

**The Idea of 'Sky' in Archaic Greek Poetry**  
**ἐν δὲ τὰ τεῖρεα πάντα, τὰ τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται**  
**Iliad 18.485**

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The divine smith fashions a world to be the emblem upon Achilles' new shield. Fertile Gaia, Ouranos, and Thalassa are put in place in the first line of the description, the toiling Helios and the full moon Selene in the second, and the signal constellations *τεῖρεα* in the third. Some of the latter are mentioned by name: the Pleades, the Hyades, Orion, and the Bear called Wagon, which alone of all has no share in the baths of Ocean. At the close of the shield's manufacture Ocean is emplaced along its extreme edge (606–607).

We assume that in Hephaestus's mind's eye was a clear image of the phenomena he was trying to depict on the shield; we assume further that this image as reported by Homer is an accurate representation of the then current conception about the parts of the world and their arrangement. Modern compilations, translations and commentaries make assumptions which defeat our understanding of Homer's clear image. We might all agree that the Homeric cosmography would comprise at least these features: earth below with interpenetrating sea, watery Ocean encircling both, and the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens above. Yet Homer does not say that Hephaestus placed sun and moon *in* or *on* Ouranos. It is only our belief that Greek and English semantics are congruent on all points in question that compels us to assume that Ouranos is ground in the god's construction and the constellations are subject. This assumption underlies the standard modern translations of *Iliad* 18.485: "... all the stars that heaven bears for garland ..." Fitzgerald; and "... all the constellations that festoon the heavens ..." Lattimore.

Ouranos is conceived as ground in both translations. Lattimore has interchanged subject and object, and has further confused the image by pluralizing Ouranos into the pallid "heavens". On the other hand, Fitzgerald, perhaps following Leaf's speculation, "... here, of course

it [the verb] means 'has set around it as a crown', the accusative being cognate ...<sup>1)</sup> follows Homer, at least in his choice of subject; but he still chooses the rather featureless "heaven" for his translation of Ouranos.<sup>2)</sup> Underlying the search for *les mots justes* is a real problem; the ancients, too, had their own difficulties with this line. According to the scholiast to manuscript A, Aristarchus read *ἔστεφάνωκε* "has crowned" as the verb in the line. This seems impossible; "hardly credible" as Leaf says. It seems unworthy on semantic grounds, for since the verb-form chosen is active voice, we would have to imagine Ouranos as the agent, crowning or offering a crown to the constellations. This seems unlikely to us even as a metaphor: do the constellations win any victories, real or imagined? Is heaven a judge of any competition between them? Such a reading evokes an unusual image to be sure. The reading is troublesome on formal grounds as well: in epic poetry the verb in question appears only in the middle/passive voice. Aristarchus's active form has no precedent known to us.

Zenodotus, on the other hand, read *ἑστήρικται*. This verb form offers a reading better only because it is attested at the end of the hexameter in a line having a similar context.<sup>3)</sup> No modern editors adopt these Alexandrian emendations into their texts against the manuscript tradition, in part because the tradition is supported by similar readings in other epic contexts: *ἑστεφάνωται* or its past tense equivalent occurs at the end of the hexameter in seven other passages in epic poetry: *Iliad* 5.739; 11.36; 15.153; *Odyssey* 10.195; *h. Aphrodite*, 120; *Scutum* 204<sup>4)</sup>, *Theogony*, 382.

But surely Zenodotus and Aristarchus knew these passages too. Why, we must ask, did they believe that the text should be altered here? They must have considered our passage to be materially different from those others—so different as to be unprecedented—and thus questionable.

Upon scrutiny these "parallel" passages turn out to be so different as not to be parallel at all. The verb "to crown" in the perfect mid-

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<sup>1)</sup> *The Iliad ad loc.* Compare "... womit der Himmel bekränzt ist ...". E. E. Seiler, *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch über die Gedichte des Homers und der Homeriden*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Leipzig, 1878 in the article on the verb.

<sup>2)</sup> English *heaven* is a word appropriate to the notion of a ground, coming from a root which means "cover"—a fabric which may be decorated.

