticista (see n. 12), Aristotle's work on Homer is also mentioned in Str. 13.1.36 p. 598 C (Arist. F 162 Rose³ = F 402 Gigon), Plu. *De audiendis poetis* 12.32f (= Arist. F 165 Rose³ = F 403 Gigon); *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 12.1095a (not included in Rose and Gigon) and schol. Ge Hom. *Il.* 21.390a Erbse. See already Sengebusch (1855: 75). Another attestation might be Ath. 13.556d (= F 144 Rose³ = F 42 Gigon, on the reason why, unlike all the other heroes, Menelaus does not have any concubines), though it is also possible that this fragment belongs to *On Noble Birth* (Περὶ εὐγενείας, cited shortly before in Ath. 13.556a = F 93 Rose³ = F 71.2 Gigon) or the *Eroticus* (suggested by Gigon (1987: 278)). Rose (1863: 149) considered it a *quaestionum volumen ex Peripateticorum studiis philologis*. So also Schrader (1890) and Heitz (1865: 276). According to Heitz, the later expansion of the Aristotelian collection might explain the difference in reported book numbers (see n. 13).

¹⁵ There is one caveat, however: Porphyry never explicitly cites Aristotle's work by its title. For some fragments, this leaves open the possibility that they belong to another work. This is especially true for fragments that include comments on animals, which might belong to a lost zoological work. Other works are the *Constitutions* (Πολιτεῖαι) and *Barbarian Customs* (Νόμιμα βαρβαρικά), which might also be the source for a number of fragments that discuss solutions οἷα ἦν. See Heitz (1865: 275-276); (1869: 141) on Arist. F 166 Rose³ = F 389 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 24.15 (discussed below). See, however, the counterarguments of Sodano (1965: 233-235). For most of the fragments which I will discuss here, the attribution to Aristotle's *Homeric Problems* seems relatively unproblematic.

Aristotle's method is in line with his views on literary problems and their solutions set out in chapter 25 of the *Poetics*.¹⁶ Despite some problems arising from Aristotle's condensed and arcane way of expressing himself in the *Poetics*, his methodology is more or less clear. He distinguishes five types of problems: (1) impossibilities (ἀδύνατα), (2) illogical behavior (ἄλογα), (3) unethical or 'harmful' behavior (βλαβερά),¹⁷ (4) contradictions (ὑπεναντία) and (5) violations of the artistic standards (παρὰ τὴν ὀρθότητα τὴν κατὰ τέχνην).¹⁸ One of the key observations which Aristotle makes at the beginning of chapter 25 is that we should judge poetry first of all by poetic standards,¹⁹ i.e. some irrational or unethical actions in Homer can be justified if they serve the artistic purpose. This is perhaps Aristotle's strongest argument against most of the objections made by Plato and Zoilus: poetry needs to abide by its own rules (as they are discussed by Aristotle throughout the *Poetics*) and not by rules imposed from another discipline, such as ethics or biology.

The actual solutions given in the *Poetics* and applied in the *Homeric Problems* roughly fall into three categories: (1) solutions based on the method of imitation; (2) solutions involving an adequate understanding of the context in which the problem occurs; (3) solutions based on a correct understanding of the language (what we today would call 'philological' solutions). In what follows, I will discuss Aristotle's method through a selection of fragments,

¹⁶ See the discussions in Vahlen (1867: 351-391; 407-430), Carroll (1895), Gudeman (1934: 418-442), de Montmollin (1951: 99-117), Hintenlang (1961: 11-16), Lucas (1972: 232-251), Rosenmeyer (1973), Gallavotti (1974: 199-217), von Fritz (1976), Dupont-Roc - Lallot (1980: 386-404), Golden - Hardison (1981: 272-278), Halliwell (1987: 176-180), Ledda (1990), Breitenberger (2006: 371-374), Schmitt (2011: 700-723) and Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 1). One of the major cruxes is that, at the end of chapter 25, Aristotle states that there are twelve solutions to the problems discussed before, but it is unclear how the solutions discussed in *Po.* 25 can be reduced to twelve and how these twelve should be identified. For this reason, I have used my own classification of problems, based on what Aristotle says in *Poetics* 25.

¹⁷ The word βλαβερά is traditionally interpreted as harmful *to the reader*, i.e. immoral. Bouchard (2010); (2016: 294-296), however, has argued that it means harmful *to the character* who is undertaking a certain action.

¹⁸ Arist. *Po.* 25.1461b: τὰ μὲν οὖν ἐπιτιμήματα ἐκ πέντε εἰδῶν φέρουσιν· ἢ γὰρ ὡς ἀδύνατα ἢ ὡς ἄλογα ἢ ὡς βλαβερά ἢ ὡς ὑπεναντία ἢ ὡς παρὰ τὴν ὀρθότητα τὴν κατὰ τέχνην, 'The censures they bring are of five kinds: that things are either impossible, illogical, harmful, contradictory or in violation of the artistic correctness.'

¹⁹ Arist. *Po.* 25.1460b: πρὸς δὲ τοῦτοις οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ ὀρθότης ἐστὶν τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς οὐδὲ ἄλλης τέχνης καὶ ποιητικῆς, 'Moreover, the standard of what is correct is not the same in the art of poetry as it is in the art of politics or any other art.'

assess the validity of his solutions and compare them with those proposed by other ancient writers.

3. Solutions based on the method of representation

3.1. Solutions οἷα ἦν

The first type of solutions is one that is based on the poet's method of imitation (μίμησις). As Aristotle says at the beginning of chapter 25 of the *Poetics*, the poet can represent things in various ways: as they are (οἷα ἐστίν), as they were (οἷα ἦν), as they are said to be (οἷα φασιν ἢ δοκεῖ), or as they should be (οἷα εἶναι δεῖ).²⁰ First, explaining problems οἷα ἦν means interpreting them as obsolete customs: since Homer wrote a long time ago, the argument goes, the customs in the Homeric epics are obviously different from those at the time of Aristotle. So Homer should not be blamed for reporting them. An example is **F 166**, which addresses Achilles' immoral behavior when he drags Hector's corpse around Patroclus' grave (*Il.* 24.15-16).

Arist. F 166 Rose³ = F 389 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 24.15 (I 267 Schrader = 258-260

MacPhail)

διὰ τί ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς τὸν Ἑκτορα εἴλκε περὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ Πατρόκλου, παρὰ τὰ νενομισμένα ποιῶν εἰς τὸν νεκρόν; (...) ἔστι δὲ λύειν, φησὶν Ἀριστοτέλης, καὶ εἰς τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἀνάγοντα ἔθη, ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἦν, ἐπεὶ καὶ νῦν ἐν Θεσσαλίᾳ περιέλκουσι περὶ τοὺς τάφους.

Why did Achilles drag Hector around Patroclus' grave, acting on the corpse contrary to the customary rites? (...) It is possible to solve the problem, says Aristotle, by also referring to the customs which existed at that time, seeing as that is how they were. For now too in Thessaly, people drag corpses²¹ around graves.

²⁰ Arist. *Po.* 25.1460b: ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐστὶ μιμητὴς ὁ ποιητὴς ὥσπερ ἀνὴρ ζωγράφος ἢ τις ἄλλος εἰκονοποιός, ἀνάγκη μιμεῖσθαι τριῶν ὄντων τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἓν τι αἰεὶ, ἢ γὰρ οἷα ἦν ἢ ἔστιν, ἢ οἷα φασὶν καὶ δοκεῖ, ἢ οἷα εἶναι δεῖ, 'Since the poet is an imitator, like a painter or anyone else who creates images, he must always represent one of three things: either as things were or are, or as they are said and believed to be, or as they should be.'

²¹ In all likelihood, Aristotle is talking about murderers; see the fragment of Callimachus below, who names the murderers and victims explicitly (see n. 23).

This fragment probably replies, at least implicitly, to Plato, who in the *Republic* had objected to this inappropriate scene.²² Aristotle explains that Achilles' behavior is not so unusual, since that was customary at the time, a custom which is said to still exist in Thessaly. Aristotle's reference to Thessaly is no coincidence here, since Achilles came from this very region. A similar explanation recurs in Callimachus, who traces the custom back to the Thessalian Simon, whose brother had been killed by Eurydamas.²³ Whether the actual

²² Pl. *Rp.* 3.391b: τὰς τε αὖ Ἑκτορος ἔλξεις περὶ τὸ σῆμα τὸ Πατρόκλου καὶ τὰς τῶν ζωγρηθέντων σφαγὰς εἰς τὴν πυράν, σύμπαντα ταῦτα οὐ φήσομεν ἀληθῆ εἰρησθαι, 'Hector being dragged around Patroclus' grave and the captives being slaughtered on the pyre; we will say that these are all lies.'

²³ Porph. *ad Il.* 24.15-16 (I 268 Schrader) ~ schol. D Hom. *Il.* 22.398 van Thiel: διὰ τί Ἀχιλλεὺς θανόντα σύρει τὸν Ἑκτορα; (...) ὁ δὲ Καλλίμαχος φησιν, ὅτι πάτριόν ἐστι Θετταλοῖς τοὺς τῶν φιλάτων φονέας σύρειν περὶ τοὺς τῶν φονευθέντων τάφους· Σίμωνα γάρ φησι Θετταλὸν τὸ γένος Εὐρυδάμαντα τὸν Μειδίου σῦραι ἀποκτείναντα Θρασύλον τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀψάμενον τοῦ νόμου πρῶτον· τὸν γὰρ φονέα ἐξάσαι τοῦ δίφρου καὶ περὶ τὸν τοῦ τετελευτηκότος τάφον ἔλκειν, φησὶν, ὁ νόμος ἐκέλευεν. ὅθεν καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς ὡς Θετταλὸς πατρίῳ ἔθει τοῦτο πεποίηκεν, 'Why does Achilles drag Hector around? (...) Callimachus says that it is a Thessalian inherited custom to drag the murderers of loved ones around the graves of the people who were murdered. For he says that Simon, a Thessalian by birth, dragged Eurydamas, son of Meidias, around, because he had killed his brother, Thrasylos; and he was the first to start the custom. For the law dictates, he says, that he attach the murderer to his wagon and drag him around the grave of the man he had killed. For this reason, Achilles too, being a Thessalian, has acted in this way in accordance with his inherited custom'. See Procl. *in R.* 391b (I 150 Kroll): ὑπόλοιπον δὲ ἐστὶ μοι περὶ τῶν εἰς τὸν Ἑκτορα τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ πεπραγμένων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸ σῆμα ἔλξεων τοῦ Πατρόκλου, καὶ ὧν εἰς τοὺς ζωγρηθέντας ἔδρασεν ἐμβάλων εἰς τὴν πυράν, τὸν εἰκότα λόγον ἀποδοῦναι. ταῦτα γὰρ οὐκ ἀληθῆ περὶ ἀνδρὸς λέγεσθαι φησιν ὁ Σωκράτης, ὃς ἦν θεᾶς παῖς καὶ Πηλέως τοῦ σωφρονεστάτου, καὶ ἀπὸ Διὸς φύντος καὶ ὑπὸ τῷ σοφωτάτῳ Χείρωνι τεθραμμένον. εἴρηται μὲν οὖν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν παλαιῶν, ὡς Θετταλικόν τι τοιοῦτον ἔθος ἦν – καὶ ὁ Κυρηναῖος μαρτυρεῖ ποιητής· «πάλαι δ' ἔτι Θεσσαλὸς ἀνὴρ / ῥυστάζει φθιμένων ἀμφὶ τάφον φονέας» [F 588 Pfeiffer] – καὶ ὡς ταῦτα συμπληροῦντα τὴν περὶ τὸν Πάτροκλον ὁσίαν παρείληπται, 'I still need to give a reasonable explanation for what Achilles has done to Hector, for why he dragged him around Patroclus' grave and for what he did to the captives, who were thrown onto the pyre. Socrates says that these are lies told about a man who was the son of a goddess and of the self-controlled Peleus, descended from Zeus and had been brought up under the most wise Cheiron. The ancient people have also said that there was a certain Thessalian custom; the Cyrenian poet (sc. Callimachus) attests it: 'a long time ago a Thessalian man dragged the murderers around the grave of the dead'; and the ancient people have said that he did this as part of the funeral rites for Patroclus.' The fragment of Callimachus is often attributed to the *Aetia*: see Schneider (1873: 627-628), Pfeiffer (1965: 407); Asper (2004: 363); Harder (2012: 743-744). According to Heitz (1869: 141), Schneider (1873: 627) and Hintenlang (1961: 22-23), Callimachus draws on Aristotle; Sodano (1965: 236-240), however, argued against this assumption.

explanation is valid or not, it is true that corpses also get mutilated elsewhere in the *Iliad*,²⁴ so Achilles is no isolated case. Interestingly, before citing Aristotle, Porphyry gives his own, psychological motivation: Patroclus' body had been violated and dragged around when he was killed by Hector, so Achilles' behavior can be justified as a form of retaliation.²⁵ Although Aristotle prefers a historicizing explanation of the problem here, we will see further on that for other problems he also paid attention to such psychological factors (§ 4).

²⁴ See, for instance, the mutilation of Sarpedon's body (*Il.* 16.638-640).

²⁵ Porph. *ad Il.* 24.15 (I 267 Schrader = 258-260 MacPhail): ἡ παρανομοῦσι τὰ αὐτὰ οὐχ οἱ ἀμυνόμενοι ἀλλ' οἱ ἄρχοντες, ὁ δὲ Ἑκτωρ πρότερος ἐνεχείρησε λωβήσασθαι τὸν Πάτροκλον τοιαῦτα. τίς γὰρ ἡ γνώμη Ἑκτορος περὶ Πατρόκλου; «μάλιστα δὲ φαίδιμος Ἑκτωρ / ἐλκόμεναι μέμονεν· κεφαλὴν δὲ ἐ θυμὸς ἀνώγει / πῆξαι ἀνὰ σκολόπεσσι ταμόνθ' ἀπαλῆς ἀπὸ δειρῆς». εἴλκυσται τε πρότερος Πάτροκλος διὰ τὴν τῶν Τρώων περὶ τὸν νεκρὸν προθυμίαν· «ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ταύροιο βοὸς μέγαλοιο βοεῖν / λαοῖσι δοῖη τανύειν μεθύουσας ἀλοιφῇ / δεξάμενοι δ' ἄρα τοί γε διαστάντες τανύουσι / κυκλός', ἄφαρ δὲ τε ἰκμάς ἔβη, δύνει δὲ τ' ἀλοιφή, / πολλῶν ἐλκόντων, τάνυται δὲ τε πᾶσα διαπρό· / ὥς οἱ γ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα νέκυν ὀλίγη ἐνὶ χώρῃ / εἴλκον ἀμφοτέροι»· καὶ πάλιν· «Ἑκτωρ μὲν Πάτροκλον, ἐπεὶ κλυτὰ τεύχε' ἀπηύρα, / ἔλχ', ἴν' ἀπ' ὤμοιν κεφαλὴν τάμοι». ἐκείνων οὖν λευκότων τὸν νόμον, οὕτως ἐχρήσατο αὐτοῖς Ἀχιλλεύς. ὅταν γὰρ βουλόμενός τις κωλυθῇ, ἐκεῖνος μὲν πεποίηκεν, ἀλλ' ὁ πάσχων οὐδὲν πέπονθε. Πάτροκλος δὲ φθάσας περιεἴλκυσται γυμνὸς ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ διὰ πρόφασιν τῶν προθεμένων αἰκίσασθαι τὸ σῶμα, ὥστ' ἀπολαμβάνοντι ἔοικεν ὁ Ἑκτωρ ἃ δέδρακεν, οὐ μὴν πάσχοντι τὰ παράνομα. καὶ φιλανθρωπότερόν γε, ὅτι μόνον ἃ δρᾶσαι δεδύνηται πέπονθεν, οὐχ ὅσα δὲ δρᾶσαι διανοήθη, “Surely not those who defend themselves but those who start it act unlawfully. And Hector was the first to try to mutilate Patroclus in this way. For what is Hector's intention with respect to Patroclus? ‘Hector was especially eager to drag him around. His heart urged him to cut off his head from his tender neck and fix it to the palisades’ (*Il.* 18.175-177). Patroclus has first been dragged around as a result of the Trojans' effort to secure the body. ‘Like when a man allows the people to stretch the hide of a large bull, drenched with grease; when they receive it, they stand apart and stretch it in a circle; immediately moisture goes up, grease sinks in, while many are pulling it, and it is entirely stretched apart; in the same manner, on those sides, they pulled the corpse in a small spot this way and that way (*Il.* 18.389-395).’ And further: ‘When Hector took the splendid armor, he dragged Patroclus off to cut his head from his shoulders’ (*Il.* 17.125-126). So, because they violated the custom, Achilles treated them in this way. For when someone is prevented from doing what he wants, this person has undertaken an action, while the person against whom the action is directed has suffered nothing. Patroclus was the first to be dragged around on the plain, stripped of his armor, because of those who intended to violate the body. Consequently, Hector seems to get what he did to another and certainly does not seem to suffer unlawful things. It is also more humane, since he has suffered only what he had been able to do, not everything he had intended to do.’

