

WHAT IS *POLYKOIRANIE*?
ARISTOTLE AND ARISTARCHUS ON *IL.* 2, 204

1. The famous speech of *Iliad* 2 through which Odysseus, inspired by Athena and holding Agamemnon's sceptre, deters the Greek army from a disorderly flight, consists of two parts. In the first one (ll. 190–197) the Ithacan hero addresses his peers (l. 188 ὄν τινα μὲν βασιλῆα καὶ ἔξοχον ἄνδρα κιχείη), urging them to an appropriate behaviour in order to prevent Agamemnon's wrath; in the second one (ll. 200–206), he addresses the private soldiers (l. 198 ὄν δ' αὖ δῆμου ἄνδρα ἴδοι), recommending the advantages of obedience to one single ruler (l. 204 οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω).

The balance and imbalance of these two allocutions have been variously judged by modern critics: present-day consensus considers their combination as an ultimately convincing and consistent attempt at restoring Agamemnon's authority, carried out with a certain degree of rhetorical licence.¹ This opinion, however, was not shared by Aristarchus, who athetised ll. 193–197 as not adequately protreptic towards self-restraint (οὐ προτρεπτικοὶ εἰς καταστολήν: *schol.* AbT *Il.* 2, 193a)² and also—we are told by Aristonicus' *schol.* A(T) *Il.* 2, 192 a—suggested to transpose ll. 203–205 after the surviving l. 192:

οὐ γάρ πω σάφα οἶσθ'· τὸ ἀντίσιγμα, ὅτι ὑπὸ τοῦτον ἔδει τετάχθαι τοὺς ἐξῆς παρεστιγμένους τρεῖς στίχους [*scil.* 203–205]: εἰσὶ γὰρ πρὸς βασιλεῖς ἀρμόζοντες, οὐ πρὸς δημότας· “οὐ μὲν πως πάντες βασιλεύσομεν ἐνθάδ' Ἀχαιοί· / οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη” καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς.³

¹ C. Brügger, M. Stoevesandt, E. Visser, J. Latacz, *Homers Ilias. Gesamtkommentar* II/2 (München–Leipzig 2003) 63–68; D. Hammer, *The Iliad as Politics* (Norman, Oklahoma 2002) 88; G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad. A Commentary* I (Cambridge 1985) 136. See also below p. 76.

² For speculation on why Socrates omitted the lines in *Xen. Mem.* 1, 2, 58 see below n. 33.

³ On the critical signs accompanying lines 192 and 203–205 in ms. Venetus A see A. Ludwig, *Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik* I (Lipsiae 1884) 209 and H. Erbse's notes on the two Aristonicus scholia that anticipate and then pick up Aristarchus' proposal: *schol.* A *Il.* 2, 188 a: πρὸς τὴν τάξιν τῶν ἐξῆς τὸ ἀντίσιγμα, and *schol.* A *Il.* 2, 203 a

You do not yet know clearly [what is the mind of the son of Atreus]: (this lined is marked with) the antisigma, because it should be followed by the three lines that below are marked by *stigmai* [i. e. 203–205]: for these lines are suitable for kings, not for privates: “we Achaeans shall not all be kings here: a multiplicity of rulers is no good” etc.

Aristarchus’ textual choice, by virtue of which Odysseus would not qualify Agamemnon (l. 192) as a stern and irascible leader (ll. 195–196) but rather declare the leader’s and his own support for monarchic regimes (l. 204), has met with wide disagreement in modern times: “a not very convincing remark” according to Leaf,⁴ even “Aristarchus at his weakest and most subjective” in the words of Geoffrey Kirk,⁵ who detected here an extreme product of the rationalising fashion so typical of Alexandrian criticism. As a matter of fact, already the *schol.* bT (ex.) *Il.* 2, 203 b singled out a good explanation for leaving the peculiar order of Odysseus’ arguments untouched:

οὐ μὲν πως πάντες βασιλεύσομεν: οὐκ ἔσται δημοκρατία, φησίν. εἰ δὲ τοῖς μείζοσι ταῦτα ἔλεγεν, ἐξήπτε τὴν στάσιν, σπουδαρχιδῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐν τοσοῦτῳ θορύβῳ καθαπτόμενος.