<sup>3)</sup> *Scutum* 218: *ἑστήρικτο*. The passage, of course, has to do with the creation of a shield by Hephaestus as much as he does in our passage.

<sup>4)</sup> Bracketed by Rzach following Bauermeister.

dle/passive is to be found in all these passages. Its recurrence is the only motive for considering the passages to be parallel. But in five of the passages, against ours and two others, there is a prepositional or adverbial<sup>5)</sup> idea “around” which modifies the action of the verb: *Iliad* 5.739: “... around which [the Aegis] Terror + verb (ἦν περι μὲν πάντη φόβος ἐστεφάνωται) ...;” *Iliad* 15.153: “... around him [Zeus] a fragrant cloud + verb (ἀμφὶ δέ μιν θύονεν νέφος ἐστεφάνωτο);” *Odyssey* 10.195: “an island about which the sea + verb (τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωται);” *h. Aphrodite*, 120: “... round about [us dancers] a great crowd + verb (ἀμφὶ δ’ ὄμιλος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο) ...;” *Scutum* 204: “... round about [the gathering] infinite wealth + verb (περὶ δ’ ὄλβος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο) ...” These adverbial ideas prompt the reader to construe the verbs as passive voice: “is enwreathed ... around ...” Then one is led to apply the passive voice, justifiable in these contexts, to those passages in which there is no hint of the adverbial “around”. We may hypothesize, therefore, that Zenodotus and Aristarchus objected to the text because the parallels from other epic passages were not, in their eyes, parallels at all. Rather than being parallel, they are likely derivative, and the derivation – the first innovation – was likely due to misunderstanding of the archetype. The first innovation was then generalized and elaborated into a number of different metaphors as we have seen, one going so far as to have an *abstract* subject [ὄλβος], the preposition *περὶ* used in tmesis or as an adverb, and no real ‘head’ for the crown,<sup>6)</sup> so that the effect of the original is completely obscured. One of the remaining “parallel”<sup>7)</sup> passages, *Iliad* 11.36–37 may well be the archetype of all the others including the one under consideration. It evokes a definite and striking image – the Gorgon’s hair conceived of as a wreath [of serpents] rimming a shield:

τῆ δ’ ἐπὶ μὲν Γοργῶν βλοσυρῶπις ἐστεφάνωτο  
δεινὸν δερκομένη, περὶ δὲ Δειμὸς τε Φόβος τε.

<sup>5)</sup> The ancient scholiasts seem divided on whether to take these words as prepositions or as prefixes in tmesis: e. g. on *Iliad* 5.739 the scholiasts insist that *περι* have its accent changed since it is a postposition: ἀναστρεπτέον τὴν πρόθεσιν, ἵνα πρὸς τὸ ἦν συντάττηται.⊗ But vis a vis *Iliad* 11.36 just the opposite: ἡ ἐπὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐστεφάνωτο συντάσσεται. διὸ τὸν τόνον φυλακτέον.⊗ All scholia are quoted from H. Erbse ed., *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* (Scholia Vetera), Berlin, 1969.

<sup>6)</sup> *Scutum* 204, translated last in the above series.

<sup>7)</sup> The other “parallel” is *Theogony* 382–3, which seems to be an adaptation of our line: τοὺς δὲ μέτ’ ἀστέρα τίκτεν Ἐωσφόρον Ἥριγένεια / ἄστρα τε λαμπρῶντα, τὰ τ’ οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται.

The phrase with *περί* may well account for the appearance of *περί* and *ἀμφί* in passages modelled after this one. A misunderstanding arose from supplying *ἔστεφάνωντο* from the previous clause as the verb in the second (either *ἦστην* or *ἔστατον* is the proper supplement); hence *ἔστεφάνωντο* was construed with prepositional *περί* having 'shield' as its understood object (so parallel with *τῇ δ' ἐπί*): "Deimos and Phobos were emplaced around it as crowns." So the verb was read as passive, but in the original *Γοργώ* clause it is likely middle: "stood as crown."<sup>8)</sup>

If this analysis is accurate and if the language of our passage is derived from this or from a lost intermediary, then we must adjust our conception of the semantic content of *Ouranos*. In the passage in *Iliad* 11 Gorgo is the encircling subject and the shield is the ground. By analogy in our passage *Ouranos*, parallel to Gorgo as the grammatical subject, should be figure, and not the ground. And since Gorgo stands as a crown to the shield our verb too should be middle, not passive: "... the constellations to which *Ouranos* provides the crown." Thus *Ouranos* cannot, in our passage at least, be a simple lexical equivalent to "sky". It is an aspect of "sky," to be sure, shaped or functioning like a wreath.