Another example of a solution οἷα ἦν is **F 160**, which asks why in *Il.* 10.153, when Diomedes and his companions are sleeping outside their tents, their spears are stuck with their spikes in the ground. If these spears fell over, this would cause a lot of noise.

Arist. F 160 Rose³ = F 383 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 10.153 (I 145 Schrader = 284-285 MacPhail)

φαύλη δοκεῖ εἶναι ἡ τῶν δοράτων ἐπὶ σαυρωτῆρας στάσις. καὶ δὴ πανταχοῦ θόρυβον ἤδη πεποίηκε νύκτωρ ἔν μόνον πεσόν. λύει δὲ Ἀριστοτέλης λέγων ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἀεὶ ποιεῖ Ὅμηρος οἷα ἦν τότε. ἦν δὲ τοιαῦτα τὰ παλαιὰ οἷά περ καὶ νῦν ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις. πολλοὶ δὲ οὕτως χρῶνται τῶν βαρβάρων.

The placement of the spears, standing on their spear butts, looks improper²⁶. For if even a single spear falls over at night, it immediately creates a loud noise everywhere. Aristotle solves the problem by saying that Homer always represents things as they were at the time. The old customs were the same as they are now among the barbarians. Many barbarians have this custom.

Aristotle's solution is that it was a custom at the time, as is the case with barbarians of his own time. What is interesting is that in this fragment Aristotle explicitly refers to his methodological principle set out in the *Poetics*: τοιαῦτα ἀεὶ ποιεῖ Ὅμηρος, οἷα ἦν τότε, 'Homer always represents things as they were at the time.' Moreover, when discussing this type of solution in the *Poetics*, he cites this very problem as an example.²⁷ From the *Poetics*

²⁶ Carroll (1895: 32; 35) translated φαῦλος as 'poetically bad.' Sodano (1965: 229-230), however, objected to this translation, arguing that Hintenlang's translation of 'unzweckmäßig' (Hintenlang (1961: 18-19)) is better. Although Carroll's main point is that φαῦλος does not mean 'immoral' (see n. 33 and n. 35), it is true that the meaning of φαῦλος here is probably 'imprudent,' i.e. Porphyry probably means that the arrangement of the spears is bad for Diomedes and his companions rather than bad for Homer or his reader (viz. because it is bad poetry).

²⁷ Alternative solutions for this peculiar scene in Homer recorded in the scholia on Homer are that (1) these spears formed a palisade which protected Diomedes and (2) they showed that he was courageous and always ready for battle. See schol. bT Hom. *Il.* 10.152-153 Erbse: τρόπον τινὰ περιχαρακοῦντα τὸν ἡγεμόνα. φοβερόν δὲ τὸ σχῆμα καὶ κοιμωμένων, ἴσως ἐμφαίνοντος τοῦ ποιητοῦ καὶ διὰ τούτου τὸ ἀνδρεῖον Διομήδους καὶ ἔτοιμον εἰς μάχην· διὸ καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ἐξῆς φησι περὶ Θρακῶν ὡς ψέγων «ἔν τε αὖτε σφί / καλὰ παρ' αὐτοῖσιν χθονὶ κέκλιτο εἶ κατὰ κόσμον», 'in a way to protect the commander; the appearance of even sleeping people is frightening; the poet probably also shows in this way the courage of Diomedes and his readiness to battle. That is why further on he (sc. Homer) says the opposite about the Thracians, since he reproaches them by saying:

we also learn that the barbarian people mentioned in the fragment refer to the Illyrians.²⁸ Barbarians were indeed thought to preserve a primitive lifestyle resembling that of the Greeks' ancestors. This historical method, which Aristotle shares with many other historians (e.g. Thucydides²⁹), is also seen in other of his works, especially the *Constitutions*.³⁰

3.2. Solutions οἷα εἶναι δεῖ?

Let us now look at a second type of solution based on the type of *mimesis*. As we have seen, Aristotle explains that a poet can represent things not only 'as they are or were,' but also 'as they should be' and 'as they are said to be.' Representing things 'as they should be' (οἷα εἶναι δεῖ) actually poses no real problems. This type is mentioned only briefly in chapter 25 of the *Poetics*, where Aristotle explains the issue by comparing Sophocles with Euripides: Sophocles portrays people as they should be (so idealistically), whereas Euripides shows people as they are (so realistically).³¹ Solutions of this kind do not recur in the fragments of the *Homeric Problems*; the reason for this is probably that idealized representations were no major problem for the Homer critics who came before Aristotle.³² As I have said in the introduction, early critics mainly censured passages in Homer which they deemed

'their splendid weapons were lying on the ground neatly beside them' (*Il.* 10.471-472).' The scholiast compares the scene with Diomedes and Odysseus' sneak attack on the sleeping Thracians, whose weapons are lying on the ground. The same explanation recurs in Eust. *Il.* 10.150-156, vol. 3 p. 33 van der Valk.

²⁸ Arist. *Po.* 25.1461a: τὰ δὲ ἴσως οὐ βέλτιον μὲν, ἀλλ' οὕτως εἶχεν, οἷον τὰ περὶ τῶν ὅπλων, «ἐγχεα δὲ σφιν / ὄρθ' ἐπὶ σαυρωτῆρος»· οὕτω γὰρ τότ' ἐνόμιζον, ὥσπερ καὶ νῦν Ἰλλυριοί, 'Other cases are perhaps inappropriate but such was the fact, e.g. the case of the arms, 'their spears driven into the ground, on their spear butts' (*Il.* 10.152-153). For that was the custom at that time, as the Illyrians now do too.'

²⁹ See Th. 1.6.6: πολλὰ δ' ἂν καὶ ἄλλα τις ἀποδείξειε τὸ παλαιὸν Ἑλληνικὸν ὁμοιότροπα τῷ νῦν βαρβαρικῷ διαιτώμενον, 'one could demonstrate that in many other respects ancient Greece lived in a way similar to the barbarians today.'

³⁰ See Huxley (1972).

³¹ Arist. *Po.* 25.1460b: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἐὰν ἐπιτιμᾶται ὅτι οὐκ ἀληθῆ, ἀλλ' ἴσως <ὡς> δεῖ, οἷον καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἷους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἰσὶν, ταύτη λυτέον, 'Next, if the charge is that something is not true, perhaps it is as it should be, just as Sophocles said that he portrayed people as they should be and Euripides portrayed them as they are. That way this problem can be solved.'

³² See Hintenlang (1961: 52).

inappropriate or immoral. Unrealistically positive depictions in Homer would have actually been applauded by people like Plato.³³

3.3. Solutions οἷά φασιν ἢ δοκεῖ

The third mimetic solution, explaining things ‘as they are said or believed to be,’ is more relevant for Homeric problem-solving. This argument acknowledges that Homer is first of all a storyteller of traditional myths. So if the myth itself contains unlikely or immoral elements, we should not fault Homer for merely following the story. This is indeed the key solution for the objections made by previous philosophers against Homer’s representation of the gods. Unsurprisingly, it is exactly this problem that Aristotle cites as an example in the *Poetics*, with explicit reference to Xenophanes’ criticism.³⁴ The actual corpus of fragments, however, has not preserved many of these solutions, though this may be the result of Porphyry’s own selection criteria. One example is **F 163**, which deals with the story in *Il.* 19.91-124 of how Zeus was once deceived by Hera.

Arist. F 163 Rose³ = F 387 Gigon = schol. A Hom. *Il.* 19.108b Erbse = Porph. *ad Il.* 19.108 (I 235-236 Schrader = 232-234 MacPhail)

διὰ τί ἡ Ἥρα ὁμόσαι προάγει τὸν Δία; ἢ δῆλον ὡς οὐ ποιοῦντα ἂν ἦν φῆ. εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, διὰ τί οὐ κατανεῦσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁμόσαι ἠξίωσεν, ὡς καὶ ψευδομένου, ἂν μὴ ὁμόση; ὁ δὲ ποιητής φησιν ἀληθεύειν «ὅτι κεν κεφαλῇ κατανεύση». τὸ μὲν οὖν ὅλον μυθῶδες, καὶ γὰρ οὐδ’ ἂν ἐαυτοῦ ταῦτά φησιν Ὅμηρος, οὐδὲ γινόμενα εἰσάγει, ἀλλ’ ὡς διαδεδομένων περὶ τὴν Ἡρακλέους γένεσιν μέμνηται. ῥητέον δὲ ὅτι καὶ ὁ μῦθος εἰκότως εἰσάγει τὴν Ἥραν ὀρκοῦσαν τὸν Δία. πάντες γὰρ περὶ ὧν ἂν φοβῶνται μὴ ἄλλως ἀποβῆ, πολλὸν τῷ ἀσφαλεῖ προέχειν πειρῶνται. διὸ καὶ ἡ Ἥρα, ἅτε οὐ περὶ μικρῶν ἀγωνιζομένη, καὶ τὸν Δία εἰδυῖα ὅτι αἰσθόμενος τὸν Ἡρακλέα δουλεύοντα ὑπεραγανακτήσει, τῇ ἰσχυροτάτῃ ἀνάγκῃ κατέλαβεν αὐτόν. οὕτως Ἀριστοτέλης.

³³ According to Carroll (1895: 30), Aristotle means ideal representations “in the aesthetic, not in the moral sense.” See also n. 35 below. However, the reference to Sophocles and Euripides makes little sense if Aristotle is merely talking about what is ideal from an artistic viewpoint.

³⁴ Arist. *Po.* 25.1460b: εἰ δὲ μηδετέρως, ὅτι οὕτω φασίν, οἷον τὰ περὶ θεῶν· ἴσως γὰρ οὔτε βέλτιον οὕτω λέγειν οὔτ’ ἀληθῆ, ἀλλ’ εἰ ἔτυχεν ὥσπερ Ξενοφάνει· ἀλλ’ οὖν φασι, ‘If neither of these solutions (sc. the portrayal of people as they are or as they should be) will do, then the solution is that such is the tale; for instance, the tales about gods. It is perhaps inappropriate to say it like this, or untrue, but if it was as Xenophanes thought, the reply is: yet such is the tale.’

Why does Hera urge Zeus to swear an oath? Maybe he clearly is not doing what he says. But if that is the case, why was she not satisfied with a nod but demanded an oath, as if he is lying, if he does not swear an oath? The poet said that “whatever he assents to with a nod of his head” comes true. Well, the entire thing is part of the myth. For indeed Homer does not say this on his own account, nor does he introduce what happens, but he mentions it as a traditional story about the birth of Heracles. One must say that it is logical that the story presents Hera as binding Zeus with an oath. For everyone tries to secure those things safely beforehand which they fear may turn out otherwise. Therefore, since Hera was not fighting over trifle matters and knew that when Zeus saw Heracles living as a slave, he would be extremely vexed, she too bound him by the strongest restraint. So Aristotle.

According to the famous myth, Hera tricked Zeus into swearing an oath that a child that would be born that same day would rule over the humans; with the help of the goddess of birth, Eileithyia, she managed to delay the birth of Heracles, thus making sure that Eurystheus would be born before him and become ruler among the humans. The problem here is why Hera demands an oath, whereas elsewhere in the *Iliad* it suffices for Zeus to nod when he makes a promise. Aristotle’s solution is that the oath was simply part of the traditional myth and not Homer’s own creation (τὸ μὲν οὖν ὅλον μυθῶδες and ὡς διαδεδομένων περὶ τὴν Ἡρακλέους γένεσιν μέμνηται). To this he also adds a psychological justification of Hera’s behavior: it is natural (εἰκότως) to want the other person to swear an oath if important matters are at stake. Hera logically goes for the strongest form of restraint.

4. Solutions based on the context in Homer

Another way of solving Homeric problems is by assessing the context in which the Homeric problem is found. Unlike previous critics, Aristotle looks at the greater picture and the underlying psychological motivations of the characters. As he says in chapter 25 of the *Poetics*, the reader needs to ask who acted or spoke, to whom they spoke, at what point they did this, for whom and for what purpose.³⁵ An example is **F 156**.

³⁵ Arist. *Po.* 25.1461a: περὶ δὲ τοῦ καλῶς ἢ μὴ καλῶς εἰ εἰρηταιῖ τινη ἢ πέπρακται, οὐ μόνον σκεπτέον εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ πεπραγμένον ἢ εἰρημένον βλέποντα εἰ σπουδαῖον ἢ φαῦλον, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὸν πράττοντα ἢ λέγοντα πρὸς ὃν ἢ ὅτε ἢ ὅτῳ ἢ οὗ ἔνεκεν, οἷον εἰ μείζονος ἀγαθοῦ, ἵνα γένηται, ἢ μείζονος κακοῦ, ἵνα ἀπογένῃται, ‘As to the question whether anyone has said or done anything in a good or bad way: one must not only check this by

Arist. F 156 Rose³ = F 380 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 7.93 (I 107-108 Schrader)

διὰ τί προκαλουμένου Ἑκτορος εἰς μονομαχίαν οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι ἄριστοι «αἰδέσθην μὲν ἀνήνασθαι, δεῖσαν δ' ὑποδέχθαι», Μενέλαος δὲ πρῶτος ἀνίσταται καὶ μεμψάμενος τοὺς ἄλλους «κατεδύσατο τεύχεα καλά», μάχεσθαι προθυμούμενος, ὅτε δὲ προτραπέντες οἱ ἐννέα ἀνίσταντο, οὐδαμοῦ οὗτος ἐν τούτοις εὐρίσκεται, ἀλλ' Ἀγαμέμνων καὶ Διομήδης καὶ οἱ Αἴαντες καὶ Ἰδομενεὺς καὶ Μηριόνης καὶ Εὐρύπυλος καὶ Θόας καὶ Ὀδυσσεύς; φησὶ δὲ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, ὅτι ἅπαξ ἀκούσας «μηδ' ἔθελ' ἐξ ἔριδος σεῦ ἀμείνωνι φωτὶ μάχεσθαι Ἑκτορι» οὐκ ἔμελλεν αὐθις ἀνίστασθαι, καὶ ὅτι τὸ πρότερον ἐκ φιλονεικίας ἢ ἀνάστασις, καὶ ὅτι ἤδη μονομαχήσας ἐτύγχανεν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ οὐ καλῶς ἀπαλλάξας, καὶ νωστὶ ἐτέτρωτο ὑπὸ Πανδάρου, καὶ ὅτι ἀποκινδυνεύειν τοῦτον οὐκ ἔχρην ἐν ᾧ τὸ τέλος ἥρτητο τοῦ πολέμου· ἐπὶ γὰρ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἴσον ἦν τὸ τοῦ κινδύνου.

Why, when Hector challenges them to a duel, are the rest of the heroes 'ashamed to decline but scared to accept' (*Il.* 7.93), whereas Menelaos is the first to stand up and reprehend the others and 'put on his splendid armor' (*Il.* 7.103), ready to fight. Yet when the nine heroes, urged on (by Nestor), stand up, he is nowhere to be found among them; instead, the heroes are Agamemnon, Diomedes, the Ajaxes, Idomeneus, Meriones, Eurypylus, Thoas and Odysseus. Aristotle says that, once he had heard 'do not wish to fight Hector out of strife, a man who is stronger than you' (*Il.* 7.111), he did not intend to stand up again. Also, he initially stood up out of strife. And he had already fought a duel with Alexander, without success, and had recently been wounded by Pandarus. Moreover, he should not take the risk in a battle in which the purpose of the war was at stake. For in the battle with Alexander, the purpose of the risk had been the same.