We shall not all reign: it will not be a democracy, he says. If he had spoken thus to the powerful, he would have stirred dissension, attacking ambitious men in such a tumultuous situation,

which is by and large Leaf’s view. Whereas the reference to δημοκρατία might be a peculiar heritage of Aristotle’s speculation (as we shall see in a minute), the idea that Odysseus employs the *πρέπουσα παρρησία* for each of the groups he sets out to persuade is espoused by Ps.-Plut. *De Hom.* 166, 3–4,⁶ and seems to be implied already by Xenophon (*Mem.* 1, 2, 58–59; see also Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 26, 5 for the comparison on this ground between Socrates and Odysseus).

τούτῳ καὶ τοῖς μετ’ αὐτὸν δύο ἢ στιγμὴ παράκειται. It is clear that Aristarchus did not accept in his text *Il.* 2, 206 (see Erbse’s note ad *schol.* *Il.* 2, 205), a poorly witnessed line that even modern editors (including M. L. West) normally excise from the text.

⁴ W. Leaf (ed.), *The Iliad* I (London 1900 [repr. Amsterdam 1971]) 62 who believes that ll. 203–205 “gain in rhetorical significance if addressed to the multitude, to whom they can cause no offence”. More extensively on the subject of Odysseus’ clever adaptation of his speech to the audience, A. J. Karp, “Homeric Origins of Ancient Rhetoric”, *Arethusa* 10 (1977) 244–247.

⁵ Kirk (n. 1) 135.

⁶ M. Hillgruber, *Die pseudo-plutarchische Schrift De Homero II* (Stuttgart–Leipzig 1999) 258–259.

Yet Aristarchus' main argument, taken at face value regardless of the overall rhetorical strategy pursued by Homer (through his character), is not absurd: why should Odysseus remind a group of simple privates the principles presiding over the sphere of political power, to which they will never have direct access (democracy remaining, even in *Iliad* II, conspicuously remote from Homer's political horizon)?

Ancient Homeric critics unanimously identified as monarchy the regime praised by *Iliad* 2, 204 οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω.⁷ Modern interpreters are more sceptical, and view the line less as a celebration of autocracy (the Homeric βασιλεύς being only a *primus inter pares*) than as an “Aufruf zur (milit.) Disziplin”, an exhortation to obey to one only commander-in-chief.⁸ But—to address the real object of our inquiry—which is the negative or polemical pole implied by Odysseus' words, i. e. what exactly is πολυκοιρανίη? Is it just anarchy? The context of the passage in book II and Homeric ideology *tout court* point to the rule of the few, oligarchy, a regime where power belongs to few aristocrats or high military leaders (“die ‘Vielenherrschaft’ mehrerer Adliger”)⁹ as opposed to a superior leader, as Eustathius of Thessalonica beautifully documented already many centuries ago;¹⁰ this is also the dominant interpretation in ancient authors (especially when the Roman imperial ideal sets in),¹¹ and *Il.* 2, 200–205 can even interfere with other Homeric contexts where the ὁμόνοια among *principes* is at stake.¹²

⁷ See e. g. Ps.-Plut. *De Hom.* 182, but the same idea underlies of course Philodemus' *De bono rege secundum Homerum* and Dio Chrysostom's *Orr.* 1–4: see Hillgruber (n. 6) 289–290, and esp. Dio Chr. *Or.* 3, 46. Cp. also Phil. *Leg. ad Cai.* 149.

⁸ Brügger et alii (n. 1) 67; K. A. Raaflaub, “Homeric Society”, in: I. Morris, B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden–New York–Köln 1997) 663–665; P. G. Katzung, *Die Diapira in der Iliashandlung* (diss. Frankfurt am Main 1960) 61–63. The idea of primacy in military rule also occurs in *schol. D Il.* 2, 204.

⁹ Chr. Meier, “Macht und Herrschaft in der Antike”, in: O. Brunner, R. Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* III (Stuttgart 1972) 822.

¹⁰ His commentary on these lines (*in Il.* 202, 12–34) is—as often—remarkably detailed, and spots an attack on democracy in l. 203 (οὐ μὲν πως πάντες βασιλεύσομεν ἐνθάδ' Ἀχαιοί: see above the *schol. Il.* 2, 203 b) and one on aristocracy in l. 204.

¹¹ See e. g. Dio Chr. *Or.* 3, 45–46; Suet. *Calig.* 22, 2 (with negative overtones in depicting the despot) and *Domit.* 12, 7; Io. Lyd. *De mag.* 2, 7 (and 1, 36 on dictatorship); see also in particular the reference to aristocratic conspiracies in Corn. Nep. *Dion* 10, 6, 4 (a passage that earned our *gnome* its way into Erasmus' *Adagia* II, 7, 7) and—most famously—in Arius Didymus' parodical neologism πολυκαισαρίη, coined as a *caveat* against Caesarion's survival (Plut. *Anton.* 81, 5, later subsumed by C. Cavafy at the end of his poem *Caesarion*).