The Gorgon's hair, attached as rim to a shield, has its parallel in Ocean at the end of the shield passage in *Iliad* 18, where Ocean is put last upon the shield to frame its circumference. Could it be that the poet was thinking of *Ouranos* as such a rim, too? Then the plane of the shield would correspond to the horizon line. If this were the case, then *Ouranos* would be an aspect of sky near the horizon. Horizon-sky? This image coincides with the contemporaneous archaeological evidence, for there are numbers of golden diadems extant from the middle and late Geometric period from several regions of Greece.<sup>9)</sup> These diadems are simply narrow bands deco-

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<sup>8)</sup> Merry and Liddell (*Homer's Odyssey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford, 1886) are the only commentators whose interpretation of these passages posits a middle voice. And then they don't state this in so many words. Commenting on *Odyssey* 10.195 they notice that "Once the verb is used with a sort of object accusative in the description of the shield of Achilles whereon are represented the constellations "which the firmament *has set as a border to itself*."

<sup>9)</sup> See J.N.Coldstream. *Geometric Greece*. London, 1977, pps.123, 198, 358. Examples of diadems of varying kinds, but all having the basic shape of a rim come to us from all periods of the Aegean Bronze Age, as far in the past as Early Minoan II: See Vermeule and Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Painting*, figures III.13-15; Demargne, *The Birth of Greek Art*, figures 224, 317, 343, 450, 451; and Cadogan, *Palaces of Minoan Crete*, p.27 without plates but referring to the three

rated with orientalizing or geometric motifs, which stood as crown to the head along the line of the temples, i. e. at the "horizon" of the cranial dome. Thus Ouranos as horizon-sky could plausibly be the subject of a verb in the middle voice: "stands as a crown."

Are there other grounds for limiting the denotation of Ouranos to horizon-sky? And even if Ouranos is exactly analogous to a golden diadem, it is nonetheless difficult to see how a diadem or any part of its wearer might be analogous to constellations. The second point will be addressed later, when we answer how Ouranos as horizon-sky can be thought of as starry (*Ούρανός ἀστερόεις*). The first crux can be explicated fully only by studying the semantics of *ούρανός* as it is used in the epic dialect. In the *Theogony* Ouranos is a proper noun, naming a deity of the sky. When Earth bears *Ούρανός ἀστερόεις* equal to herself so as to cover herself on every side,

*Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο Ἴσον ἑαυτῇ  
Ούρανόν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,  
ἄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ (126–28)*

it is clear that Ouranos is both a person and an aspect of nature; the same is true of that Ouranos for whom Kronos lies in ambush as he comes to cover Earth bringing Night in his train:

*Ἦλθε δὲ νύκτι' ἐπάγων μέγας Ούρανός, ἀμφὶ δὲ Γαίῃ  
ἱμείρων φιλόνητος ἐπέσχετο καὶ ῥ' ἐτανύσθη  
πάντη (176–78).*

In the *Odyssey*, however, the facts are not so clear-cut. Poseidon sends a storm to conceal earth and sea alike; Night arises from heaven, *ὀρώρει δ' ούρανόθεν νύξ* (5.294), much as *Ἥριγένεια* is roused from Ocean by Athena: *αὐτίκ' ἀπ' Ὠκεανοῦ χρυσόθρονον ἡριγένειαν ᾤρσεν* (23.347). One is not certain here whether *Νύξ* and *Ούρανός* deserve deific capitals (as *Ἥριγένεια* and *Ὠκεανός* surely do in 23.347). Throughout, in many contexts, *Ούρανός* is simply equivalent to "sky".<sup>10</sup> How did the semantics of the word evolve, from common noun to proper, or vice-versa? If the *Theogony*

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gold-leaf, short diadems found in the Early Minoan II tombs at Mokhlos, one of which was decorated abstractly, another with eyes and the third with a pack of canines (wolves?).