When Hector challenges the Achaeans to a one-on-one battle in *Iliad* 7, Menelaus reproaches the other heroes for not accepting it and volunteers himself (*Il.* 7.92-103), but Agamemnon

looking at what has been done or said, asking whether this is noble or base, but also by looking at the man who did or said it, to whom he did or said it, when, for whom and for what purpose; for example, in order to secure a greater good or to avoid a greater evil.' Traditionally, καλῶς ἢ μὴ καλῶς is interpreted as 'morally good or bad': see Vahlen (1867: 361-362); Gudeman (1934: 428); Hintenlang (1961: 14-15 with n. 2); Lucas (1972: 240); Gallavotti (1974: 202); Golden - Hardison (1981: 276); Breitenberger (2006: 373); Schmitt (2011: 704-705; 715). According to Carroll (1895: 33-40), however, Aristotle means good from an aesthetic and not from a moral viewpoint. So also de Montmollin (1951: 107). It is indeed true that looking at the context is not only the solution for moral problems. However, most scholars do not agree with Carroll: see e.g. Sodano (1965: 230).

holds him back. After Nestor's subsequent speech, nine heroes step forward to accept the challenge, but Menelaus is not among them (*Il.* 7.161-168). This makes him come across as a total hypocrite. Aristotle considers various explanations. First, Menelaus was deterred from stepping forth a second time because, when Agamemnon held him back, he had said that he was no match for Hector (*Il.* 7.111). Another solution is that Menelaus' first reaction was merely an emotional one, induced by φιλονεικία. Aristotle also considers the circumstances preceding Hector's challenge: Menelaus had already fought a duel with Paris without much success (*Il.* 3.340-382) and had recently been wounded by Pandarus (*Il.* 4.139-147). So he was certainly in no shape to fight Hector. Finally, Aristotle points out that, if Menelaus were to fight, the whole purpose of the expedition would be at stake: the Greeks had come to Troy to get Helen back for him, so if he died, the war would be over. In the duel with Paris, by contrast, the risk had been the same on either side.

Looking at the context, especially at the person speaking, is also Aristotle's way of solving some of the blatant "factual" contradictions in Homer. A nice example is **F 146**, which asks why in the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.649) Crete is said to have a hundred cities (ἐκατόπολεις), whereas in the fictitious tale told by Odysseus to Penelope (*Od.* 19.173) Crete is said to have ninety cities (ἐννήκοντα πόλεις).

Arist. F 146 Rose³ = F 370 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.649 (I 48-49 Schrader = 68 MacPhail)
 διὰ τί ἐνταῦθα μὲν πεποίηκεν «ἄλλοι θ' οἱ Κρήτην ἐκατόπολιν ἀμφενέμοντο», ἐν δὲ Ὀδυσσεΐα εἰπὼν ὅτι ἔστιν ἡ Κρήτη καλὴ καὶ πείρα καὶ περίρρυτος, ἐπάγει· «ἐν δ' ἄνθρωποι / πολλοὶ ἀπειρέσιοι καὶ ἐννήκοντα πόλεις»; τὸ γὰρ ποτὲ μὲν ἐνενήκοντα ποτὲ δὲ ἑκατὸν λέγειν δοκεῖ ἐναντίον εἶναι. (...) Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ οὐκ ἄτοπὸν φησιν, εἰ μὴ πάντες τὰ αὐτὰ λέγοντες πεποίηται αὐτῷ· οὕτως γὰρ καὶ ἀλλήλοις τὰ αὐτὰ παντελῶς λέγειν ὄφειλον.

Why has he written here 'and others who were dwelling around Crete of a hundred cities' (*Il.* 2.649), while in the *Odyssey*, after saying that Crete is beautiful, rich and surrounded with water, he adds: 'in it are many countless men and ninety cities' (*Od.* 19.173)? For the fact that he at one point says ninety but at another one hundred seems to be contradictory. (...) Aristotle says that it is not illogical if he does not depict everyone saying the same. For in this way they should have said the same things as one another altogether.

Nowadays we usually just accept these types of contradictions in Homer as being inherent to the originally oral transmission of the epics. However, ancient critics went out of their way to try and make sense of these inconsistencies. Aristotle's solution is that these lines are spoken by two different people: Homer himself in the Catalogue of Ships and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.³⁶ As long as it is not the same person speaking, such contradictions are therefore allowed.³⁷ This also agrees with what Aristotle says in *Poetics* 25, viz. that we must check whether the same person is speaking with regard to the same things.³⁸

Porphyry next adds two further observations.³⁹ First, 'a hundred' in the Catalogue of Ships might be a metaphor for 'many.' This metaphorical explanation was also used by the

³⁶ According to Breitenberger (2006: 383-384), πάντες in εἰ μὴ πάντες τὰ αὐτὰ λέγοντες πεποιήνται αὐτῷ implies that Aristotle is talking about different characters, which excludes the narrator. From this she concluded that the two passages quoted here (I 48.25-29 Schrader and I 49.7-13 Schrader) do not form one fragment. However, the slight inconsistency might also belong to Aristotle. Incidentally, according to Bouchard (2016: 254), αὐτῷ is not the agent of the perfect passive πεποιήνται ('if they are not all depicted *by him* as saying the same things') but a dative of comparison governed by τὰ αὐτὰ ('if they are not all depicted as saying the same things *as he*'). If Bouchard is correct, this makes Breitenberger's argument invalid. Bouchard preferred this interpretation, since the subsequent sentence ('For in this way they should have said the same things as one another altogether') would otherwise be redundant. Note, however, that such redundant sentences are common in Ancient Greek.

³⁷ Ammendola (1907: 25) inaccurately translated the fragment as 'non c'era nulla di strano in quella doppia denominazione di Creta, perchè così conveniva che fosse chiamata' and erroneously concluded that Aristotle agreed with Heraclides.

³⁸ Arist. *Po.* 25.1461b: τὰ δ' ὑπεναντίως εἰρημένα οὕτω σκοπεῖν ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἔλεγχαι εἰ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως, ὥστε καὶ αὐτὸν ἢ πρὸς ἃ αὐτὸς λέγει ἢ ὃ ἄν φρόνιμος ὑποθῇται, 'Contradictory statements need to be examined in the same way as refutations in the arguments, viz. whether it is the same thing, with respect to the same thing and in the same way, so that he contradicts either what he himself says or what an intelligent person would suppose.' The same principle is explicitly mentioned in Porph. *ad Il.* 6.265 (I 100 Schrader = 116 MacPhail): οὐδὲν δὲ θαυμαστὸν εἰ παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ ἐναντία λέγεται ὑπὸ διαφόρων φωνῶν. ὅσα μὲν γὰρ ἔφη αὐτὸς ἅφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐξ ἰδίου προσώπου, ταῦτα δεῖ ἀκόλουθα εἶναι καὶ μὴ ἐναντία ἀλλήλοις· ὅσα δὲ πρόποις περιτίθῃσιν, οὐκ αὐτοῦ εἰσιν ἀλλὰ τῶν λεγόντων νοεῖται, ὅθεν καὶ ἐπιδέχεται πολλάκις διαφωνίαν, 'It is not at all surprising if contradictory statements are given in the poet by different characters. For everything that he said himself from his own persona must be consistent and must not contradict each other; but everything that he attributes to characters are not his own words but are considered words of the people speaking them. By consequence, he often allows discrepancies.'

³⁹ Porph. *ad Il.* 2.649 (I 49 Schrader = 68 MacPhail): μήποτε δὲ καὶ μεταφορά ἐστὶ τὰ ἑκατόν· πολὺ γάρ τι ἐστὶ τὰ ἑκατόν, ὥς ἐκ «τῆς ἑκατόν θύσανοι». οὐ γὰρ ἑκατόν ἦσαν ἀριθμῶ· καὶ «ἑκατόν δέ τε δούρατ' ἀμάξης».

Alexandrian grammarians to refute the so-called Chorizontes or Separators, who used such contradictions between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in order to prove that these were written by two different poets.⁴⁰ Porphyry's second argument is more convoluted, however: he argues that, technically, Homer does not say that Crete has *only* ninety cities, i.e. saying that there are ninety cities does not exclude the possibility of there being a hundred cities.

ἔπειτα οὐδαμοῦ λέγει ὡς ἐνενήκοντα μόναι εἰσίν· ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑκατόν καὶ ἐνενήκοντα, ‘But perhaps a hundred is also a metaphor. A hundred is a large number, as in ‘a hundred tassels were suspended from it’ (*Il.* 2.448). For they were not a hundred in number; and ‘a hundred are the beams of a wagon’ (*Hes. Op.* 456). Moreover, he nowhere says that there are only ninety; ninety are part of a hundred.’ According to Römer (1884: 287), Ammendola (1907: 25), Hintenlang (1961: 67-69), Breitenberger (2006: 384) and Heath (2009), these two explanations go back to Aristotle; Sodano (1974: 23; 26-28) attributed only the metaphorical explanation to Aristotle but excluded the second one. The two additional explanations were omitted, however, by Rose (1863: 157); (1870: 1502); (1886: 123) and Heitz (1869: 132-133). What speaks against the attribution of Porphyry's additional explanations is that they are introduced by μήποτε ‘but perhaps’; elsewhere in Porphyry, this usually introduces the last solution, which seems to be Porphyry's own: see Porph. *Zetemata Vaticana* 10 = *ad Il.* 21.362sq. (I 252 col. 1.2 ~ I 251 col. 2. 25 Schrader = 55 col. 1.4 ~ col. 2.1-2 Sodano) (μήποτ’ οὖν, etc.); *ad Il.* 2.447 (I 44.32 Schrader) (καὶ μήποτε πάλιν ῥητέον ὅτι, etc.); *ad Il.* 3.98sq. (I 54.12 Schrader) (ῥητέον οὖν ὅτι μήποτε, etc.); *ad Il.* 6.200-201 (I 95.6;10 Schrader) (ἢ μήποτε... μήποτ’ οὖν, ὡς φαμεν, etc.); *ad Il.* 12.10-12 (I 172.20 Schrader = 192.13 MacPhail); *ad Il.* 12.127-132 (I 177.35 Schrader = 200.8 MacPhail) (μήποτε δὲ, etc.); *ad Il.* 14.200 (I 191.25-26 Schrader = 214.37 MacPhail) (μήποτε δὲ καὶ, etc.); *ad Il.* 14.304-306 (I 197.19 Schrader) = 14.423-424 (220.10 MacPhail) (μήποτε δὲ, etc.); *ad Il.* 19.221 (I 237.26 Schrader = 236.17 MacPhail); *ad Il.* 20.329 (I 248.10-11 Schrader = 288.3 MacPhail) (μήποτε δὲ καὶ, etc.); *ad Od.* 1.1 (II 1.12 Schrader) = schol. Hom. *Od.* 1.111 Pontani (μήποτε οὖν, etc.); *ad Od.* 5.334-337 (II 57.6 Schrader) = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334e Pontani (μήποτε δὲ, etc.); *ad Od.* 9.25-26 (I 82.16-83.1 Schrader) (μήποτε δὲ, etc.); *ad Od.* 16.188 (II 122.18 Schrader) (μήποτε δ’, etc.). See MacPhail Jr. (2011: 7 with n. 60); Bouchard (2016: 254). An exception is Porph. *ad Il.* 2.305-329 (I 33.10 Schrader = 44.9 MacPhail).

⁴⁰ See schol. A Hom. *Il.* 2.649 Erbse: πρὸς τοὺς Χωρίζοντας, ὅτι νῦν μὲν ἑκατόμπολιν τὴν Κρήτην, ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐᾳ δὲ ἐνενηκοντάπολιν. ἦτοι οὖν ἑκατόμπολιν ἀντὶ τοῦ πολύπολιν, ἢ ἐπὶ τὸν σύνεγγυς καὶ ἀπαρτίζοντα ἀριθμὸν κατενήνεκται νῦν, ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐᾳ δὲ τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐξενήνοχεν, ὡς παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ. τινὲς δὲ φασὶ ᾠπυλαιμένην τὸν Λακεδαιμόνιον δεκάπολιν κτίσαι, ‘Against the Separators, who objected that on this occasion he calls Crete ‘of a hundred cities,’ but in the *Odyssey* ‘of ninety cities.’ Well, either he uses ‘of a hundred cities’ in the sense of ‘of many cities,’ or he has rounded it up to the closest number here but, in the *Odyssey*, has given the exact one, as is the case in Sophocles (F 899 Radt). Some people claim that Pylaemenes founded the Spartan decapolis.’ The alternative solution reported in the *Viermännerkommentar* is that ninety is the correct number, whereas a hundred is a rounded number, or that a decapolis was later founded by ‘Pylaemenes’ (probably an error for Althaemenes, as the name is found in Ephorus).

Other writers, by contrast, tried to defend *both* numbers as being correct. Heraclides Ponticus, whose work of *Homeric Solutions* I mentioned at the beginning, is one of these. He claims that there were originally a hundred cities, but, after the fall of Troy, Idomeneus and his men destroyed ten of these;⁴¹ so by the time Odysseus returned to Ithaca, he had heard of the event and “updated” the number. Another writer who proposed a solution similar to that of Heraclides is the historian Ephorus, who claimed that, after the Trojan War, a decapolis was founded, which increased the number of cities from ninety to a hundred.⁴²

⁴¹ Heraclid. Pont. F 99 Schütrumpf = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.649 (I 48-49 Schrader = 68 MacPhail): Ἡρακλείδης μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλοι λύειν ἐπεχείρουν οὕτως· ἐπεὶ γὰρ μυθεύεται τοὺς μετ’ Ἰδομενέως ἀπὸ Τροίας ἀποπλεύσαντας πορθησάιν Λύκτον καὶ τὰς ἐγγύς πόλεις, αἷς ἔχων Λεύκων ὁ Τάλῳ πόλεμον ἐξήνεγκε τοῖς ἐκ Τροίας ἐλθοῦσιν, εἰκότως ἂν φαίνοιτο μᾶλλον τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἢ ἀκρίβεια ἢ ἐναντιολογία τις. οἱ μὲν γὰρ εἰς Τροίαν ἐλθόντες ἐξ ἑκατὸν ἦσαν πόλεων, τοῦ δὲ Ὀδυσσεὺς εἰς οἶκον ἦκοντος ἔτει δεκάτῳ μετὰ Τροίας ἄλῳσιν καὶ φήμης διηκούσης, ὅτι πεπόρηνται δέκα πόλεις ἐν Κρήτῃ καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶ πῶς συνωκισμέναι, μετὰ λόγου φαίνοιντ’ ἂν Ὀδυσσεὺς λέγων ἐνενηκοντάπολιν τὴν Κρήτην. ὥστε, εἰ καὶ μὴ τὰ αὐτὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν λέγει, οὐ μέντοι διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ψεύδεται, ‘Now then, Heraclides and others attempted to solve it in the following way: since it is said that, after sailing away from Troy, Idomeneus and his men sacked Lyctus and the nearby cities which had been in the possession of Leucon, the son of Talos, who brought war on them as they came from Troy, this would actually be an indication of the accuracy of the poet rather than a contradiction. For those who had gone to Troy had come from a hundred cities, but while Odysseus was returning home in the tenth year after the capture of Troy and a rumor was circulating that ten cities in Crete had been sacked and were not inhabited in any way, Odysseus would obviously call Crete ‘of ninety cities’ with good reason. Consequently, although the poet does not say the same things about the same people (or: ‘in reference to the same thing’), he nonetheless does not lie because of it.’ Interestingly, the last sentence echoes Aristotle’s words ‘it is not illogical if Homer does not depict everyone saying the same’ (οὐκ ἄτοπόν φησιν, εἰ μὴ πάντες τὰ αὐτὰ λέγοντες πεποιήνται αὐτῷ). However, this comment at the end of Heraclides’ fragment (which Porphyry cites right before Aristotle’s solution) might also be Porphyry’s own conclusion. Whatever the case is, the two philosophers obviously disagreed here about how to solve the contradiction in Homer.

⁴² Ephor. *FGrHist* 70 F 146 = Str. 10.4.15: τοῦ δὲ ποιητοῦ τὸ μὲν ἑκατόμπολιν λέγοντος τὴν Κρήτην, τὸ δὲ ἐνενηκοντάπολιν, Ἐφορος μὲν ὕστερον ἐπικτισθῆναι τὰς δέκα φησὶ μετὰ τὰ Τρωϊκὰ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀλθαίμενει τῷ Ἀργεῖῳ συνακολουθησάντων Δωριέων· τὸν μὲν οὖν Ὀδυσσεὺς λέγει ἐνενηκοντάπολιν ὀνομάσαι. οὗτος μὲν οὖν πιθανός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος. ἄλλοι δ’ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰδομενέως ἐχθρῶν κατασκαφῆναι φασὶ τὰς δέκα, ‘Since the poet says that Crete has a hundred cities in one passage and ninety in another, Ephorus states that the additional ten were founded later after the Trojan War by the Dorians who came with Althaemenes of Argos. And he notes that Odysseus calls Crete ‘of ninety cities.’ This is a plausible explanation. Others, however, claim that the ten cities were sacked by the enemies of Idomeneus.’ The second explanation reported by Strabo (ἄλλοι) is that of Heraclides.