¹² The ἐν πολέμῳ of *Il.* 2, 202 creeps in the quotation of *Od.* 3, 127–129 (as a substitute for the correct εἰν ἀγορῇ in l. 128) in Ps.-Plut. *De Hom.* 145, 6 and

But the approach to this line rings on a different note in Aristotle: the purpose of this paper is to suggest that the controversy over the real purport of *Il.* 204 may not be Aristarchus' own fanciful invention, and may somehow be related to a Peripatetic stance on the issue.

2. The line appears twice in Aristotle's works: we shall leave aside the most famous occurrence, at the end of *Metaphysics* Λ (1076 a 3–4),¹³ where it metaphorically represents the natural tendency of all beings to be governed by a unitary principle—this passage contributed to the line's popularity in later centuries, both among philosophers¹⁴ and in a Christian perspective, as soon as the invoked absolute *κοίρωνος* becomes identical with God.¹⁵

Aristotle's other quotation of this line involves its programmatic value in the narrower terms of political doctrine—a self-evident fact,¹⁶ which led someone, at some (probably very late) stage in history, to associate tentatively *Il.* 203–205, suspected by Aristarchus as we have seen, with the tyrant Pisistratus, the alleged author of an epoch-making *recensio Homerica*.¹⁷ Be that as it may, Aristotle is the first to work a reference

Philod. *Bon. reg. sec. Hom.* XXIX, 26–30 Dorandi (hence probably in their common source).—I shall not consider here the occurrence of *πολυκοιρανίη* in Rhian. fr. 1, 10 Powell, where the term, albeit preserving a negative flavour, indicates the “rule over many” as opposed to the “rule by many” (see N. Hopkinson, *A Hellenistic Anthology* [Cambridge 1988] 228).

¹³ See M. Sanz Morales, *El Homero de Aristóteles* (Amsterdam 1994) 156–157.

¹⁴ Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 27, 7 and 33, 3; see also, with religious overtones, *schol.* bT [ex.] *Il.* 2, 205 a, and, interestingly, Boeth. *Cons. phil.* 1, prose 5.

¹⁵ The process starts in Hebrew quarters (Phil. Jud. *Conf. ling.* 170) and soon becomes a commonplace in Christian authors: Tat. *Or. ad Gr.* 14, 1; Ps.-Just. *Coh. ad Gr.* 17, 2; Epiphani. *Ancor.* 104, 3; Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 1, 1 (Procopius' words during his martyrdom); Cyrill. *In Iul.* 7 (PG 76. 848 D); Theodoret. *Gr. aff. cur.* 3, 2. See N. Zeegers-Vander Vorst, *Les citations des poètes grecs chez les apologistes chrétiens du IIe siècle* (Louvain 1972) 230–232 (for a fuller list) and 237–239. I am indebted to Margherita Fantoli (Pisa).

¹⁶ See *schol.* b T (ex.) *Il.* 2, 204 *δογματίζει δὲ περὶ πολιτειῶν*. And *Il.* 2, 204–205 open the section *Περὶ μοναρχίας* of Stobaeus' *Anthologion* (4, 6, 1).

¹⁷ We owe this information—whose sources and reliability are open to all sorts of doubts—not to a scholium in ms. Venetus A, but solely to a note penned by the humanist Vettore Fausto in his copy of the *editio princeps* of the *Iliad* (now ms. Marc. gr. IX, 35: c. B iv recto): Ν ὁ Φ (the annotator's usual abbreviation for his own name Νικήτας ὁ Φαῦστος) ἔλεγεν ὅτι ταῦτα καλῶς εἰ ὡς ἀπὸ Πεισιστράτου: see H. Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* I (Berolini 1969) 225; Guil. (Wilh.) Dindorf, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem ex codicibus aucta et emendata* I (Oxonii 1885) xxiv–xxvi; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Homerische Untersuchungen* (Berlin 1884) 260. On Fausto, his books, his studies and his handwriting, see in particular F. Vendruscolo,

to *l.* 204 in a systematic treatment of political regimes, namely *Politics* 4, 4, at the heart of an elaborate discussion about the various forms of democracy and its degeneration, demagoguery (1292 a 7–15):¹⁸