<sup>10</sup> In the *Odyssey* (14.302) the incognito Odysseus tells Eumaeus a story of his travels: "When Crete was out of sight astern, no land anywhere to be seen but sky and ocean ..." Sky, sea, and land, each deific in some contexts, are here simply features of the sailors' world.

and the *Odyssey* are roughly coeval, the two concepts of sky seem to coexist.<sup>11)</sup>

We may trace back the steps whereby, in one conception at least, *Ούρανός* became *ούρανός* in epic poetry. A frequent epithet of Ouranos in the epic is *εὐρύς*, “broad.” In many passages the epithet seems appropriate only to the physical expanse of “sky” to which both earth and sea are equal, for they too receive the same epithet.<sup>12)</sup>

On the other hand the broad Sky, which the gods possess, does not seem equivalent simply to “sky”, *τοῖ [οἱ θεοί] ούρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν* (*Od.* 1.67, etc.). This Ouranos is the special province of Zeus as distinct from Poseidon’s sea and Hades’ *ζόφος* (earth and high Olympus are held in common), and it has two aspects, cloudy and bright (*Il.* 15.190–93):

ἦ τοι ἐγὼν ἔλαχον πολιὴν ἄλα ναιέμεν αἰεὶ  
παλλομένων, Αἴδης δ’ ἔλαχε ζόφον ἠερόεντα,  
Ζεὺς δ’ ἔλαχ’ ούρανὸν εὐρὺν ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσι·  
γαῖα δ’ ἔτι ξυνή πάντων καὶ μακρὸς Ὀλυμπος.

One wonders here whether we should not accord all these realms capital letters as we do Olympus.

Ouranos was created by Earth in the *Theogony* to be a *ἔδος ἀσφαλές* for the gods. In the *Odyssey* (1.67) The gods are said to possess Ouranos: *ούρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν*. This conception of Ouranos as home of the gods, therefore, does not seem to be idiosyncratic. Indeed, it seems to be universal, for in one of its aspects “broad sky” is none other than Olympus itself.<sup>13)</sup> In Book Five of

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<sup>11)</sup> One wonders whether the co-existence of the proper and the common nouns “Sky” with “sky” antedates epic diction or, perhaps, even the formation of proto-Greek as a dialect of Indo-European.

<sup>12)</sup> *χθών* is broad at *Il.* 4.182, and *Γαῖα* is broad-bosomed *εὐρύστερνος* at *Th.* 117; *Πόντος* is broad too: *Il.* 6.291. Hence Ouranos with his epithet “broad” is usually simply “sky” a counterpart to “broad earth” or “broad sea” (*πόντον*, *Iliad* 6.291). He is the sky: into which Agamemnon looks as he prays to Zeus (*Iliad* 3.364); which Zeus studs with clouds like flowers on a garland (*Odyssey* 5.302).

<sup>13)</sup> There is a considerable literature on this subject. The ancient scholia seem to define *ούρανός* as the name of the solid (crystalline sphere), below which zone are the clouds (darkness), e.g., that to *Iliad* 1.497: *τὰ νέφη: ὅτι οὕτως εἰρηκεν οὐχ ὡς τοῦ Ὀλύμπου ἐπ’ ούρανοῦ ὄντος, ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ καὶ αἱ κορυφαὶ τοῦ δρους ὑπὲρ τὰ νέφη εἰσίν. ὁ δὲ ὑπὲρ τὰ νέφη τόπος ούρανοῦ καλεῖται ὁμωνύμως τῷ στερεομνίῳ. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ούρανῳ καὶ ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ γεγονέναι αὐτὴν λέγει.*<sup>Α</sup> Most editors and commentators think that the two cannot be one and the same. See Myron Luch, *The Homeric Olympus*, Philadelphia, 1925, 91. Johanna Schmidt in *RE* 18.1 vacillates, declaring rather boldly that vis à vis *Iliad* 19.128 at least (see

the *Iliad* Ares appears in the clouds on his way up into the broad sky: *φαίνεθ' ὀμοῦ νεφέεσιν ἰὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν.* (867). In the very next line it says that he arrived at the seat of the gods, steep Olympos: *καρπαλίμως δ' ἴκανε θεῶν ἔδος, αἶπὺν Ὀλυμπον.* (868). Notice that the word *ἔδος* is used here of Olympos as in the *Theogony* of Ouranos. This interrelationship is confirmed by four other passages.<sup>14</sup>) And yet this Ouranos seems to be not horizon-sky, but sky of Dusk:

*Ἦλθε δὲ νύκτι ἐπάγων μέγας Οὐρανός, ... (Theogony 176–8).*

Ouranos, starry (*ἀστερόεις* at 127) and broad, is, to judge from these assembled passages from the *Theogony*, Dusk, who hides away Earth from view with his coming, while at the same time he brings on Night. Exactly in what sense Ouranos, the alter-Olympos, is to be linked with Ouranos, sky of Dusk, and with Ouranos of the horizon must wait for explication to the end of the paper.

Meanwhile we must ask whether Ouranos, sky of Dusk, is so portrayed elsewhere as he is in the *Theogony*? A passage from the *Iliad* seems to be based upon such a portrait:

the note below) they are definitely different. Aristarchus seems to have been on her side; for it is reported that he observed that in the *Iliad* *Ὀλυμπος* is always a mountain (See *Homer's Odyssey*, D. B. Monro ed., Oxford, 1901, note to 20.103). On the other hand M. P. Nilsson, in his *Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, Berkeley, 1932, 229 avers that *Iliad* 1.497 proves that they are to be identified. Most recently William Merritt Sale has written on the subject incidental to his treatment of Homeric formulae for Olympos and Ouranos: "Homeric Olympus and its Formulae," *American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984) 1–28. Sale's point is to demonstrate that the Homeric formulae for Olympos antedate those for Ouranos even though, in some measure, they are interchangeable. This demonstration rests on too many assumptions. His list of possibilities and sequence of development from them (22) is not exhaustive. What interests us here is that Sale declares for identifying Olympos and Ouranos "in some sense" (14), but when it comes to arguing about the formulas which developed around them he eschews the possibility that they are and were one and the same to Homer and to his predecessors (20–21). We know that many peoples consider a tall mountain in their region to touch the sky, and not merely to touch it but to pierce its navel, i. e. the pole around which it turns (e.g. the Papago of southern Arizona and their Baboquiviri peak). Such a belief may well underlie this seeming confusion in Homer. Compare Mt. Mandara and its role in the Hindu story "Amritamanthana."

<sup>14</sup>) *Iliad* 1.497: *μέγαν οὐρανὸν Ὀλυμπόν τε*; 19.128: *ἐς Ὀλυμπόν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα*, together with 130 in which Zeus, who is an Olympos (114), hurls Ate: *ᾧς εἰπὼν ἔρριψεν ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος*; and *Odyssey* 20.103f.: *ἔβρόντησεν ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος Ὀλύμπου ὑψόθεν ἐκ νεφέων*; together with 20.113: *ἦ μεγάλ' ἐβρόντησας ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος*.

αὐτόμαται δὲ πύλαι μύκον οὐρανοῦ, ἃς ἔχον Ὑραι,  
τῆς ἐπιτέτραπται μέγας οὐρανὸς Οὐλυμπός τε,  
ἥμὲν ἀνακλῖναι πυκινὸν νέφος ἢ δ' ἐπιθεῖναι. *Iliad* 8.393–5

“... and moving of themselves the gates of the sky groaned, which the hours kept, the Hours to whom was entrusted great Ouranos and Olympos, whether to unfold the thick gloom or to replace its cover.”

It is clear that the particular office of the Hours is to open or to shut the gates of Ouranos-Olympos, bringing Night from Day or Day from Night. The deified Ouranos seems not to be merely Sky, but Dusksky. We have here, furthermore, an archaic image (repeated, incidentally, at 5.749 ff.) which is a model of the contemporary conception of how the sky, at twilight, shuts off the light or brings it on.