Disagreement with Heraclides is also seen in **F 147**, which deals with the Teichoscopy in *Iliad* 3.

Arist. F 147 Rose³ = F 371 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 3.236 (I 58 Schrader)

διὰ τί τὴν Ἑλένην πεποίηκεν ἀγνοοῦσαν περὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὅτι οὐ παρῆσαν, δεκαετοῦς τοῦ πολέμου ὄντος καὶ αἰχμαλώτων πολλῶν γινομένων; ἄλογον γάρ. ἔτι δὲ καὶ εἰ ἡγνόει, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦν ἀναγκαῖον μνησθῆναι τούτων οὐκ ἐρωτηθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ Πριάμου περὶ αὐτῶν· οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸς τὴν ποίησιν πρὸ ἔργου ἦν ἡ τούτων μνήμη. φησὶ μὲν οὖν Ἀριστοτέλης· ἴσως ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐντυγχάνειν ἐφυλάττετο τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις. ἢ ὅπως τὸ ἦθος βελτίων φανῇ καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονοίη, οὐδὲ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ᾗδει ὅπου εἰσί.

Why has he portrayed Helen as being unaware that her brothers are not present, even though the war was in its tenth year and many prisoners were held captive? That is illogical. Moreover, even if she was unaware of their fate, there was no need to mention them, since Priam had not asked her about them. Mentioning them was not relevant from an artistic viewpoint either. Aristotle says: perhaps she was prevented by Alexander from meeting the prisoners. Or maybe she did not even know where her brothers were so that her character might appear better and she would not come across as meddling.

When Helen is describing the Achaean heroes (*Il.* 3.236), she says to Priam at a certain point that she cannot see her brothers (Castor and Pollux) and speculates that they either never joined the expedition or are not showing themselves in battle out of shame for her, showing herself unaware that they are actually already dead and buried in Sparta. The problem is that, since the war had already been going on for over nine years, you would expect her to know about her brothers' absence by that time.

Let us first look at Heraclides' solution, which (like Aristotle's) is reported by Porphyry.⁴³ He suggests that the Greek army had split up to attack other cities in the vicinity. Since not

⁴³ Heraclid. Pont. F 100 Schütrumpf = Porph. *ad Il.* 3.236 (I 59 Schrader): ἀπίθανον εἶναι δοκεῖ, ἐννέα ἐτῶν διελθόντων τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐν Ἰλίῳ, μηδένα τῶν βαρβάρων ἀπαγγεῖλαι τῇ Ἑλένῃ περὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, εἴτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀφίκοντο εἰς τὸν πόλεμον εἴτε ὅλως οὐκ ἦλθον εἰς Τροίαν, ἢ ἐλθόντες οὐκ ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὴν μάχην· οὐ γὰρ ἐνῆν τοιοῦτους ὄντας μὴ οὐχ ὑπὸ πάντων γινώσκεσθαι παρόντας εἰς τὴν Τροίαν. λέγει δὲ Ἡρακλείδης, ὅτι ἄλογον ἦν ὄντως τοῦτο, εἰ διατελεσάντων ἐν τῇ Τροίᾳ πάντων Ἑλλήνων ἐννέα ἔτη μηδὲν περὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἔσχεν Ἑλένη λέγειν· εἰ δὲ οὐ πάντες ἦσαν οἱ στρατεύσαντες ἐν Τροίᾳ, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν περὶ Λέσβον καὶ τὰς ἄλλας

all Greek heroes were present in Troy, it was therefore impossible for the Trojans to know which heroes had joined the expedition. Porphyry also reports another solution immediately after this, which he may have taken from Heraclides as well: since the Trojans were unsure whether Helen's brothers were alive or dead, they kept her out of the loop and never reported any news.⁴⁴ This point gets a surprisingly Aristotelian twist since it is said that barbarians are typically reluctant to report bad news to their rulers, a custom still observed to this day. Both explanations assume that news can only reach Helen through Trojans, who either did not know it themselves or were unwilling to give the information.

Aristotle, by contrast, points out that the Trojans also had Greek prisoners, which undermines Heraclides' whole argument.⁴⁵ However, Aristotle's own solution is no less contrived than that of Heraclides. He gratuitously assumes that Paris made sure to keep the prisoners away from Helen. Yet, Aristotle also adds an explanation based on Helen's character: portraying Helen as being unaware of her brothers' fate shows that she does not

νήσους, ἃς οἱ Κῆρες εἶχον, ἐπόρθουν, πόλεις δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ ἡπείρῳ, οὐδὲν ἦδει εἰ ἐστράτευσαν ἢ οὐ, 'It seems to be implausible that, after nine years had gone by for the Greeks in Troy, not one of the barbarians had reported to Helen about her brothers, whether they had also come to the war or had not come to Troy at all, or had come but did not go into the battle. For it was not possible that men of such a stature would not be recognized by everybody, if they had come to Troy. Heraclides says that this really was illogical, if, since all the Greeks had spent nine years in Troy, Helen was not able to say anything about her brothers. But if not all those who had joined the expedition were present in Troy, but some were besieging the area of Lesbos and the other islands, which the Carians occupied, while others were attacking the cities in the west, she did not know whether or not they had joined the expedition.'

⁴⁴ Porph. *ad Il.* 3.236 (I 59 Schrader): πιθανώτερον δὲ προσθεῖναι, ὅτι ἡφανισμένων τοῦ Κάστορος καὶ τοῦ Πολυδεύκου καὶ δοκούντων τεθνάναι, διὰ τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὸ συμβεβηκός, μήτε ὅτι ἐτεθνήκεσαν μήτε εἰ ἐτι εἰσίν, οὐκ ἀνηγγέλλετο τῇ Ἑλένῃ περὶ αὐτῶν. οὐδὲ γὰρ τὰ δυσχερῆ οἱ βάρβαροι τοῖς δυνάσταις πάντα εἰσὶν εἰθισμένοι ἀπαγγέλλειν. καὶ τούτου πολλὰ παραδείγματα λέγειν ἔστιν· ἐτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν χρῶνται τῷ ἔθει. οὐδὲν οὖν ἐκώλυεν ἀμφιδοξεῖν περὶ αὐτῶν τὴν Ἑλένην, 'It is more trustworthy to add that, when Castor and Pollux had disappeared and were believed to be dead, people did not report any news to Helen about them, seeing as they did not know what had happened to the men, neither that they were dead nor whether they were still alive. For barbarians are used to not reporting bad news to their rulers. It is possible to cite many examples of this. It is now too their custom. So nothing prevented Helen from being in doubt about them.'

⁴⁵ This interpretation also recurs in schol. bT Hom. *Il.* 3.236a Erbse (ἡγνόει δὲ τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν, ἴσως μὴ συγχωρουμένη συντυγχάνειν τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις, 'she did not know about them, probably since she was not allowed to meet the prisoners'). As Scodel (1999: 182) pointed out, however, only Trojan prisoners are mentioned in the *Iliad* but no Greek ones.

wish to meddle with actual warfare, which matches Homer's positive portrayal of her.⁴⁶ Interestingly, Aristotle's first remark on Greek prisoners implies that this is a reaction to an existing interpretation; otherwise, it would be unnecessary for Aristotle to bring this up in the first place. Therefore, this suggests that Aristotle's work was probably written *after* Heraclides'.⁴⁷

5. Solutions based on the language

Having discussed Aristotle's solutions based on the poetic representation and the context, I will now look at the third big category of solutions: those based on a correct understanding of the language. These are essentially linguistic or philological solutions that involve for

⁴⁶ Porphyry actually mentions two problems: (1) why is Helen unaware of her brothers' fate, and (2) why does Helen bring up her brothers here, although Priam did not ask her about them and mentioning them is not relevant for the plot? According to Breitenberger (2006: 385), Porphyry has not recorded Aristotle's solution to the second problem. However, the reference to the portrayal of Helen's character can also be seen as a solution to this problem: although the detail might not be relevant for the plot, it does serve the artistic purpose, viz. of rehabilitating Helen's character: see Hintenlang (1961: 114 n. 2). In fact, after citing Aristotle, Porphyry goes on to comment on Helen's portrayal in Homer and argues that such details are necessary (καὶ ἡ μνήμη οὖν ἀναγκαῖα εἰς σύστασιν τοῦ προσώπου, 'so mentioning them is necessary for the portrayal of her character') and are meant to show that Helen is held in Troy against her will (φαίνεται δὲ πάντα καὶ λέγουσα καὶ οἰκονομοῦσα, ὅπως ὁ τε Πρίαμος καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πεισθῶσι Τρῶες, ὅτι ἀκούσιος καὶ παρὰ γνώμην αὐτῆς ἢ εἰς τὸν Ἴλιον γέγονεν ἄφιξις, 'she is seen to say and do everything to convince both Priam and the other Trojans that she has come to Troy involuntarily and against her will'). Unlike Rose (1863: 158); (1870: 1502); (1886: 123) and later Gigon (1987: 529), Heitz (1869: 133) also included the latter sentence (which follows immediately after ἢ ὅπως τὸ ἥθος βελτίων φανῇ καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονοίῃ, οὐδὲ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ᾗδὲ ὅπου εἰσί) as part of the fragment of Aristotle. So also Ammendola (1907: 10-12). Römer (1884: 288), in contrast, rejected this and instead argued that this sentence is part of a reply to the opinion of the Separators, who used the contrast between the portrayal of Helen in the *Iliad* (where she is distraught and complains about her abduction) and the *Odyssey* (where she came to Troy willingly) to show that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written by two different poets: see schol. A Hom. *Il.* 2.356a1 Erbse. According to Römer, this part was wrongfully inserted in the discussion about the Homeric problem. However, the subsequent discussion shows that the comment does not regard the Separators and is part of the motivation why Helen mentions her brothers. Römer may have been right, however, to exclude the sentence from the fragment of Aristotle, since it does not entirely fit Aristotle's explanation: according to Aristotle, Homer does not want to portray Helen as meddling, whereas Porphyry's subsequent explanation states that Homer wants to show that she is held against her will. The quotations of various passages in Homer which mention Helen is also a trait of Porphyry's method.

⁴⁷ See Heath (2009: 258-259).

instance an archaic word, a metaphor, polysemy, a homonym or other types of ambiguity. For example, when we read that Ganymedes ‘pours wine’ for Zeus (an example cited in the *Poetics*), we should not be too pedantic and object that the gods drink only nectar but no wine.⁴⁸ It is just a figure of speech. Surprisingly, Aristotle forgets this explanation in **F 170**, which deals with Hermes’ visit to Calypso in *Od.* 5.93.

Arist. F 170.1 Rose³ = F 393.1 Gigon = schol. T Hom. *Od.* 5.93e1 Pontani (Porph. *ad Od.* 5.93 II 50 Schrader): εἰ μηδὲν ἄλλο πίνουσιν οἱ θεοὶ ἢ τὸ νέκταρ, διὰ τί αὐτὸ ἡ Καλυψὼ τῷ Ἑρμῇ κεράσασα δίδωσιν; εἰ γὰρ κεκέρασται σὺν ὕδατι, οὐ μόνον τὸ νέκταρ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὕδωρ πίνουσιν. καίτοι, φησὶ, ψιλὴν ἀμβροσίαν παρέθηκεν, «κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν». λύων οὖν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης τὸ κέρασσε φησὶν ἥτοι τὸ μῖξαι ἄλλο ἄλλῳ ὑγρῷ δηλοῖ ἢ τὸ ἐγχεῖν· ἄμφω γὰρ δηλοῖ τὸ κεράσαι. νῦν οὖν τὸ κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν οὐ τὸ μῖξαι δηλοῖ, ἀλλὰ ψιλῶς ἐγχεῖν.

If the gods do not drink anything else but nectar, then why does Calypso give it to Hermes after mixing it? For if it is mixed with water, they drink not only nectar but also water. Nonetheless, he says, she served him ambrosia ‘and mixed red nectar’ (κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν [*Od.* 5.93]). Solving the problem, Aristotle says that κέρασσε means either ‘mix one drink with another’ or ‘pour.’ For κεράσαι can mean either. So, in this case, κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν does not indicate ‘mixing’ (μῖξαι) but simply ‘pouring’ (ἐγχεῖν).

Arist. F 170.2 Rose³ = F 393.2 Gigon = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.93c2+e2 Pontani
εἰ μηδὲν ἄλλο πίνουσιν οἱ θεοὶ ἢ νέκταρ, πῶς ἡ Καλυψὼ αὐτὸ κερνᾷ ὕδατι; (...) ἢ ὅτι τὸ κέρασε κατὰ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλην, ὡς ὁ Πορφύριος λέγει, οὐ μόνον δηλοῖ τὸ μῖξαι ἄλλῳ ὑγρῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐγχεῖν ψιλῶς.

If the gods do not drink anything else but nectar, then why does Calypso mix it with water? (...) Or, according to Aristotle, as Porphyry says, κέρασε indicates not only mixing (μῖξαι) with another fluid but also simply pouring (ἐγχεῖν).

⁴⁸ Arist. *Po.* 25.1461a: τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἔθος τῆς λέξεως (...) ὅθεν εἴρηται ὁ Γανυμήδης «Διὶ οἰνοχοεῦειν», οὐ πινόντων οἶνον. εἴη δ’ ἂν τοῦτο γε καὶ κατὰ μεταφοράν, ‘Other problems are solved in reference to fixed expressions (...) therefore, Ganymedes is said to ‘pour wine for Zeus’ (*Il.* 20.234), although they do not drink wine. This might also be metaphorical.’ Another problem linked with this passage in the *Iliad* is why, in *Il.* 4.2, Hebe is said to pour wine for the gods, whereas, in *Il.* 20.234, Ganymedes has this function: see Porph. *ad Il.* 4.2 (I 67-68 Schrader) = *ad Il.* 20.232-235 (242 MacPhail).

Homer says that Calypso ‘mixed red nectar’ for him (κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν): mixing it means adding water, which the gods do not drink. Aristotle’s solution is that κέρασσε does not mean ‘mix’ (μῖξαι) but ‘pour’ (ἐγχεῖν).⁴⁹ However, κεράννυμι always means mix in Homer. The most straightforward explanation is that this is just a projection of a human custom onto the gods. That is also why Homer calls nectar ἐρυθρός here, which is the usual epithet of wine.⁵⁰

Indeed, Aristotle’s understanding of the Homeric language is often misguided, especially when it comes to the meaning of archaic words. I will illustrate this with two examples, cited in the *Poetics*. At the beginning of the *Iliad*, Apollo famously sends the plague onto the Greek army. In Homer, Apollo first shoots his arrows at the mules and dogs and then strikes the humans: οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπώχετο καὶ κύνας ἀργούς, / αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἐχεπευκὲς ἐφιεῖς / βάλλ’ (*Il.* 1.50-52), ‘He first attacked the mules and the swift dogs; next he hit the people, firing his sharp arrow at them.’ This scene was ridiculed by Zoilus of Amphipolis, the famous critic of Homer: why does Apollo start with mules and dogs when he sends the plague?⁵¹ Aristotle’s creative solution to this problem is that οὐρῆας means

⁴⁹ See also schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.93c1 Pontani (κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν· ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐνέχεεν· οὐ γὰρ κιννᾶται τὸ νέκταρ, ‘she mixed red nectar: instead of ‘she poured,’ since nectar is not mixed’). Schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.93d Pontani = schol. D Hom. *Od.* 5.93c Ernst combines this interpretation with a supposed old custom of pouring wine in a horn (κέρας), thus also giving it a half-baked etymology (ἔστιν οὖν ψιλῶς ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐνέχεεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχαίας συνηθείας. εἰς κέρας γὰρ ἐγχεόντες ἔπινον, ‘the word is used merely in the sense of ‘she poured,’ on the basis of an old custom; for people used to pour wine into a horn to drink it’). See also Eust. *Od.* 5.93 vol. 1 p. 202 Stallbaum (τὸ δὲ κέρασε νέκταρ, οὐ δηλοῖ κρᾶμά τι, ἀλλ’ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐνέχεε κεῖται, ὡς ἀπὸ παλαιᾶς χρήσεως, καθ’ ἣν ὡς καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ σαφῶς ἐδηλώθη, κέρασι ζῶων ἐγχεόντες ἔπινον, ‘the phrase ‘she mixed nectar’ does not indicate some form of mixture but is used instead of ‘she poured,’ on the basis of an old custom, according to which people used to pour wine into the horns of animals to drink it, as is also clearly seen elsewhere’) and *EM* s.v. νεοκράτας σπονδᾶς p. 537 Kallierges (καὶ Ὅμηρος, «κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν». ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπέχεεν· οὐ γὰρ ὕδατι κιννᾶται τὸ νέκταρ, ‘So also in Homer: ‘she mixed red nectar,’ in the sense of ‘she poured,’ since nectar is not mixed with water’).