ἐν μὲν γὰρ ταῖς κατὰ νόμον δημοκρατουμέναις οὐ γίνεται δημαγωγός, ἀλλ' οἱ βέλτιστοι τῶν πολιτῶν εἰσιν ἐν προεδρίᾳ· ὅπου δ' οἱ νόμοι μὴ εἰσι κύριοι, ἐνταῦθα γίνονται δημαγωγοί. Μόναρχος γὰρ ὁ δῆμος γίνεται, σύνθετος εἰς ἕκαστων· οἱ γὰρ πολλοὶ κύριοι εἰσιν οὐχ ὡς ἕκαστος ἀλλὰ πάντες. Ὅμηρος δὲ ποίαν λέγει οὐκ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι πολυκοιρανίην, πότερον ταύτην ἢ ὅταν πλείους ᾦσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες ὡς ἕκαστος, ἄδηλον.

For in cities under democratic rule guided by law no demagogue can arise, but the best of citizens attain the foremost positions; wherever the laws are not sovereign, on the other hand, demagogues arise. For the populace becomes a monarch, a composite one made of many, since the many are not sovereign individually, but collectively. Which *polykoiranie* Homer presents as “no good”, whether this one or the regime where there are several individual rulers, remains unclear.

Books 4–6 of the *Politics* contain an “empirical” analysis of existing constitutions which despite its Platonic flavour in terms of methodology has often led scholars to assume that they were composed after the more theoretical and “idealistic” books 7–8.¹⁹ In particular, in our passage—

“Dall’ignoto Falconio all’immortal Fausto”, *AION (filol.)* 27 (2005) 37–50, who also suggests a link between his Homeric studies and the teaching of Marcus Musurus (see the notes on c. V ii verso–c. V vii recto of Marc. gr. IX, 35).

¹⁸ On the forms of constitution see e. g. E. Schütrumpf (– H. J. Gehrke), *Aristoteles. Politik. Buch IV–VI* (Darmstadt 1996) 130–140; M. H. Hansen, “Aristotle’s Alternative to the Sixfold Model of Constitutions”, in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Paris 1993) 91–101; Chr. Eucken, “Der aristotelische Demokratiebegriff und sein historisches Umfeld”, in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles’ “Politik”* (Göttingen 1990) 277–291; R. Mulgan, *Aristotle’s Political Theory* (Oxford 2nd 1987); A. Rosenberg, “Aristoteles über Diktatur und Demokratie”, *RhM* 82 (1933) 339–361.

¹⁹ See E. Schütrumpf (transl., comm.), *Aristoteles. Politik. Buch VII–VIII* (Berlin 2005) 139–170; J. Roberts, *Aristotle and the Politics* (Abingdon–New York 2009) 105–130; M. P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Savage 1992) 90–100. On the structure and dating see also some of the papers collected in *La “Politique” d’Aristote*, Entretiens Fondation Hardt 11 (Vandoeuvres–Genève 1965; see especially R. Stark, “Der Gesamtaufbau der aristotelischen *Politik*”, 3–51 [with discussion], somehow tuning down the rigid analytical approach of Werner Jaeger); an updated overview in D. Keyt, F. D. Miller Jr. (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle’s Politics* (Oxford–Cambridge 1991) 2–5 (book 5 has a reference to the assassination of Philip II in 336, see 5, 10, 1131 b 1–3).

rounding off an “astonishingly unmethodical chapter”²⁰—the philosopher analyses the fifth and last form of democracy, where the common people rule and not the law: he is describing a sort of assembleary regime where popular leaders flatter the mob and appeal to its passions, thus giving way to something much akin to a collective tyranny of the populace (conceived as one block: this is demagogy, or the monarchy of the mob).²¹

Aristotle’s “philological” doubt concerns the real purport of *Il.* 2, 204, whether namely this line is directed by Homer against the demagogy just described or against a regime where power is held by a multiplicity of distinct (and distinguished) individuals *ut singuli*.²² Which regime Aristotle is exactly alluding to here, is partly unclear: Eckhart Schütrumpf, the latest commentator, states openly that this is a reference to the aforementioned, milder and better form of democracy, where the law reigns and the βέλτιστοι τῶν πολιτῶν are in power (1292 a 8).