The operation of these gates needs clarification. Think of them as hung not plumb but tipped to the angle of the north star with the polar<sup>15</sup>) axis as hinge point—one door opening to the west and one to the east. As night comes on, the eastern sky grows dark, shadows creep up the mountains in the east until they are in shadow; the purple sky extends itself to the zenith while the western sky is still bathed in golden light. Finally there is but a “crack” of light left on the western limb of the horizon as if the door were all but shut in a darkened room. Ouranos, bringing Night in his train, has retreated beyond the far ends of Earth. In the morning the reverse happens; the door opens but a crack at first and then extends its opening until it is fully light and the sun rises.

But the image may be clarified in a different way as well—through an examination of the semantics of doors and gates in the epic dialect. There was a Homeric double gate (*δι-κλίδες* from *ἀνα-κλίνω*, the verb translated “unfold” above). Such gates could stand in a wall, in which case they were usually called *πύλαι* as in the passage above; or they might be the entry portal into a *μέγαρον*, in which case they were called *θύραι*. An excellent description of the former is to be found in *Iliad* 12 (451–463), where Hector breaks through the Greek *πύλαι* using a huge boulder. Outer planks (*σανίδες*) protect the stoutly joined, tall double posts (*πύλαι δικλίδες*); on the inside they are barred with overlapping bars fastened with a single pin. The weak point which Hector attacks are the hinges (*θαιροί*). Odysseus’s high-roofed storeroom is similarly built (*Od.* 2.336–345). From the description of Alcinoous’s marvelous palace (*Od.* 7.83–90) we learn

<sup>15</sup>) To be precise, not the equatorial axis but the ecliptic one.



yet more terminology about his doors (*θύραι*) which had a *bronze* threshold (*οὐδός*), *silver* posts (*σταθμοί*), and lintel (*ὑπερθύριον*) and curved pushbar (*κορώνη*) made of *gold*. Are the precious metals used in the construction of these doors mentioned simply to convey unheard-of wealth? Or are these Gates of Paradise by theme as well as through luxury? The answer will be forthcoming in a few pages. The *σταθμοί* mentioned (the same word is used of the bearing pillars of a roof, as at *Od.* 17.96) are clearly so named because they are set in to be plumb (*στάθμη*). There is another word (*φλιά*) for the doorpost, as we see at *Od.* 17.221.

Such is the vocabulary of doors and doorways in Homer. But to the poet of the *Odyssey*, a door is not simply a door, but the symbol of the house's main support—not just the posts and lintels which hold it up, but its human mainstay, Odysseus himself. In the passage last noted the goatherd Melanthios shows his true allegiance and character. Infected with horrible *ἄτη* he offers insults to Eumaeus and to Odysseus, who is present in disguise:

*πῆ δὴ τόνδε μολοβρόν ἄγεις, ἀμέγαρτε συβῶτα,  
πτωχὸν ἀνηρόν, δαιτῶν ἀπολυμαντήρα;  
ὄς πολλῆς φλιῆσι παραστὰς θλίψεται ὄμους.  
αἰτίζων ἀκόλους, ... (219–222)*

“Where are you taking that glutton, unlucky Swineherd? This disgusting beggar, bad penny at our feasts? Begging for a handout he'll stand about rubbing his shoulders on many a doorpost ...”

Far from being the mere insults which they seem, Melanthios's words are a *κληδών* which foretell the manner of his own death and reveal the true identity of the man to whom he speaks. Odysseus is the “door” of the house, the lintel upon whom its burdens ultimately rest. This portrayal is anticipated in earlier passages, lending gravity to the foolhardiness of Melanthios here. Odysseus's first act of public revelation occurs at the doorway where he fights the old beggar Iros in a battle which foreshadows that with the suitors:

*Ἦς οἱ μὲν προπάροιθε θυράων ὑψηλάων  
οὐδοῦ ἔπι ξεστοῦ πανθυμαδὸν ὀκρίωντο. (18.32–33).*