⁵⁰ See Hom. *Od.* 5.165; 9.163; 9.208; 12.19; 12.327; 13.69; 16.444; Eust. *Od.* 5.93 vol. 1 p. 202 Stallbaum (ἐρυθρόν δὲ νέκταρ, καθ’ ὁμοιότητα τοῦ «οἶνος ἐρυθρός», ‘red nectar, in the same way as ‘red wine’’). See Hintenlang (1961: 56).

⁵¹ Zoilus *FGrHist* 71 F 5 = Heraclit. *All.* 14.2: οὐ γὰρ οὕτως ἄκριτον ἦν παρανάλωμα τῆς Ἀπόλλωνος ὀργῆς τὰ ἄλογα τῶν ζῶων οὐδ’ ἂν ὁ θυμὸς ἀφρόνως ἡμίονοις ἐνήκμαζε καὶ κυσίν, ὡς τὸ Θρακικὸν ἀνδράποδον Ὀμήρου κατεξανίσταται, λέγω δὲ τὸν Ἀμφιπολίτην Ζώιλον ἄνω καὶ κάτω τοιοῦτους τινὰς λήρους

φύλακας, so Apollo first shoots the guards.⁵² This solution, which should probably be seen as a direct reply to Zoilus, thus assumes that οὐρεὺς is a synonym of Homeric οὔρος. However, ancient lexicographers are very clear that οὐρεὺς does not have this meaning.⁵³ This interpretation is also explicitly rejected in the *Viermännerkommentar*, which points out that it is contradicted by αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι: Homer clearly means that the plague first hit the animals and only then the humans.⁵⁴

The second example from the *Poetics* deals with the moment when the envoy of Phoenix, Ajax and Odysseus arrives at Achilles' tent in *Iliad* 9. Achilles invites them to have a drink with him and instructs Patroclus to bring a larger bowl and mix a stronger wine: ζωρότερον δὲ κέραε (*Il.* 9.203). Zoilus of Amphipolis was among the critics to object that it is inappropriate to serve undiluted wine to one's guests.⁵⁵ Essentially, Achilles is presented here as someone who is trying to get people drunk. Again, Aristotle engages in linguistic acrobatics: his solution is that ζωρότερον does not mean 'unmixed' (ἀκρατότερον) but

φληναφοῦντα, 'It was not so unreasonable that Apollo's anger killed the animals, nor did his anger rage foolishly against mules and dogs, as the Thracian slave accused Homer. I am speaking of Zoilus of Amphipolis, who continuously blurted out such nonsense.'

⁵² Arist. *Po.* 25.1461a: τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὴν λέξιν ὁρῶντα δεῖ διαλύειν, οἷον γλώττη τὸ «οὐρήας μὲν πρῶτον»· ἴσως γὰρ οὐ τοὺς ἡμιόνους λέγει ἀλλὰ τοὺς φύλακας, 'Other problems must be solved by looking at the diction, for example, with a rare word in 'first the οὐρήας.' For perhaps he does not mean mules (ἡμιόνους) but guards (φύλακας).'

⁵³ See schol. D Hom. *Il.* 1.50 van Thiel: οὐρήας. ὀρεῖς. ἡμιόνους. ὑποζύγια, 'οὐρήας: ὀρεῖς, mules, beasts of burden'; Apollon. *Lex.* s.v. οὐρήας (p. 124 Bekker): οὐρήας· ἡμιόνους. [ἦτοι ὀριβατοῦσι], διὰ τὸ ὀρούειν πρὸς τοὺς ἀνάντεις τόπους, 'οὐρήας: beasts of burden, [they climb mountains], because they run to places uphill' (I have bracketed ἦτοι ὀριβατοῦσι as a gloss, probably to ὀρούειν; ἦτοι is a common way of introducing glosses).

⁵⁴ Schol. A Hom. *Il.* 1.50a Erbse: ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθῶς τινες οὐρήας τοὺς φύλακας· ἀντιδιαστέλλει γὰρ διὰ τοῦ «αὐτοῖσι», 'some people incorrectly explain οὐρήας as 'guards'; however, this is contradicted by 'at them'.' See schol. A Hom. *Il.* 10.84a Erbse: ἡέ τιν' οὐρήων· ἀθετεῖται, ὅτι οὐρήων βούλεται λέγειν τῶν φυλάκων, καὶ οὐκ ἐκράτησε τοῦ σχήματος· οὔρον γὰρ λέγει ὡς κοῦρον τὸν φύλακα, οὔρεα δὲ τὸν ἡμίονον. καὶ ὅτι ἄκαιρος ἢ ἐρώτησις, 'or one of your mules (οὐρήων): this part is deleted, since οὐρήων is supposed to mean 'the guards'; the form does not have this meaning: for he (sc. Homer) uses οὔρος like κοῦρος for guard but οὐρεὺς for mule; and also because the question is improper.'

⁵⁵ Zoilus *FGrHist* 71 F 4 = Plu. *Quaest. conv.* 5.4.2.677e: ἀλλὰ μειρακίῳδῃ τὴν φιλοτιμίαν αὐτῶν ἀπέφαινον, δεδιότων ὁμολογεῖν ἀκρατότερον εἰρησθαι τὸ ζωρότερον, ὡς ἐν ἀτόπῳ τινὶ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ἐσομένου, καθάπερ ὁ Ἀμφιπολίτης Ζοῖλος ὑπελάμβανεν, 'But I pointed out that their effort was schoolboyish because they were afraid to admit that ζωρότερον means 'stronger,' as if Achilles would find himself in an awkward position, as Zoilus of Amphipolis claimed.'

‘faster’ (θᾶπτον).⁵⁶ Interestingly, this idiosyncratic solution recurs in Porphyry as well, who reports it as an anonymous tradition (οἱ μὲν).⁵⁷ This passage in Porphyry shows that he (or the excerpting scholiast) does not always mention Aristotle by name when he uses his work, which implies that still more anonymous material from Aristotle’s *Homeric Problems* may be hidden in Porphyry.

Il. 9.203 provides the only attestation of that word in Homer, which ancient writers therefore interpreted in various ways. Theophrastus, Aristotle’s famous student, claimed in his work *On Drunkenness* that the word actually means the opposite, viz. ‘mixed.’⁵⁸ So both Aristotle and Theophrastus try to avoid making Homer say that Achilles is serving unmixed wine and is thus trying to get his guests drunk.⁵⁹ However, their solutions both fall flat, since elsewhere in Greek literature ζωρός always means ‘unmixed’ or ‘strong.’⁶⁰ Theophrastus quotes Empedocles for the supposed meaning ‘unmixed,’ but there are textual problems with that fragment of Empedocles.⁶¹ Theophrastus quotes the line as ζωρά τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα

⁵⁶ Arist. *Po.* 25.1461a: καὶ τὸ «ζωρότερον δὲ κέραιε» οὐ τὸ ἄκρατον ὡς οἰνόφλυξιν ἀλλὰ τὸ θᾶπτον, ‘And ζωρότερον δὲ κέραιε does not mean ‘mix it undiluted’ (ἄκρατον) as for drunkards but ‘mix it faster’ (θᾶπτον).’

⁵⁷ Porph. *ad Il.* 9.203 (I 135 Schrader = 283 MacPhail): ἀπρεπές· ὡς γὰρ ἐπὶ κῶμον ἤκουσιν ἀκρατότερον διδόναι παρακελεύεται. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς λέξεως λύουσιν· τὸ γὰρ ζωρότερον εἶναι τάχιον· οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ, ὅτι νύξ· οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθους· τοὺς γὰρ ἥρωας, ἄλλως καταπονουμένους, δαψιλεστέροις τοῖς πρὸς τὴν δίαίταν κεχρησθαι εἰκός· ἢ ἴσως ὡς μουσικὸς καὶ ὑδαρέστερον πίνων, ἀφ’ ὧν ὀνειδίζει καὶ οἰνόφλυγιαν Ἀγαμέμνονι, ‘This is inappropriate. He orders to give them unmixed wine as if they have come for a party. Some people solve the problem on the basis of the diction: ζωρότερον means ‘faster’.’ Aristotle’s interpretation also lives on in Hsch. ζ 257 Latte: ζωρότερον· ἀκρατότερον· ἐνιοὶ δὲ τάχιον, ‘ζωρότερον: less diluted; according to some, it means ‘faster’.’

⁵⁸ Thphr. F 574 FHS&G = Ath. 10.424a: Θεόφραστος δ’ ἐν τῷ Περὶ μέθης ζωρότερόν φησιν εἶναι τὸ κεκραμένον, παρατιθέμενος Ἐμπεδοκλέους τάδε· «αἶψα δὲ θνητὰ φύοντο, τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατ’ εἶναι, / ζωρά τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα, διαλλάσσοντα κελεύθους», ‘Theophrastus in his work *On Drunkenness* says that what is mixed is ζωρότερον, citing the following lines of Empedocles: ‘What had previously been accustomed to being immortal immediately became mortal, and what was previously unmixed became ζωρά, changing its path’.’

⁵⁹ Alternative interpretations were that ζωρότερον meant ‘hotter’ (as if related to ζέω ‘boil’), ‘livelier’ (as if derived from ζέω ‘live’) or ‘old’ (a supposed compound of ζα- and ὄρος). See Plu. *Quaestiones convivales* 5.4.677c-678b, schol. D Hom. *Il.* 9.203 van Thiel and Ath. 10.423e-424a. Plutarch calls all the previous attempts at making sense of ζωρότερον a frivolous game. In his view, Achilles serves unmixed wine simply because Phoenix and Odysseus are old men and therefore prefer strong wine.

⁶⁰ See also Apollon. *Lex.* s.v. ζωρότερον (p. 81 Bekker): ζωρότερον· ἀκρατότερον.

⁶¹ Emp. 31 B 35 DK = F 47 Wright. Aristotle quotes this very line of Empedocles in *Po.* 25.1461a as αἶψα δὲ θνήτ’ ἐφύοντο τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατ’ εἶναι / ζωρά τε πρὶν κέκρητο. The line is also quoted in Plu. *Quaestiones*

‘what was unmixed before became *zora* (mixed).’ Wright, the most recent editor of Empedocles, however, actually reads this line as ζωρά τε πρὶν κέκρητο ‘what was *zora* (unmixed) before became mixed.’⁶²

Apart from lexical obscurities, a Homeric problem can also involve syntactic ambiguity. That is, there may be more than one way of interpreting a certain line grammatically. An example concerns the famous problem of Nestor’s drinking cup described in *Il.* 11.632-637.

Arist. ap. Porph. *ad Il.* 11.637 (I 168 Schrader = 188 MacPhail)⁶³

διὰ τί πεποίηκε μόνον τὸν Νέστορα αἶροντα τὸ ἔκπωμα; οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς ῥᾶον αἶρειν νεωτέρων (...) Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ τὸ «Νέστωρ ὁ γέρων» ἀπὸ κοινοῦ ἔφη δεῖν ἀκούειν ἐπὶ τοῦ «ἄλλος», ἵν’ ἦ· ἄλλος μὲν γέρων μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης, Νέστωρ δ’ ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν. πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς καθ’ ἡλικίαν ὁμοίους γενέσθαι τὴν σύγκρισιν.

Why has he depicted only Nestor raising the cup? For it is not likely that Nestor raises it more easily than men who are younger (...) Aristotle said that one must understand ‘the old Nestor’ (Νέστωρ ὁ γέρων) jointly with ‘another’ (ἄλλος), so that it is: ‘another old man had difficulty moving it from the table, but the old Nestor lifted it with ease.’ For the comparison is in regard to those who are similar in age.

The scene includes the following peculiar comment: ἄλλος μὲν μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης / πλεῖον ἐόν, Νέστωρ δ’ ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν ‘Anyone else had difficulty moving it from the table when it was filled, but the old Nestor lifted it with ease’ (*Il.* 11.635-636). How can it be that the old Nestor manages to lift the cup, while none of the other, much younger and stronger heroes can? This puzzled many people in antiquity, who tried to solve the problem in various ways.

A first man who tried to solve the problem is Stesimbrotus of Thasus, whom I have already mentioned at the beginning as one of the first writers who discussed Homeric problems. Stesimbrotus assumed that despite his old age, Nestor kept his strength, which is why he was

convivales 5.4 (ζωρά τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα); Simp. in *Cael.* vol. 7 p. 529 Heiberg; in *Ph.* vol. 9 p. 33 Diels (both read ζωρά τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα).

⁶² Arundel (1962); Wright (1995: 113; 208). Diels - Kranz (1951: 328), in contrast, read ζωρά τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα. See also the discussion in O’Brien (1965); West (1966); Solmsen (1967).

⁶³ The fragment is not included in Rose³ or Gigon. Rose (1863: 166) claimed that Ἀριστοτέλης is an error for Ἀρίσταρχος. However, the explanation in Porphyry is inconsistent with the opinion of Aristarchus as discussed in schol. *A Hom. Il.* 11.636b Erbse (see n. 69).

able to lift the cup.⁶⁴ Appealing to Nestor's strength is justified; yet it does not explain why the other heroes could not do the same thing. Another avenue was explored by Glaucon, another early Homer critic. In his view, lifting the cup required some dexterity because of its two handles, and only Nestor knew the right technique for doing this.⁶⁵ So the reason why the other heroes struggled was not so much the weight of the cup itself but rather its peculiar shape.

The philosopher Antisthenes, by contrast, gave a philological solution. He claimed that ἄειρεν does not mean 'lift' but 'endure,' i.e., unlike the other heroes, Nestor was able to endure the cup, i.e. he did not get drunk.⁶⁶ A clever solution, but it can hardly be reconciled with the word ἀποκινήσασκε, which shows that Homer literally means lifting or moving the cup.

Aristotle goes for an alternative philological solution. He focuses on the word ἄλλος and argues that it should be combined with γέρων at l. 637, which is *apo koinou*, i.e. the line means 'any other old man had difficulty moving it from the table when it was filled, but the old Nestor lifted it with ease.' So Homer is supposedly comparing Nestor to other old men. This fragment shows how Aristotle wrote his *Homeric Problems* at least in part in order to address Homeric problems that were commonly discussed in his days. His interpretation regarding Nestor's cup was later adopted by the grammarian Sosibius.⁶⁷ It shows that

⁶⁴ Stesimbr. *FGrHist* 107 F 23 = Porph. *ad Il.* 11.637 (I 168 Schrader = 186 MacPhail): Στησίμβροτος μὲν οὖν φησιν, ἵνα δοκῇ εἰκότως πολλὰ ἔτη βεβιωκέναι· εἰ γὰρ παράμονος ἡ ἰσχὺς καὶ οὐχ ὑπὸ γήρωος μεμάρανται, καὶ τὰ τῆς ζωῆς εὐλόγον εἶναι παραπλήσια, 'Stesimbrotus says (that Nestor is described as such) so that it would seem logical that he lived for many years. For if his strength remains and has not been withered by old age, it is also reasonable that what concerns his lifetime is similar.'

⁶⁵ Porph. *ad Il.* 11.637 (I 168 Schrader = 186 MacPhail): Γλαύκων δέ, ὅτι κατὰ διάμετρον ἐλάμβανε τὰ ὄτα, ἐκ μέσου δὲ πᾶν εὐφορον, 'Glaucon says that he took the handles along the diameter, and everything is easy to carry from the middle.'

⁶⁶ Antisth. F 55 Declava Caizzi = *SSR* V A 191 = Porph. *ad Il.* 11.637 (I 168 Schrader = 186 MacPhail): Ἀντισθένης δέ· οὐ περὶ τῆς κατὰ χεῖρα βαρύτητος λέγει, ἀλλ' ὅτι οὐκ ἐμεθύσκετο σημαίνει· ἀλλ' ἔφερε ῥαδίως τὸν οἶνον, 'Antisthenes says: He is not speaking about the weight in his hand, but he means that he was not getting drunk; he was easily bearing the wine.'