First of all, let us examine this *iunctura*: according to Newman, the βέλτιστοι correspond to “the upper class of citizens”, rather than to ethically superior members of the *polis*:²³ in the cities κατὰ νόμον δημοκρατούμενοι, these are the only citizens who have access to office. This is a central issue: the main difference between the first four types of democracies (see esp. the third and fourth ones in *Pol.* 4, 1292 a 1–4) consists in the share of the *demos* having access to public office.²⁴ Aristotle praises and recommends a “Mischverfassung” based on democracy, provided “die Bekleidung der Ämter den Besten, die aus den höchsten

²⁰ R. Robinson (transl., comm.), *Aristotle. Politics Books III and IV* (Oxford 1995) 81. But see a different evaluation in E. Schütrumpf, *Die Analyse der Polis durch Aristoteles* (Amsterdam 1980) 90–108.

²¹ See e. g. A. Rosler, *Political Authority and Obligation in Aristotle* (Oxford 2005) 241; M. Davies, *The Politics of Philosophy* (Lanham 1996) 80–81; E. Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Oxford 1946) 167–169. On the complicated and hotly debated issue of the relationship of this constitution with Athens’ historical democratic regimes see Schütrumpf (n. 18) 298–305 and 155–163.

²² J. Tricot (transl.), *Aristote, La Politique I* (Paris 1962) 279 n. 3. As the anonymous referee kindly points out to me, the ἄδηλον formula is not unknown to Aristotle when he discusses different philosophical interpretations of poetic works (see e. g. *Metaph.* 984 a 2; *sim.* 1000 a 9–23).

²³ W. L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle IV* (Oxford 1902 [repr. 1950]) 179, with many examples of this meaning in Hellenistic and later authors. In *Pol.* 1301 b 1–4 the “well born” citizens are nearly, but not entirely equated with the morally excellent: see J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton 1989) 249–250.

²⁴ See Newman (n. 23) xxxvi and xxxvii (“eligibility to the most important offices is confined to those who possess the requisite property-qualification, which increases with the importance of the office, or... to those who are capable of filling them”).

Vermögensklassen stammen, überlassen *ist*":²⁵ it is thus clear that a good democracy necessarily embraces some elements of aristocratic/oligarchic nature, for even if the Stagirite does not regard exclusion from office for a more or less wide part of the *demos* as an obstacle towards the definition of a democratic regime,²⁶ it is nonetheless true that such a division of power (high offices to the notables, passive rights to the *demos*) appears in *Politics* 5 as the hallmark of a mixed constitution between δημοκρατία and ἀριστοκρατία (5, 8, 1308 b 38–1309 a 9)–and the same is true for the praise of “agricultural democracy” in book 6 (6, 4, 1318 b 6–1319 b 1).²⁷

Let us now come back to the sentence of *Politics* 4, 4 concerning *Il.* 2, 204: it is clear that Aristotle’s first alternative refers the line to degenerate democracy, to the anarchic mob that controls affairs, an interpretation which surfaces again in his pupil Theophrastus.²⁸ In modern times, Marxist critics have read the unfortunate appearance of Thersites shortly after Odysseus’ speech precisely in this key, considering Thersites as a “proto-demagogue” or as a forerunner of democratic stances;²⁹ but in fact the Thersites episode enacts the humbling of the unruly military leader rather than the disparagement of the mob.³⁰

Now to Aristotle’s second alternative: according to Schütrumpf, as we said, the wording ὅταν πλείους ᾧσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες ὡς ἕκαστος should apply to the “good” democratic systems as defined in the foregoing sentences. At face value, it could well refer broadly to any system “in which there are more rulers than one”;³¹ however, even if Schütrumpf is

²⁵ Schütrumpf (n. 18) 155–156.

²⁶ Schütrumpf (n. 18) 288; Newman (n. 23) xxxviii.

²⁷ Here, however, the “notables” (οἱ βέλτιστοι 1318 b 32) appear to be the worthiest rather than the richest men. See the succinct but very clear commentary by D. Keyt, *Aristotle. Politics. Books V and VI* (Oxford 1999) 208–211, who also tackles the problem whether this can indeed be called a democracy.

²⁸ Theophrastus is our sole other witness for the ancient interpretation of *Il.* 2, 204 as a critique of democracy: one of the first peculiarities of the ὀλιγαρχικός in *Characters* 26, 2 consists in his special *penchant* for this particular line—the rest of the epic, we are told, he ignores; see J. Diggle (ed.), *Theophrastus. Characters* (Cambridge 2004) 465–468.

²⁹ See A. Rosenberg, *Demokratie und Klassenkampf im Altertum* (Freiburg 2007 = 1921) 17; G. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London 1981) 413; L. Spina, “Oratoria di Tersite, retorica di Tersite”, in: L. Calboli Montefusco (ed.), *Papers on Rhetoric* III (Bologna 2000) 260.

³⁰ This is also the way Aeschines (3, 231) alluded to it: see e. g. Ober (n. 23) 179–180. Illuminating remarks on the status of Thersites and on the authority of Odysseus can be found in B. Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago 1994) 32–36.

³¹ Newman (n. 23) 180, comparing passages (in Thucydides, Xenophon etc.) where the multiplicity of military leaders (not of private soldiers) is at stake.

right, it is apparent that Aristotle's focus cannot be on the actual, entire political frame of those democracies (it would be very anachronistic, almost clumsy to involve Homer in a debate over an Aristotelian classification of 4th-century constitutions),³² but rather on their most characteristic feature, namely the "oligarchic" element they contain. This element is stressed by the specific addition ὡς ἑκαστος, well attested in another crucial passage about the separation between the masses sharing in deliberation and judgement and the βέλτιονες having access to the highest offices: *Pol.* 3, 11, 1281 a 39–b 37.

Thus, the Stagirite's second alternative implies the reading of πολυκοιρανία as something else than pure democracy, as a regime where single βέλτιστοι are admitted to office, in other words as a democracy with a decisive oligarchic / aristocratic counterweight. Now, *Iliad* 2, 204 is spoken by Odysseus to the δήμου ἄνδρες (l. 198) as opposed to the ἔξοχοι ἄνδρες (l. 188) addressed in the first of his two speeches: it seems clear to me that a discourse about the role of the βέλτιστοι in politics is totally out of place in a harangue to private soldiers, and would fit in much better in an address to the ἔξοχοι. In other words, Aristotle's second alternative seems to proceed from an understanding of the text that implies the same tension between the line's meaning and its context which later prompted Aristarchus to his drastic textual choice.

I would not push the argument so far as to argue that the debate on the textual status of *Iliad* 2, 197–205 was current in pre-Alexandrian times:³³ Aristotle's observation might well represent just his own doubts, and does not affect his allusion to the *facies* of this passage. On the other hand, however, we have remarked how peculiar Aristotle's interpretation turns out to be as opposed to the general *consensus* of later sources who read πολυκοιρανία as oligarchy; and we do know the Stagirite as a very attentive and reliable source of information about early philological debates on Homer's text.³⁴ Aristotle's interest for Homer's text and

³² Schütrumpf (n.18) 157 and 294 explains this away by ascribing to Aristotle's treatment a total "Indifferenz für Zeitverhältnisse".

³³ A similar idea is maintained by M. Bandini ("PBerol 21108 e l'Omero di Senofonte", *Maia* 46 [1994] 19–21) on the basis of the omission of ll. 192–197 in Socrates' quotation of this passage (*Xen. Mem.* 1, 2, 58). However, this omission has neither a moralistic bias nor can it be justified on the basis of Xenophon's picture of the Athenian philosopher (see M. Bandini, in *Xénophon, Mémoires I* [Paris 2000] 119–120), and at any rate the Alexandrian philologist does not refer to any textual variance in earlier mss., and motivates his proposal in a different way

³⁴ See e. g. A. C. Cassio, "Early Editions of the Greek Epics and Homeric Textual Criticism in the Sixth and Fifth Century BC", in: F. Montanari, P. Ascheri (eds.), *Omero tremila anni dopo* (Roma 2002) 124–132.

interpretation comes as no surprise if we believe Plutarch's information that he actually edited the *Iliad* in his capacity as a tutor for Alexander the Great.³⁵

In our case, Aristotle's ἄδηλον proceeds from his uncertainty about the exact meaning of the word πολυκοιρανίη—a word subsequent generations were to read in a purely oligarchic sense, i. e. relying more directly on his second interpretation. I venture the assumption that this very uncertainty prompted Aristarchus, who could hardly conceive of Homer's πολυκοιρανίη as democracy, to feel a certain uneasiness about the transmitted text and thus to suspect that *Il.* 203–205, if related to an aristocratic or semi-aristocratic regime, could be problematic within Odysseus' second speech to the army, and appear more at home in the first.