⁶⁷ Sosib. *FGrHist* 595 F 26 = Ath. 11.493c-494b: Σωσίβιος δ' ὁ λυτικὸς προθεῖς τὰ ἔπη· «ἄλλος μὲν μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης / πλεῖον ἔόν, Νέστωρ δ' ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν», γράφει κατὰ λέξιν· νῦν τὸ μὲν ἐπιτιμώμενόν ἐστι τῷ ποιητῇ ὅτι τοὺς μὲν λοιποὺς εἶπε μογέοντας ἀείρειν τὸ δέπας, τὸν δὲ Νέστορα μόνον ἀμογητὶ. ἄλογον δ' ἐδόκει Διομήδους καὶ Αἴαντος, ἔτι δ' Ἀχιλλέως παρόντων εἰσάγεσθαι τὸν Νέστορα γενναιότερον, τῇ ἡλικίᾳ προβεβηκότα. τούτων τοίνυν οὕτως κατηγορουμένων τῇ ἀναστροφῇ χρησάμενοι

Aristotle's interpretation of a specific Homeric passage influenced later generations of scholars. The problem was so heavily debated that the grammarian Asclepiades of Myrlea even devoted a whole monograph to Nestor's cup (entitled *Περὶ τῆς Νεστορίδος*).⁶⁸ The solution of the Alexandrian grammarians was much more straightforward: according to the *Viermännerkommentar*, Homer is just exaggerating here in order to praise Nestor.⁶⁹

ἀπολύομεν τὸν ποιητὴν. ἀπὸ γὰρ τούτου τοῦ ἑξαμέτρου «πλεῖον ἔόν, Νέστωρ δ' ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν» ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου ἐξελόντες τὸ γέρων τάξομεν τοῦ πρώτου στίχου πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τὸ ἄλλος μὲν, εἴτα τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς συνεροῦμεν· ἄλλος μὲν γέρων μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης πλεῖον ἔόν, ὁ δὲ γέρων μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης πλεῖον ἔόν, ὁ δὲ Νέστωρ ἀπονητὶ ἄειρεν. νῦν οὖν οὕτω τεταγμένων ὁ Νέστωρ φαίνεται τῶν μὲν λοιπῶν πρεσβυτῶν μόνος τὸ δέπας ἀμογητὶ ἀείρων, 'Sosibius, the problem-solver, when citing the lines 'Anyone else had difficulty moving it from the table when it was filled, but the old Nestor lifted it with ease' (*Il.* 11.636-637), writes exactly the following: The poet is criticized nowadays for saying that the others had difficulty lifting the goblet, whereas Nestor alone lifted it with ease. And it seemed illogical, when Diomedes, Ajax and also Achilles are there, that Nestor is presented as stronger than them, although he was an extremely old man. But by making use of the technique of anastrophe, I free the poet from these charges. For if we take the word γέρων from the middle of the hexameter 'when it was filled. But the old Nestor lifted it with ease' and put it at the beginning of the first line after ἄλλος μὲν, we will then construe the beginning as follows: another old man had difficulty moving it from the table, but the old Nestor lifted it with ease. So if the words are arranged like this, Nestor is presented as the only one of the other old men who can lift the goblet with ease.'

⁶⁸ Asclep. Myrl. F 4 Pagani.

⁶⁹ See schol. A Hom. *Il.* 11.636a Erbse: πρὸς τὸ ζητούμενον, πῶς ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι μετὰ κακοπαθίας. οὐ δεῖ δὲ οὕτε δασύνειν τὴν προφορὰν οὕτε ἐπαίρειν τὴν προσφθίαν, ἀλλὰ νοεῖν ὅτι καὶ τοῦτο τῶν ἐπαίνων λεγομένων Νέστορός ἐστι, καθάπερ καὶ τὸ «Νέστωρ δὲ πρῶτος κτύπον ἄϊε φώνησέν τε», 'With regard to the question why the old man lifted it with ease, while the others struggled: it is not necessary to give rough breathing (ἄλλος) or lift the accent (ἀλλ' ὅς), but you need to take into account that this is also part of the praise given to Nestor, as is also found in 'Nestor was the first to hear the noise and spoke' (*Il.* 10.532).' There were also other, competing linguistic solutions. Some ancient critics suggested correcting the word ἄλλος to either ἀλλ' ὅς or ἄλλος, both of which would refer to the wounded hero Machaon, who Nestor's guest in this scene. In the *Viermännerkommentar*, the conjectures ἀλλ' ὅς and ἄλλος are rejected as un-Homeric, however. See also schol. A Hom. *Il.* 11.636b Erbse: ὁ Ἀσκαλωνίτης ψιλοῖ, καὶ φησιν ὅτι ἐπὶ τοῦ Νέστορος κεῖται· ἄλλος μὲν γὰρ ἂν τις αὐτὸ μόνος ἐκίνησε, Νέστωρ δ' ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν. πολὺ πρότερον δὲ οὕτως καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος. τινὲς δὲ βούλονται δασύνειν τὸ α καὶ ἐκτείνειν, ἵν' ἢ ὁ ἄλλος μὲν μογέων, τουτέστιν ὁ Μαχάων. ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐκεῖνο παραφυλάττειν ἔχομεν ὥς ὅτι παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ οὐ δύναται ἡ τοιαύτη κρᾶσις εἶναι· εἰ γὰρ καὶ κρᾶσιν ἠβούλοντο, παραλαμβάνειν ἐχρὴν εἰς τὸ ω, ὁμοίως τῷ «οἶχετ' ἀνὴρ ὠριστος». εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ διέστειλαν «ἀλλ' ὅς», τὸ ὅς δασύνοντες, «ἀλλ' ὅς μὲν μογέων», ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχη νοητόν· ἐπὶ γὰρ τοῦ Μαχάωνος πάλιν βούλονται τὴν διαστολὴν λαμβάνειν. ἡμεῖς δὲ συγκατατιθέμεθα τῷ Ἀριστάρχῳ ψιλοῦντι, ἐπεὶ βούλεται ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ διὰ

Solving Homeric problems in a philological manner obviously anticipates the work of the Alexandrian grammarians, who edited and commented on the text of Homer. Even though in many respects Aristotle's studies of Greek poetry can be said to have laid the groundwork for the Alexandrian grammarians, there is one important difference between their method and Aristotle's. Aristotle himself is in fact much more conservative when it comes to the Homeric text as it is transmitted to him. Unlike the Alexandrian grammarians, he does not use *athetesis*, i.e. he does not delete problematic lines, and he almost never corrects the Homeric text.

The only example of a conjecture is **F 171**, but even that involves only a minor change, though not a very successful one.

Arist. F 171.1 Rose³ = F 394.1 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 5.334-337 = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334e Pontani (II 56-57 Schrader)

προσκεῖσθω δὲ καὶ τὸ «ἢ πρὶν μὲν ἔην βροτὸς αὐδήεσσα». ζητεῖ γὰρ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, διὰ τί τὴν Καλυψὼ καὶ τὴν Κίρκην καὶ τὴν Ἰνώ αὐδηέσσας λέγει μόναις· πᾶσαι γὰρ καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι φωνὴν εἶχον. καὶ λῦσαι μὲν οὐ βεβούληται, μεταγράφει δὲ ποτὲ μὲν εἰς τὸ αὐλήεσσα, ἐξ οὗ δηλοῦσθαί φησιν ὅτι μονώδεις ἦσαν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς Ἰνοῦς οὐδήεσσα⁷⁰. τοῦτο γὰρ πᾶσαις ὑπῆρχεν αὐταῖς καὶ μόναις· πᾶσαι γὰρ αὖται ἐπὶ γῆς ὄκουν.

The next point to be addressed is the line 'she had been a mortal woman before, gifted with a voice.' Aristotle asks why only Calypso, Circe and Ino are called 'gifted with a voice' (αὐδηέσσας). For all the other deities have voices too. He did not wish to solve it but changed the word sometimes to αὐλήεσσα, because he says that it is clear that

τούτου τὸ εὐρωστον τοῦ γέροντος παριστάνειν, (Ptolemy) of Ascalon gives smooth breathing and says that it refers to Nestor: anyone else lifted it with difficulty, but the old Nestor lifted it with ease. So also much earlier Aristarchus. But some want to give alpha rough breathing and lengthen it, so that it is: the other person lifted it with difficulty, i.e. Machaon. But we must avoid this, since such a crasis is not possible in the poet. If they wanted a crasis, they should have accepted changing it to omega, like in 'the splendid man went away' (*Il.* 11.288: οἷχετ' ἀνὴρ ὄριςτος). Other people separate ἄλλ' ὅς with rough breathing in ὅς: 'now he lifted it with difficulty,' so that it has the same meaning: for they again want to understand the separation in reference to Machaon. But we agree with Aristarchus, who gives smooth breathing, since the poet wants to show the old man's strength through this.' Aristotle's solution is also mentioned (without his name) alongside these other solutions in schol. b Hom. *Il.* 11.636c1, which is a compilation of the *Viermännerscholia* and Porphyry.

⁷⁰ The manuscripts actually read αὐδήεσσα, which is obviously corrupt. In view of schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334c1 Pontani, this is generally corrected to οὐδήεσσα.

they live alone; in the case of Ino, he changed it to οὐδήεσσα. For this applies to them alone, since they all live on the earth.

Arist. F 171.2 Rose³ = F 394.2 Gigon = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334c1 Pontani
ὁ δὲ Ἀριστοτέλης «οὐδήεσαν» λέγει οἶονεῖ ἐπίγειον. οὕτως καὶ Χαμαιλέων.
Aristotle says οὐδήεσαν, meaning terrestrial. So also Chamaeleon.

Arist. F 171.3 Rose³ = F 394.3 Gigon = schol. H Hom. *Od.* 10.136 Dindorf
αὐδήεσσα· Ἀριστοτέλης οὐδήεσσα.
αὐδήεσσα: Aristotle reads οὐδήεσσα.

Aristotle wonders why Calypso (*Od.* 12.449), Circe (*Od.* 10.136; 11.8; 12.150) and Ino (*Od.* 5.334) are the only deities to be given the epithet αὐδήεσσα ‘gifted with a voice,’ although all the other nymphs and gods are able to speak as well. Aristotle chooses to change one letter of the epithet. In the case of Calypso and Circe, he suggests changing the word to αὐλήεσσα, which he interprets as ‘living alone’ (ὅτι μονώδεις ἦσαν).⁷¹ Alternatively, he considers changing the word to οὐδήεσσα, which supposedly means ‘living on the earth’ (πᾶσαι γὰρ αὗται ἐπὶ γῆς ὄκουν), so as if derived from the poetic word οὐδας ‘earth,

⁷¹ The manuscripts read μονώδεις or μονώδη, which is a *hapax*. Schrader (1890: 57; 184-185) conjectured μονωδοί, interpreting this as referring to music (*tibiarum amans*) and explaining αὐλήεσσα as derived from αὐλός rather than αὐλή. Schrader claimed that Calypso (*Od.* 5.61) and Circe (*Od.* 10.221) like singing on their own in Homer. However, singing and playing the pipes at the same time is impossible. Schrader therefore claimed that they were accompanied by pipers, but this contradicts the supposed *cantus solitarius*.

ground.⁷² The conjecture οὐδήεσσα was also adopted by Aristotle's pupil, Chamaeleon,⁷³ who wrote a treatise on the *Iliad*⁷⁴ and perhaps also one on the *Odyssey*. Interestingly, Aristotle seems to have considered this intervention to be not a real solution, since Porphyry states that Aristotle did not wish to solve the problem. Neither of Aristotle's conjectures are correct Homeric formations, however. The suffix -εις, -εσσα, -εν (originally *Fεντ-) is a possessive suffix, so αὐδήεις means 'in the possession of a voice.' In Attic, the suffix was no longer in use and survives only in χαρίεις, χαρίεσσα, χαρίεν. Aristotle probably thought of it as a strange ending, which he could apply freely to any word he wanted. The Alexandrian grammarians, by contrast, had a better understanding of the Homeric language. Aristophanes of Byzantium, for instance, argues that αὐδήεις means 'in the possession of a human voice', i.e. the epithet indicates that the goddesses in question are able to change their voices.⁷⁵

⁷² F 171.1 Rose³ and F 171.3 Rose³ are somewhat contradictory. In the former, Aristotle is said to have used οὐδήεσσα for Ino and αὐλήεσσα for Calypso and Circe. However, the scholiast goes on to comment that they all live on the earth, which seems to imply that οὐδήεσσα was also used for Calypso and Circe. F 171.3 Rose³ also points in this direction, since that scholion comments on the epithet of Circe, which Aristotle is said to have changed to οὐδήεσσα. Similarly, Eustathius, commenting on *Od.* 10.137 (Circe) claims (vol. 1 p. 372 Stallbaum): γράφεται δὲ καὶ οὐδήεσσα, τουτέστιν ἐπίγειος κατὰ τὴν Καλυψὶ καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς νύμφας 'another reading is οὐδήεσσα, i.e. terrestrial in the case of Calypso and the other nymphs.' For this reason, Römer (1884: 305-306) concluded that Aristotle used οὐδήεσσα for all three goddesses and conjectured changing the text of Porphyry to ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς Ἰνου αὐλήεσσα [corrected from αὐδήεσσα, as the epithet is read in the manuscripts] <οὐχ ἀρμόττει. διὸ οὐδήεσσα ἐν πάσαις>· τοῦτο γὰρ πάσαις ὑπῆρχεν αὐταῖς καὶ μόναις, 'in the case of Ino αὐλήεσσα <does not fit. Therefore he used οὐδήεσσα for them all.> For this applies to them alone.' However, this contradicts the claim that Aristotle 'changed the word sometimes to αὐλήεσσα.' It is possible that the conclusion 'For this applies to them alone, since they all live on the earth' is actually that of the scholiast, i.e. Aristotle may have initially used the conjecture οὐδήεσσα only for Ino, but later this conjecture also came to be used for the other goddesses.

⁷³ Chamael. F 24 Martano.

⁷⁴ See Chamael. F 17-23 Martano.

⁷⁵ Ar. Byz. ε 334 (Slater 197) = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334c1 Pontani: ὁ μὲν Ἀριστοφάνης τὰς ἀνθρωποειδεῖς θεὰς «αὐδηέσσας» φησὶν οἶονεῖ φωνὴν μετελιφνύας. Alternatively, the epithet can be interpreted as meaning 'famous.' See schol. D Hom. *Od.* 5.334b Ernst = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334c2: αὐδήεσσα· ἦτοι διαβόητος διὰ τὰ συμβάντα, ἢ ἐπεὶ οἱ ἀνθρώποι φωνήεντες πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα. <ἢ> οὐδήεσσα ἢ ἐπίγειός ποτε. Apollon. *Lex.* s.v. αὐδήεσσα (Bekker 48): αὐδήεσσα ὁ Ἀπίων ὀνομασθὴ καὶ ἔνδοξος, οἷον αὐδωμένη, ἐπὶ Κίρκης καὶ Καλυψοῦς. τινὲς δὲ αὐδηέσσας αὐτὰς λέγουσιν, ὅτι εἰς ὁμιλίᾳς ἤλθον ἀνθρώπων τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ. Porph. *ad Od.* 5.334-337 (II 57 Schrader): μήποτε δὲ τὸ αὐδήεσσα οὐ τὸ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φωνῇ μόνον χρῆσθαι δηλοῖ, ὥς τὸ αὐδήεντα δ' ἔθηκε,

6. Allegorical interpretations?

Although Aristotle never explicitly rejects allegories, his method shows that, unlike the early defenders of Homer (Theagenes, Metrodorus of Lampsacus the Elder and Democritus) and unlike the Stoics later, he does not allow allegorical interpretations for the solution of Homeric problems. This is perhaps the only point on which he agrees with Plato about Homer. This later becomes one of the key concepts of Aristarchus' exegesis of Homer, viz. "to explain Homer on the basis of Homer" (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν).⁷⁶ There is one fragment, however, that seems to involve an allegorical interpretation, viz. **F 175**. It concerns the Cattle of Helios in the *Odyssey*.⁷⁷

Arist. F 175.2 Rose³ = F 398.1 Gigon = schol. Q Vind. Hom. *Od.* 12.129 Dindorf = Porph. *ad Od.* 12.128sq. (II 111-112 Schrader)

Ἀριστοτέλης φυσικῶς τὰς κατὰ σελήνην ἡμέρας αὐτὸν λέγειν φησὶ τν' οὔσας. τὸν γὰρ πεντήκοντα ἀριθμὸν ἑπταπλασιάσας εἰς τὸν τριακοστὸν πεντηκοστὸν περιεστάναι εὐρήσεις.

Aristotle gives a scientific explanation when he says that he (sc. Homer) is referring to the number of days of the lunar calendar, which are 350. For if you multiply the number fifty by seven, you will find that this results in 350.