Actually, one might wonder if the detailed analysis of democracy and oligarchy in *Politics* 4—an analysis designed to “help the statesman improve the government of his city”³⁶—might have some connection with Alexander the Great's almost contemporary exploits.³⁷ The issue is of course very delicate, since we know very little about Aristotle's personal ideas on the Macedonian political system. Nevertheless, *Il.* 2, 204 appears to me as—to put it in Aristarchus' words—particularly ἀρμόζων πρὸς βασιλείας: one might surmise that the man who kept the *Iliad* under his pillow, chose *Il.* 3, 179 as his favourite line (see Plut. *Fort. Alex.* 331 c–d) and modelled his own life and deeds on those of the Homeric heroes,³⁸ had in mind precisely this line of Homer (and its reference to ὅταν πλείους

³⁵ See Plut. *Alex.* 8, 2, relying on Onesicritus, *FGrHist* 134 F 38. A strong case for the existence of this διόρθωσις (the famous *Iliad* ἐκ τοῦ νόρθηκος), and for its special design “al uso personal de Alejandro” is made by Sanz Morales (n. 13) 22–39. M. L. West, *Studies in the Text and Transmission of the Iliad* (München–Leipzig 2001) 25 and 72–73, more cautiously insists that we have no evidence that this “edition” played any role in the textual lucubrations of Alexandrian scholars.

³⁶ See R. Mulgan, “Aristotle's Analysis of Oligarchy and Democracy”, in: Keyt, Miller (n. 19) 308.

³⁷ See H. Kelsen, “The Philosophy of Aristotle and the Hellenic-Macedonian Policy”, *Int. Journ. of Ethics* 48 (1937) 1–64 (then in J. Barnes [ed.], *Articles on Aristotle* [London 1977] 170–194). For a different view see e. g. V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford 1938) 62–102; Robinson (n. 20) xii–xiii. More nuanced approaches e. g. in Ch. H. Kahn, “The Normative Structure of Aristotle's “Politics””, in: Patzig (n. 18) 378–381; R. G. Mulgan, “Aristotle and Absolute Rule”, *Antichthon* 8 (1974) 21–28.

³⁸ See J. M. O'Brien, *Alexander the Great* (London 1994) 43–100; E. Carney, “Artifice and Alexander History”, in: A. B. Bosworth, E. Baynham (eds.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford–New York 2000) 280–281 (with further bibliography).

ᾧσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες ὡς ἕκαστος, along perhaps with its cosmological interpretation in *Metaph.* 1076 a 4) when addressing to the Persian king Darius the famous maxim: “There cannot be two suns”.³⁹

3. The difficulty highlighted by Aristarchus (possibly in the wake of an Aristotelian input) left some traces also beyond philological debates. The *Techne rhetorike* falsely ascribed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus is actually a “disparate assemblage of essays on a variety of rhetorical themes”, and its chapters 8–9 might be the partially unfinished work of an anonymous rhetorician of the early II century AD, perhaps Aelius Sarapion.⁴⁰ From § 8 of the second chapter of this work we learn that Odysseus’ speeches in *Iliad* II had become the paradigm of a particular type of figured speech (or σχηματισμός), which consisted in criticising someone while attacking someone else, thus avoiding the offence that might arise from confrontational directness (p. 336, 11–15 Us.-Rad. = 98, 17–20 Dent. and 340, 6–8 Us.-Rad. = 102, 27–29 Dent.):

τὸ ἑτέροις διαλεγόμενον ἑτέρων καθάπτεσθαι, τὸ ἀσφαλὲς τοῦ μὴ προσκρούειν τῇ ὑπαλλαγῇ τοῦ προσώπου ἐνδιοικούμενον).⁴¹

While quoting extensively *Il.* 2, 188–99 and 2, 203–205, the author of this chapter of the *Techne* observes that Odysseus spoke to the people

³⁹ For the anecdote see e. g. Diod. Sic. 17, 54, 5 (insisting precisely on the threat to ὁμόνοια among rulers: οὐθ’ ὁ κόσμος δεῖν ἡλίω ὄντων τηρῆσαι δύναιτ’ ἂν τὴν ἰδίαν διακόσμησιν τε καὶ τάξιν οὐθ’ ἡ οἰκουμένη δύο βασιλέων ἐχόντων τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἀταράχως καὶ ἀστασιάστως διαμένειν ἂν δύναιτο); 30, 21, 4; Plut. *Reg. imp. apophth.* 180 b; Justin. 11, 12.

⁴⁰ See M. Heath, “Pseudo-Dionysius *Art of Rhetoric* 8–11: Figured Speech, Declamation, and Criticism”, *AJPh* 124 (2003) 86–93 for a discussion of ch. 9 and more generally for insights into the relationship of the treaty with Ps.-Hermogenes’ *On Method*. The most detailed analysis of the work remains K. Schöpsdau, “Untersuchungen zur Anlage und Entstehung der beiden Pseudodionysianischen Traktate *Περὶ ἐσχηματισμένων*”, *RhM* 118 (1975) 83–123. Some speculation on the function of examples in P. Chiron, “Quelques observations sur la théorie du discours figuré dans le *Τέχνη* du Ps.-Denys d’Halicarnasse”, in Montefusco (n. 29) 75–94. A new edition with commentary is now provided by S. Dentice d’Accadia (ed.), *I discorsi figurati I e II dello Ps.-Dionisio di Alicarnasso* (Pisa–Roma 2010).

⁴¹ The *προσώπων ὑπαλλαγή* is a well-known technique in Greek rhetoric: see e. g. Ps.-Herm. *Meth.* p. 442, 10–21 Rabe with a Demosthenic example (and, partly, Ps.-Demetr. *De eloc.* 292), with Schöpsdau (n. 40) 115 and n. 35 and Dentice d’Accadia (n. 40) 35 and 165. It is spotted by *schol. b T Il.* 2, 252–253 in Odysseus’ harsh words to Thersites, actually designed to instruct the entire body of the Greek army: see on this topic R. Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge 2009) 321–322.

the reproaches he wanted to address to the kings, and vice versa (p. 341, 6–8 Us.-Rad. = 104, 17–19 Dent.: ἄ γὰρ ἐβούλετο καθάψασθαι τῶν βασιλέων, τῷ δήμῳ διελέγετο· ἄ δ' ἐβούλετο ἐπιτιμῆσαι τῷ δήμῳ, τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν διελέγετο). Now, I am not sure that this interpretation should be taken as a contribution to the long-standing philosophical and political debate about the equity of Ulysses' treatment of leaders and privates in the Homeric scene, a debate witnessed since the times of Socrates (Xen. *Mem.* 1, 2, 58; Socrates fr. I.C.137 Giannantoni; Liban. *Decl.* 1, 93).⁴² But it is clear to me that the rhetor's observation tackles the same problem already posed by Aristarchus (and probably implicit in Aristotle), and that this is one of the several instances of his confrontation with earlier Homeric exegesis: it is, in other words, a typical explanation by way of a *σχηματισμός* ("figured speech") of an apparent *ἄτοπία* ("problem, absurdity") in Homer's text: in so far, it represents an alternative solution if compared to Aristarchus' approach.⁴³

Thus, whatever glimpses we get of the history of the ancient speculation on *Il.* 2, 204 provide an interesting test-case of the possible interplay between Aristotelian philosophy and Aristarchean philology (a connection that has been stressed in recent studies, partly modifying the more sceptical views of R. Pfeiffer),⁴⁴ and between the latter and Greek rhetorical studies of the Roman age.

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Аристотель и Аристарх находят трудности в похвале монархии (и предостережении против *πολυκοιρανίη*) в *Il.* 2, 203–205. Аристотель пытался найти объяснение этому пассажи в *Политике*, а александрийский филолог

⁴² So D.A. Russell, "Figured Speeches: "Dionysius", *Art of Rhetoric* VIII–IX", in: C.W. Wooten (ed.), *The Orator in Action and Theory in Greece and Rome (Fs. G.A. Kennedy)* (Leiden–Boston–Köln 2001) 164.

⁴³ See Dentice d'Accadia (n. 40) 35–37 and, for further examples, see Schöpsdau (n. 40) 110 n. 31. It is true that Ps.-Dionysius implicitly accepts the lines and that *schol. b T Il.* 2, 203 b (quoted above) defends them against Aristarchus' athetesis, but they do so on rather different grounds, which is why I cannot agree with H. Schrader, "Telephos der Pergamener", *Hermes* 37 (1902) 530–581 (541 n. 1), who postulates a common source.

⁴⁴ See most recently F. Schironi, "Theory into Practice: Aristotelian Principles in Aristarchean Philology", *CPh* 104 (2009) 279–316, with further bibliography.

(возможно, под влиянием аристотелевских сочинений) решительно предложил перенести эти строки после ст. 192. Автор статьи рассматривает различные аспекты ученой дискуссии вокруг гомеровского пассажа вплоть до эпохи Римской империи.

Both Aristotle and Aristarchus felt uneasy about Odysseus' praise of monarchy (and disparagement of *polykoiranie*) in *Iliad* 2, 203–205: the Stagirite tried to give a suitable philosophical explanation of the passage in his *Politics*, while the Alexandrian philologist (perhaps in the wake of Aristotle's doubts) decided *tout court* to transpose the lines. The present paper tries to follow the reasons and forms of this debate down to the imperial age.