σημαίνει δὲ καὶ τὸ ἔνδοξον καὶ ἐπίφημον. καὶ ἐκάστη δὲ τούτων ἔνδοξος, ὥσπερ ἡ Ἰνώ, ὅτε ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἦν, ἔνδοξος ἦν καὶ πᾶσι περίφημος. Finally, the epithet might also be a meaningless *epitheton ornans*, as it also used in Hom. *Od.* 6.125 (ἦ νύ που ἀνθρώπων εἰμὶ σχεδὸν αὐδηνέντων).

⁷⁶ Porph. *Quaestiones Homericae* lib. I 11 (I 297 Schrader = 56 Sodano). Although the phrase Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν might be Porphyry's own, it does accurately describe Aristarchus' approach. See D-schol. Hom. *Il.* 5.385 van Thiel: Ἀρίσταρχος ἄξιοι «τὰ φραζόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ μυθικώτερον ἐκδέχεσθαι κατὰ ποιητικὴν ἐξουσίαν, μηδὲν ἔξω τῶν φραζομένων ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ περιεργαζομένους.»

⁷⁷ Lamberton (1992: xiii-xv) also cited F 145 Rose³ = F 369 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.305-329 (I 32-33, 34 Schrader = 44-46 MacPhail), F 153 Rose³ = F 377 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.447 (I 44-45 Schrader = 98-100 MacPhail) and F 175 Rose³ = F 373 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 12.374 (II 113-114 Schrader) as supposed examples of allegorical interpretations. However, none of these concern actual allegories. F 145 Rose³ involves the interpretation of an oracle by Calchas, which Aristotle considers to be inadequately explained. F 153 Rose³ merely interprets the head of Gorgo on Athena's *aegis* to be a metaphor (the effect of the *aegis* is similar to the petrifying effect of the Gorgo head) rather than being the actual head, which elsewhere in Homer is said to dwell in the Hades. Finally, F 175 Rose³ merely involves a comparison between Helios and humans: like the humans need eyes to see, so too does Helios need Lampetia in order to see all. See Bouchard (2016: 58-65).

Arist. F 175.1 Rose³ = F 398.2 Gigon = schol. D Hom. *Od.* 12.129 Ernst

«ἐπτα βοῶν ἀγέλαι» Ἀριστοτέλης φυσικῶς φησι· λέγει γὰρ τὰς ἑπτὰ καθ' ἡμέρας πεντήκοντα πρὸς ταῖς τριακοσίαις.

Seven herds of cows: Aristotle gives a scientific explanation when he says: for he (sc. Homer) is referring to the 350 days.

Arist. F 175.3 Rose³ = F 398.3 Gigon = Eust. *Od.* 12.130 vol. 2 p. 18 Stallbaum

Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι τὰς ἀγέλας ταύτας καὶ μάλιστα τὰς τῶν βοῶν φασι τὸν Ἀριστοτέλην ἀλληγορεῖν εἰς τὰς κατὰ δωδεκάδα τῶν σεληνιακῶν μηνῶν ἡμέρας, γινομένας πεντήκοντα πρὸς ταῖς τριακοσίαις, ὅσος καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς ταῖς ἐπτα ἀγέλαις, ἐχούσαις ἀνὰ πεντήκοντα ζῶα. διὸ οὔτε γόνον αὐτῶν γίνεσθαι Ὅμηρος λέγει οὔτε φθοράν. τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ποσὸν αἰεὶ ταῖς τοιαύταις ἡμέραις μένει.

It is necessary to know that Aristotle is said to interpret these herds and especially the herds of the cows allegorically as referring to the days according to the twelve lunar months, which are 350. This is the same number for the seven herds, which have fifty animals each. For this reason, Homer says that they have no birth or death, since the number always remains for those days.

Aristotle seems to have argued that the number of oxen in the cattle of Helios is (approximately) equal to the number of days in the lunar calendar. Eustathius explicitly calls this an allegorical interpretation (ἀλληγορεῖν). However, this label might be inaccurate. In fact, the other two scholia call it a scientific explanation (φυσικῶς). The essential difference is that a scientific explanation addresses the origin of the myth, whereas an allegorical interpretation claims to reveal the true, underlying meaning of the poem. This type of scientific interpretation is also found elsewhere in Aristotle.⁷⁸ What Aristotle seems to have

⁷⁸ See especially the discussion in Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 9). Another reference to a supposedly allegorical interpretation of Aristotle in Eustathius is Eust. *Od.* 12.65 vol. 2 p. 11 Stallbaum (Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ φασιν ἀλληγορικῶς εἶπε, etc.). Eustathius cites an allegorical interpretation of the doves (πέλεια) that bring ambrosia to Zeus in *Od.* 12.62-63. However, Eustathius appears to have taken this information from Ptolemaeus Chennus' *Novel History* (Καινὴ ἱστορία 1.8 p. 13-15 Chatzís), which is notorious for its fake information and bogus citations. According to the summary in Phot. *Bibliotheca* cod. 190 p. 147a, Ptolemaeus reported a conversation between Aristotle and Alexander the Great about the reason why doves serve to bring food to the gods.

done is ponder why Homer gives 7 herds of 50 cows each, as opposed to any other random number.⁷⁹

A further reason to not jump to conclusions is that the fragment might belong to another work of Aristotle. The appendix of the *Vita Menagiana* lists a work entitled ‘Why did Homer make the Cattle of Helios <...>’ (τί δήποτε Ὅμηρος ἐποίησεν τὰς Ἥλιου βοῦς <...>).⁸⁰ First, it seems that this title is incomplete, since a second accusative is expected with ἐποίησεν. Hintenlang, for instance, suggested restoring the text as <διὰ> τί δήποτε Ὅμηρος ἐποίησεν τὰς Ἥλιου βοῦς <ἀφθάρτους> ‘Why did Homer portray the cattle of Helios as immortal.’⁸¹ Indeed, one of the puzzling details is that, although Helios’ cattle does not give birth, their number stays the same. This implies that they are immortal, which raises the question how Odysseus’ men are able to kill and eat them. Although the scholia have not preserved a Homeric problem along these lines, it is possible that this was a debated issue and that Aristotle wrote a treatise on this passage, similar to Asclepiades of Myrlea’s *On Nestor’s Cup*. Another possibility is that the fragment belongs to another lost work of Aristotle, viz. *On Mythological Animals* (Περὶ τῶν μυθολογουμένων ζώων).⁸²

7. Aristotle’s legacy

⁷⁹ This interpretation later recurs in Luc. *Astr.* 22. A much more straightforward ‘solution,’ of course, is that 7 and 50 are common symbolic numbers to denote a large group. See Roscher (1917: esp. 80-90).

⁸⁰ *Vita Aristotelis Menagiana* n°142 p. 85 Düring = p. 16 Rose³ = p. 28 Gigon. This item is sometimes considered to belong together with n° 141 (Περὶ μακαριότητος) and therefore restored as Περὶ μακαριότητος <ἢ> τί δήποτε Ὅμηρος ἐποίησεν τὰς Ἥλιου βοῦς, ‘On Happiness or Why Homer Made the Cattle of Helios’: see Düring (1957: 85); Gigon (1987); Dorandi (2006: 101). Moraux (1951: 251), however, followed Menagius’ suggestion to correct Περὶ μακαριότητος to Περὶ μακροβιότητος, i.e. the title might actually refer to Aristotle’s *On Longevity and the Shortness of Life* (Περὶ μακροβιότητος καὶ βραχυβιότητος). Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 2) suggests that περὶ μακαριότητος might be a corruption of περὶ μακάρων νήσου, which would be a work on the Island of Blessed.

⁸¹ Hintenlang (1961: 132 with n. 1). Supplementing διὰ is unnecessary, however. Hintenlang also considered the supplement εἰ δήποτε Ὅμηρος ἐποίησεν τὰς Ἥλιου βοῦς, ‘Whether Homer Invented the Cattle of Helios,’ proposed by Heitz (1869: 148), i.e. whether it was an element of the traditional myth or whether Homer first introduced this. Hintenlang’s first suggestion is much more plausible, however.

⁸² The title is attested in Diog. Laert. 5.25 and the *Vita Aristotelis Menagiana* p. 87 Düring = p. 14 Rose³ = p. 27 Gigon. Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 2) suggests, however, that Τί δήποτε Ὅμηρος ἐποίησεν τὰς Ἥλιου βοῦς and Περὶ τῶν μυθολογουμένων ζώων may be subtitles of Aristotle’s *Homeric Problems*.

Aristotle's *Homeric Problems* are at the origin of a long-standing tradition of Homeric questions that flourished in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Homeric problems were first of all studied by Aristotle's own pupils. I have already mentioned Chamaeleon, who wrote one or more works on Homer. Other Peripatetics who discussed Homeric problems were Demetrius of Phalerum, Megacrides and Praxiphanes.⁸³ Aristotle and the Peripatetics also inspired Hellenistic grammarians, who wrote their own works on Homeric problems. I have already mentioned Sosibius of Sparta when I discussed the problem of Nestor's cup; other grammarians who wrote on Homeric problems are Apollodorus of Athens, Satyrus "Zeta" (a pupil of Aristarchus) and Zenodotus of Alexandria.⁸⁴ In the Roman period, the tradition was continued with Soteridas,⁸⁵ Cassius Longinus,⁸⁶ and most importantly Porphyry, whose *Homeric Questions* preserve the bulk of the fragments of Aristotle's work and probably contain numerous solutions which were tacitly adopted from Aristotle.⁸⁷

Apart from inspiring these writers of Homeric problems, Aristotle also influenced the great Alexandrian grammarians.⁸⁸ Aristotle's method can be seen to have influenced Aristarchus. Like Aristotle, Aristarchus paid attention not only to linguistic matters but also to questions about the archaic lifestyle of the Homeric heroes and the relation of the Homeric epics with the traditional myths.⁸⁹ To a certain extent, Aristarchus can thus be said to have perfected Aristotle's method, especially with regard to linguistic problems.

Admittedly, Aristotle's solutions to Homeric problems are far from perfect. His understanding of Homer's language lacks the refinement of the Alexandrian grammarians, and his love for Homer often leads him to wild speculations and contrived solutions.

⁸³ See Dem. Phal. F 143; F 145 SOD; Megacrides F 5-6; F 11 Janko; Praxiphanes F 25 Matelli. For Dicaearchus, see my discussion in Verhasselt (forthcoming).

⁸⁴ Apollodorus wrote *Grammatical Questions on the Fourteenth Book of the Iliad*, as the subscription in P.Mil.Vogl. I 19 shows. For Satyrus Zeta, see Satyr. T *7; F *32 Schorn (he was called 'Zeta' because of his love for ζητήματα). Zenodotus of Alexandria wrote *Solutions to Homeric Problems* according to Suid. s.v. Ζηνόδοτος ζ 75.

⁸⁵ Soteridas wrote *Homeric Questions* according to Suid. s.v. Σωτηρίδας σ 875. A fragment of his *Homeric Questions* might be found in schol. A Hom. Il. 4.412b Erbse (which cites Σωτήρας).

⁸⁶ Cassius Longinus wrote *Homeric Problems and Solutions* according to Suid. s.v. Λογγίνος λ 645. He was Porphyry's teacher in Athens.

⁸⁷ Porphyry later wrote a work *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, in which he interprets Homer allegorically.

⁸⁸ See also Richardson (1993).

⁸⁹ See Lehrs (1882); Nickau (1977: 136-139); Lührs (1992: 13-17).

However, his main contribution to Homeric philology lies not so much in his actual solutions but rather in the methodology that underlies them. He developed this method in reply to critics who wrote before him. Contrary to the early detractors of Homer, Aristotle stressed the importance of judging Homer by poetic standards instead of by external criteria. He did not indulge in far-fetched allegorical interpretations in order to justify Homer either but instead tried to put the Homeric epics in what he believed was their historical context and paid attention to potentially ambiguous passages which could be interpreted in more than one way. But most of all, he appreciated Homer as an artist.

Appendix: a list of fragments according to their solutions

In this appendix, I give a list of fragments arranged according to the method of solution, with the Homeric question and Aristotle's solution(s). The fragments in bold are discussed in the main text of this article.

1. Solutions based on the method of representation
 - 1.1. Solutions οἶα ᾗν
 - 1) **F 158 Rose³ = F 382 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 9.17 (I 132 Schrader)**
 - Problem: why does Agamemnon address only the leaders in *Il.* 9.17, although the entire army is assembled?
 - Solution: old custom, according to which the common people are only allowed to listen, while only the leaders are allowed to act
 - 2) **F 160 Rose³ = F 383 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 10.153 (I 145 Schrader = 284-285 MacPhail)**
 - Problem: why are the spears of Diomedes and his companions stuck with their spikes in the ground in *Il.* 10.152-153?
 - Solution: old custom, still observed by the Illyrians (cf. Arist. *Po.* 25.1461a)
 - 3) **F 164.1 Rose³ = F 388.3 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 23.269 (I 261-262 Schrader = 256 MacPhail) + F 164.3 Rose³ = F 388.2 Gigon = schol. T Hom. *Il.* 23.269b Erbse + F 388.3 Gigon = schol. b Hom. *Il.* 23.269a Erbse**
 - Problem: why are the four talents of gold only the prize for the fourth in the race at the games for Patroclus (*Il.* 23.262-270), although this prize is by far the most valuable?
 - Solution: the exact weight of a talent was not yet fixed in Homer's time

4) **F 166 Rose³** = F 389 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 24.15 (I 267 Schrader = 258-260 MacPhail):

- Problem: Achilles commits injustice by dragging Hector's corpse around Patroclus grave in *Il.* 24.15-16

- Solution: old custom, still observed in Thessaly

5) **F 169 Rose³** = F 392 Gigon = schol. Hom. *Od.* 4.356a1 Pontani

- Problem: why does sailing from Pharos to Egypt take a whole day in *Od.* 4.354-357?

- Solution: the head of the Nile used to be located at Naucratis

6) **F 175.1 Rose³** = F 398.2 Gigon = schol. D Hom. *Od.* 12.129 Ernst + F 175.2 Rose³ = F 398.1 Gigon = schol. Q Vind. Hom. *Od.* 12.129 Dindorf = Porph. *ad Od.* 12.128sq. (II 111-112 Schrader) + F 398.3 Gigon = Eust. *Od.* 12.130 vol. 2 p. 18 Stallbaum

- Problem: why does the cattle of Helios consist of 7 herds, which contain 50 oxen each?

- Solution: there are 350 oxen in total, since this was the number of days in the lunar calendar

1.2. Solutions οἷα εἶναι δεῖ (no fragments)

1.3. Solutions οἷα φασιν ἢ δοκεῖ

1) **F 163 Rose³** = F 387 Gigon = schol. A Hom. *Il.* 19.108b Erbse = Porph. *ad Il.* 19.108 (I 235-236 Schrader = 232-234 MacPhail)

- Problem: why does Hera demand an oath from Zeus in *Il.* 19.91-124, whereas elsewhere in the *Iliad* it suffices for Zeus to nod when he makes a promise?

- Solution 1: the oath was part of the traditional myth

2) **F 172 Rose³** = F 385 Gigon = schol. HQ Hom. *Od.* 9.106 Dindorf = schol. T Hom. *Od.* 9.311 Dindorf = Porph. *ad Od.* 9.106sq. (II 84 Schrader)

- Problem: how can Polyphemus be a Cyclops if neither his father nor his mother are Cyclopes?

- Solution: these elements are part of the traditional myth; in the same way, horses are born from Boreas, and Pegasus is born from Poseidon and Medusa

2. Solutions based on the context in Homer

1) **F 142 Rose³** = F 366 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.73 (I 24 Schrader = 40 MacPhail)

- Problem: why does Agamemnon test the Achaean army in *Il.* 2.55-141?

- Solution: this is a way for Homer to introduce more suspense

2) **F 143 Rose³** = F 368 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.183 (I 27-28 Schrader = 40 MacPhail)

- Problem: it is inappropriate of Odysseus to throw off his mantle and run around in only his tunic in *Il.* 2.183
- Solution: Odysseus does this so that he may catch the attention of the people and his voice may reach further
- 3) F 144 Rose³ = F 42 Gigon = Ath. 13.556d [perhaps from another work]
- Problem: why is Menelaus the only Achaean hero to not have concubines?
- Solution: Menelaus does this out of respect for Helen
- 4) **F 146 Rose³** = F 370 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.649 (I 48-49 Schrader = 68 MacPhail)
- Why is Crete said to have a hundred cities in *Il.* 2.649 but ninety cities in *Od.* 19.173?
- Solution: these lines are spoken by two different persons (viz. Homer in the *Iliad* and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*)
- 5) **F 147 Rose³** = F 371 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 3.236 (I 58 Schrader)
- Problem: Why is Helen unaware of her brothers' fate in *Il.* 3.236, even though the Trojan War has already been going on for nine years?
- Solution 1: Paris made sure to keep Greek prisoners away from Helen
- Solution 2: Helen comes across as not meddlesome
- 6) F 148 Rose³ = F 372 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 3.276 (I 59-60 Schrader = 76 MacPhail)
- Problem: although Homer assumes that the Trojans swear falsely when making a truce with the Achaeans, the Trojans never did this, since the agreement was that Menelaus had to kill Paris; since Paris was rescued by Aphrodite, he was not killed, and the Trojans were therefore not required to give back Helen
- Solution: in their oath, they Trojans cursed themselves if they violated the truce; Pandarus' attack on Menelaus was a violation of this truce
- 7) F 149 Rose³ = F 373 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 12.374 (II 113 Schrader)
- Problem: how can Homer claim that "Helios sees all" in *Il.* 3.277 but in *Od.* 12.374-375 lets Lampetia report to Helios that his cattle has been slaughtered?
- Solution 3: the lines are spoken by two different people (viz. Agamemnon in the *Iliad* and Homer himself in the *Odyssey*). It is also fitting that Agamemnon would say in his oath that Helios sees all, since this is intended to be a threat towards both the Greeks and the Trojans to not break the oath
- 8) F 150 Rose³ = F 374 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 3.441 (I 65-66 Schrader)

- Problem: Paris is a despicable character since he is not only saved after being defeated by Menelaus but also immediately wants to have sex with Helen after returning from the battle

- Solution: Paris' sexual desire was already present before; this desire naturally increases if it is not satiated or if the person in question thinks that he will not be able to satiate it anymore in the future

9) F 151 Rose³ = F 375 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 4.88 (I 70 Schrader)

- Problem: why does Athena tempt Pandarus (part of the auxiliary troops) to break the truce rather than a Trojan?

- Solution: the Trojans hated Paris and therefore would not risk the action just to get in his favor; Pandarus is a logical choice since he was a greedy man

10) F 155 Rose³ = F 379 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 6.234 (I 96 Schrader = 114 MacPhail)

- Problem: why does Homer criticize Glaucus for exchanging his golden armor for Diomedes' iron armor in *Il.* 6.232-236?

- Solution: Homer is not criticizing Glaucus for giving away his much more valuable armor; Glaucus is criticized for doing this in the middle of battle

11) **F 156 Rose³** = F 380 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 7.93 (I 107-108 Schrader)

- Problem: why does Menelaus initially rebuke the Achaean heroes for not accepting Hector's challenge but, after Nestor's speech, no longer volunteers

- Solution 1: Agamemnon had told him that he was no match for Hector

- Solution 2: Menelaus' initial reaction was emotional

- Solution 3: Menelaus was in no shape to fight Hector, since he had recently been wounded by Pandarus

- Solution 4: the stakes were not the same for both parties in a duel between Menelaus and Hector

12) F 157 Rose³ = F 381 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 7.229-230 (I 109 Schrader = 126 MacPhail)

- Problem: why does Ajax reveal Achilles' wrath to Hector in *Il.* 7.226-230?

- Solution: Ajax mentions Achilles' wrath to show to Hector that Achilles is not cowering away and that there are other Achaean heroes who are stronger than Achilles

13) F 159 Rose³ = F 384 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 10.194-197 (I 145-146 Schrader = 168 MacPhail)

- Problem: why do the Achaean leaders meet outside the wall in *Il.* 10.194-202, although this is less safe?

- Solution 1: it was unlikely that the Trojans would risk a sneak attack, since they already had the upperhand
 - Solution 2: it is customary to discuss important matters in a quiet place
 - Solution 3: it would be illogical to not get closer to the Trojans, since they sent out scouts
 - Solution 4: meeting inside camp would create panick because of the noise
- 14) F 162 Rose³ = F 402 Gigon = Str. 13.1.36 p. 598 C + Eust. *Il.* 7.445-463 vol. 2 p. 494 Stallbaum
- Problem: why does Homer report that the Achaeans built a wall to protect their camp in *Il.* 7.434-441, although in the present-day site no remnants of such a wall are found?
 - Solution: Homer invented the existence of the wall for dramatic purpose and therefore adds a prophecy that it will later be destroyed by Poseidon and Apollo
- 15) **F 163 Rose³** = F 387 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 19.108 (I 235-236 Schrader = 232-234 MacPhail)
- Problem: why does Hera demand an oath from Zeus, whereas elsewhere in the *Iliad* it suffices for Zeus to nod when he makes a promise?
 - Solution 2: it is logical to want the other person to swear an oath if important matters are at stake
- 16) F 165 Rose³ = F 403 Gigon = Plu. *De audiendis poetis* 12.32f
- Problem: Agamemnon's behavior is immoral, since he accepts a horse as bribe to release Echeolus from duty in *Il.* 23.296-298
 - Solution: it is good to prefer a good horse to a bad man (cf. Porph. *ad Il.* 23.296sq. [I 263 Schrader])
- 17) F 168 Rose³ = F 391.1 Gigon = schol. T Hom. *Il.* 24.569b1 Erbse = Porph. *ad Il.* 24.559sq. (I 277 Schrader) + F 391.2 Gigon = schol. b Hom. *Il.* 24.569b2 Erbse
- Problem: Achilles' character is anomalous since out of nowhere he suddenly becomes angry with Priam in *Il.* 24.569
 - Solution: unknown; probably: Homer portrays Achilles as someone with a lot of mood swings (cf. Arist. *Po.* 15.1454b)
- 18) F 173.1 Rose³ = F 396.2 Gigon = schol. HT Hom. *Od.* 9.345 Dindorf = Porph. *ad Od.* 8.564sq. (II 79-80 Schrader) + F 173.2 Rose³ = F 396.1 Gigon = schol. MQ Hom. *Od.* 9.333 Dindorf

- Problem: why does Odysseus tell the Phaeacians that he blinded Polyphemus, although the Phaeacians were also descendants of Poseidon?
 - Solution: Odysseus knew that the Phaeacians were enemies of the Cyclopes, who had driven them away to Scheria
- 19) F 176 Rose³ = F 399 Gigon = schol. N Hom. *Od.* 13 p. 789 Dindorf = Porph. *ad Od.* 17.188 (II 121 Schrader)
- Problem: why does Odysseus reveal his identity to Telemachus, the servant Euryclea and the two herdsmen but not to Penelope?
 - Solution 1: Odysseus needed the help of Telemachus and the selected servants in order to fight the Suitors
 - Solution 2: if Penelope stopped crying, this would be suspicious and thus might jeopardize the plan
- 20) F 177 Rose³ = F 400 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 17.291sq. (II 124 Schrader)
- Problem: uncertain; perhaps: why does Odysseus' dog die so suddenly in *Od.* 17.326-327?
 - Solution: the old dog died overcome with joy upon recognizing his old master
- 21) F 178 Rose³ = F 401 Gigon = Porph. *Od.* 7.258 (II 68-69 Schrader)
- Problem: why does Odysseus not accept the gift of immortality, offered to him by Calypso?
 - Solution 1: Odysseus wants to come across as more honorable to the Phaeacians, to whom he is telling his story, so that they speed up his return home
 - Solution 2: Odysseus did not trust Calypso
- 22) Eust. *Od.* 19.472 vol. 2 p. 213 Stallbaum = Porph. *ad Od.* 17.476sq. (II 126-127 Schrader) (not in Rose³ or Gigon)
- Problem: Odysseus proves his identity to the herdsmen Eumaeus and Philoetius on the basis of a scar on his foot; however, by this logic, any man with a scar can be identified as Odysseus (*Od.* 19.467-475)
 - Solution: unknown; perhaps: Euryclea does not merely recognize him by his scar but also by his stature and voice
- 23) P.Oxy. II 221 col. xiv 27-32 = schol. Hom. *Il.* 21, pap. 12, 286 Erbse (not in Rose³ or Gigon)
- Problem: why are Athena and Poseidon not helping Achilles in his fight against the Scamander but are only encouraging him?

- Solution: Hephaestus was already the opponent of the Scamander (cf. schol. bT Hom. *Il.* 21.288-291 Erbse = Porph. *ad Il.* 21.288 [I 250 Schrader])
- 3. Solutions based on the language
 - 1) F 145 Rose³ = F 369 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.305-329 (I 32-33, 34 Schrader = 44-46 MacPhail)
 - Problem: why does Calchas, in his interpretation of the portent in *Il.* 2.308-332 (a snake appeared at the altar, devoured a nest of 8 little birds along with their mother and then turned to stone) not discuss the petrification of the snake and what does it mean?
 - Solution: the petrification denotes the length and hard nature of the war
 - 2) F 149 Rose³ = F 373 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 12.374 (II 113 Schrader)
 - Problem: how can Homer claim that 'Helios sees all' in *Il.* 3.277 but in *Od.* 12.374-375 lets Lampetia report to Helios that his cattle has been slaughtered?
 - Solution 1: Helios sees all but not at the same time
 - Solution 2: Lampetia is to Helios what the eyes are to humans
 - 3) F 152 Rose³ = F 376 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 4.297-299 (I 73 Schrader = 84 MacPhail)
 - Problem: why does Nestor advise to put the the cavalry before the infantry and the cowards between these two (*Il.* 4.297-300: ἱππῆας μὲν πρῶτα σὺν ἵπποισιν καὶ ὄχρεσφι, / πεζοὺς δ' ἐξόπιθε στήσεν πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς / ἕρκος ἔμεν πολέμοιο· κακοὺς δ' ἐς μέσσον ἔλασεν, / ὄφρα καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλων τις ἀναγκαίη πολεμίζοι)
 - Solution: Nestor actually advises to put the cavalry on the flanks (πρῶτα = ἐπὶ τοῖς κέρασιν); in both the cavalry and the infantry, cowards stand next to courageous men (ἐς μέσσον = ἐναλλάξ μεταξὺ)
 - 4) F 153 Rose³ = F 377 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 2.447 (I 44-45 Schrader = 98-100 MacPhail) and F 175 Rose³ = F 373 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 12.374 (II 113-114 Schrader)
 - Problem: why is the head of Gorgo part of the *aegis* in *Il.* 5.741 but at the same time is said to dwell in Hades in *Od.* 11.634-635?
 - Solution: the *aegis* does not literally contain the head of Gorgo; instead, its stunning effect is compared to the petrifying effect of the Gorgo head
 - 5) F 154 Rose³ = F 378 Gigon = schol. bT Hom. *Il.* 5.778 Erbse
 - Problem: uncertain; perhaps: why does Homer compare Hera and Athena to fearful doves, although they are going to battle (*Il.* 5.778: αἱ δὲ βάτην τρήρωσι πελειάσιν ἴθμαθ' ὁμοῖαι, 'they both went on, resembling fearful doves in their ἴθματα')?

- Solution: ἵθματα means “trace,” i.e. the goddesses are compared to doves, since their traces are invisible

6) F 161 Rose³ = F 385 Gigon = Porph. *ad Il.* 10.252-253 (I 149-150 Schrader = 174 MacPhail)

- Problem: how can Homer claim in *Il.* 10.252-253 that ‘more than two thirds of the night had passed’ (παρώχηκε δὲ πλέω νύξ τῶν δύο μοιράων), while at the same time stating that one third is left (τριτάτη δ’ ἔτι μοῖρα λέλειπται)? If more than 2/3 of the night has passed, *less than* 1/3 of the night is left

- Solution: παρώχηκε δὲ πλέω νύξ τῶν δύο μοιράων means that ‘more than half of the night had passed.’ The night consists of two parts, each containing six hours. Of the 12 hours in total, more than half (8 hours) have passed. What remains is 4 hours, or 1/3 of the night

7) **F 170.1 Rose³** = F 393.1 Gigon = schol. T Hom. *Od.* 5.93e1 Pontani (Porph. *ad Od.* 5.93 II 50 Schrader) and F 170.2 Rose³ = F 393.2 Gigon = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.93c2+e2 Pontani

- Problem: why does Calypso mix nectar for Hermes (κέρασσε δὲ νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν), although the gods do not drink water?

- Solution: κέρασσε means ‘pour’

8) F 174 Rose³ = F 397 Gigon = schol. HQT Hom. *Od.* 9.525 Dindorf = Porph. *ad Od.* 9.525 (II 94-95 Schrader)

- Problem: why does Odysseus provoke Poseidon by saying to the Cyclops that not even Poseidon will heal the now blind Cyclops (ὥς οὐκ ὀφθαλμόν γ’ ἰήσεται οὐδ’ ἐνοσίχθων)

- Solution: Homer means that not even Poseidon *will be willing to* heal Polyphemus (οὐ βουληθήσεται) rather than *will be able to* heal (οὐ δυνήσεται), since Polyphemus is evil

9) schol. Ge Hom. *Il.* 21.390a Erbse (not in Rose³ or Gigon)

- Problem: it is inconsistent for Zeus to condemn Ares’ love for strife and war in *Il.* 5.890-891 but at the same time enjoy seeing the gods fight among each other in *Il.* 21.388-390

- Solution: Zeus rebukes Ares for *always* wanting war; similarly, there is a difference between someone who likes wine and an alcoholic (cf. Porph. *ad Il.* 21.388sq. [I 254-255 Schrader = 288 MacPhail])⁹⁰

10) **Porph. *ad Il.* 11.637** (I 168 Schrader = 188 MacPhail) (not in Rose³ or Gigon)

⁹⁰ See Mayhew (2016); (forthcoming: ch. 8).

- Problem: how can the old Nestor lift his drinking cup, while the others are unable to do this (*Il.* 11.635-636: ἄλλος μὲν μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης / πλεῖον ἐόν, Νέστωρ δ' ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν)?
- Solution: Homer is comparing Nestor to other old men (ἄλλος = ἄλλος γέρων)
- 11) Eust. *Il.* 11.385 vol. 3 p. 218 van der Valk (not in Rose³ or Gigon)⁹¹
 - Problem: uncertain; perhaps: why is Paris addressed as κέρᾱ ἀγλαέ 'famous for your horn' in *Il.* 11.385?
 - Solution: κέρᾱς means 'penis' (αἰδοίῳ σεμνυνόμενον); the implication is probably that Paris excels in the bedroom rather than on the battlefield
- 4. No solution
- 1) **F 171.1 Rose³** = F 394.1 Gigon = Porph. *ad Od.* 5.334-337 = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334e Pontani (II 56-57 Schrader) + F 171.2 Rose³ = F 394.2 Gigon = schol. Hom. *Od.* 5.334c1 Pontani + F 171.3 Rose³ = F 394.3 Gigon = schol. H Hom. *Od.* 10.136 Dindorf
 - Problem: why is the epithet αὐδήεσσα used only for Calypso (*Od.* 12.449), Circe (*Od.* 10.136; 11.8; 12.150) and Ino (*Od.* 5.334), although other deities have voices too
 - Solution: αὐδήεσσα should be changed to αὐλήεσσα 'living alone' or οὐδήεσσα 'living on the earth'
- 2) Perhaps also *Et. Gen.* s.v. Ἀχερωΐς α 1507 Lasserre-Livadaras (not in Rose³ or Gigon)
 - Problem: perhaps: what type of tree is the ἄχερωΐς (*Il.* 13.389 and *Il.* 16.482)?
 - Solution: perhaps: ἄχερωΐς should be changed to ἄχελωΐς and refers to the black poplar⁹²
- 3) F 130 Rose³ = F 386 Gigon = schol. T Hom. *Il.* 16.283 Erbse
 - Problem: unknown
 - Solution: unknown
- 4) F 167 Rose³ = F 390 Gigon = schol. T Hom. *Il.* 24.420b Erbse
 - Problem: how can the wounds of Hector's corpse close (*Il.* 24.420-421), since wounds inflicted on a corpse after death do not close but rot
 - Solution: unknown

⁹¹ See Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 7). Schol. T Hom. *Il.* 11.385f Erbse and schol. Ge Hom. *Il.* 11.385 cite Aristotle for the explanation that κέρᾱς means bow (τῷ τόξῳ σεμνυνόμενε). However, Ἀριστοτέλης is probably an error for Ἀρίσταρχος, who is known to have defended the bow interpretation (cf. Apollon. *Lexicon Homericum* s.v. κέρ' ἀγλαέ p. 98 Bekker).

⁹² See Mayhew (forthcoming: ch. 3).

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