During the battle the hero girded up his loins revealing his mighty thighs and broad shoulders: *φάνεν δέ οἱ εὐρέες ὄμοι* (67–8). Iros landed a blow to his left shoulder, but Odysseus's riposte was crushing, wrecking the hinge of the beggar's jaw (*ὁ δ' ἀύχεν' ἔλασσεν ὑπ' οὔατος, ὅστέα δ' εἴσω/ἔθλασεν*) (95–6). Then could Odysseus reclaim his favored place at the threshold, slinging over his shoulder as

he went the rucksack in which he carried his braided swordbelt. Thereupon he warned Amphinomos that the master would return to take vengeance; that now there was still time for repentance, but only the option of blood-vengeance would remain once Odysseus should come back under his roofbeam: *ἐπεὶ κε μέλαθρον ὑπέλθη* (150). Not only are Melanthios's words a *κληδών*, but they are cast in figures. "Rub" (*θλίψεται*) is a double entendre, for door timbers are sanded (*ξεστοί*). "Standing around" (*παραστάς*) is in polyptoton, for the same word (but a different part of speech) means "doorpost", and now we can aver that Odysseus's shoulders (*ῶμοι*) are not merely part of his anatomy, but stand for the whole man as pillar of his house.<sup>16)</sup>

In Book 22 the suitors are done to death by the hero and his son from the vantagepoint of the only doorway into the room, a door which, as Melanthios had reported to the suitors, could be held by one man against a crowd (138). The suitors were forced to fight, supplied with armor from the storeroom by Melanthios. But Odysseus sent Eumaeus and the cowherd to put a stop to the goatherd's treachery. The two followed him to the storeroom and concealed themselves, each one standing alongside one of the doorposts: *τὼ δ' ἔσταν ἐκάτερθε παρὰ σταθμοῖσι μένοντε* (181). When the unsuspecting Melanthios exited across the threshold, they seized him and strung him up just as Odysseus had specified: they lashed him to the doorplanks with his hands and feet tied behind him, suspending him by a woven rope; then they hoisted him up alongside the high post (*κίονα ὑψηλήν*) to the height of the joists (*δοκοῖσιν*) (175-76 = 193-94). Eumaeus's last jeer is that in such a position, Melanthios can spend the night in soft comfort, nor will he miss Dawn on her golden throne rising from the streams of Ocean:

*νῦν μὲν δὴ μάλα πάγχυ, Μελάνθιε, νύκτα φυλάξεις,  
εὐνή ἔνι μαλακῇ καταλέγμενος, ὡς σε ἔοικεν  
οὐδὲ σέ γ' ἠριγένεια παρ' Ὠκεανοῖο ῥοάων<sup>17)</sup>  
λήσει ἐπερχομένη χρυσόθρονος, ἥνικ' ἀγινεῖς  
αἴγας μνηστήρεσσι δόμον κάτα δαῖτα πένεσθαι. (195-199).*

<sup>16)</sup> The association of man and pillar occurs again at the close of the poem where Odysseus protests the deconstruction of his bed (23.191 ff.): "An old trunk of olive grew like a pillar on the building plot, and I laid out our bedroom round that tree, lined up the stone walls, built the walls and roof, gave it a doorway and smooth-fitting door. Then I ... hewed and shaped that stump from the roots up into a bedpost (*καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνα ἐρμῖν' ἀσκήσας*) ..."

<sup>17)</sup> This line was considered spurious by Monro and by Merry and Riddell owing to the fact that the epithet *ἠριγένεια* is not used elsewhere without *Ἥως*.

The elaborated metaphor which casts Odysseus in the role of the door of the pillar of the house is not so unusual as it might seem upon first consideration. The same idea is repeated in Penelope's contest of the bed; the key to which is the recollection by the hero of the construction of the bed about the pivot-point and anchor of a great tree. This bed, once possessed, symbolized the sexual and administrative right-running of the household. Odysseus is the pillar of virtue and his minions, the herdsmen, are his surrogate twin-posts (*τῷ δ' ἔσταν ἐκάτερθε παρὰ σταθμοῖσι μένοντε*). Notice the allusion to wrong-running under the profligate depredations of the suitors alluded to in Eumaeus's jeer to Melanthios quoted above: Melanthios is a pillar-no-pillar; he will sleep in a bed-no-bed, and he is to be restrained from his morning office of plundering the herds. The symbolism attached to Odysseus as the upholder of good order is not confined to him alone; its application to the hero is likely borrowed from its use in the case of Atlas. At the opening of the poem which bears his name, Odysseus is confined upon the island of Calypso:

*νήσῳ ἐν ἀμφιρῦτῃ ὅθι τ' ὀμφαλός ἐστι θαλάσσης.  
νήσος δενδρήεσσα, θεὰ δ' ἐν δώματα ναίει.  
Ἄτλαντος θυγάτηρ ὀλοόφρονος, ὅς τε θαλάσσης  
πάσης βένθεα οἶδεν, ἔχει δέ τε κίονας αὐτὸς  
μακράς, αἶ γαῖάν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχουσι. (1. 50–54)*

"... swept by the sea on both sides, there where is the navel of the sea.<sup>18)</sup> An island of woods, and a goddess dwells on it, the daughter of Atlas of the baneful mind, he who knows the depths of the whole sea and himself holds up the long pillars which keep Earth and Sky [each] on their own side."

Atlas is like a doorway with two posts (*κίονας* here for *πύλας* or *σταθμούς*) keeping heaven from earth (*ἀμφίς*) at two points (*ἀμφίς*). Does not he, like Odysseus and the Hours which bring on Night and Day in their turns, symbolize the right-running of the universe? A passage from the *Prometheus Bound* provides a definite link, via the idea of the pole, between Atlas and the Gates of the Hours.

The text of the stasimon is uncertain in some places, but enough can be read with certainty for the point being made here. The Oceanids lament the fate of Prometheus, the whole earth sympathizes with his suffering and that of his brothers (*ξυνομαιμόνων*), especially the inhabitants of Asia, the Colchians (Amazons), and the

<sup>18)</sup> *Odyssey* 1. 50.

Scythians of Maeotis who dwell at the limits of the earth, and the Abaries (Hyperboreans) or Samartae (surely not the “Arabians” of the text) who inhabit fortresses (πόλισμα) in high crags (ὕψι κρημνον), which refer to the Gates<sup>19)</sup> of the Caucasus (397–424). Then it reads:

† μόνον δὴ πρόσθεν ἄλλον ἐν πόνοις  
δαμέντ' ἀκαμαντοδέτοις  
Τιτᾶνα λύμαις εἰσιδόμεαν θεὸν  
Ἄτλανθ' ὄς αἰὲν ὑπέροχον σθένος κραταιὸν  
οὐράνιον τε πόλον  
νώτοις ὑποστενάζει<sup>20)</sup>

“Only one other Titan have I seen before this day tortured in bonds unbreakable – the eversupporting, mighty strength of Atlas<sup>21)</sup> [who] roofs in <sup>22)</sup> with his back (νώτοις) the pole (πόλον) of Ouranos (425–430).”

The word πόλος used here for the more usual κίων allows the metaphor in ὑποστεγάζει to be suggestive not only of Atlas as supporter, but as heavenly gatekeeper. Like the doors of Night and Day which swing on a celestial axis and cover or uncover the sky, Atlas's back also acts as cover to the sky. Furthermore, πόλος seems to operate with πόλισμα and πύλας in a play on words which suggests that Prometheus (at the Caucasus) in the East performs a task parallel to that of Atlas in the West. At some point in the development of a mythology from this image, Atlas was identified with the western

<sup>19)</sup> Hermann's Πύλας for the text's πέλας. Hermann reasons from the point of view that there was a well-known locale, the Gates of the Caspian, located in the Caucasus (not merely near them). But we may add an argument from lexical grounds as well: the verb νέμω in the middle almost never lacks the accusative object.

<sup>20)</sup> The text of Denys Page, *Aeschyli Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoedias*, Oxford 1972, who prints daggers enclosing this strophe.

<sup>21)</sup> This author's reading Ἄτλαντος for Ἄτλανθ' ὄς after Heimsoeth. Page reports Heimsoeth's reconstruction; I have followed his suggested text in proposing my translation the general meaning of which is clear: μόνον δὲ πρόσθεν ἐν πόνοις / εἰδόμεαν θεὸν δαμέντ' / Ἄτλαντος ὑπέροχον σθένος κραταιόν. / ὄς γὰρ οὐράνιον τε πόλον νώτοις ὑποστεγάζει.

<sup>22)</sup> Reading ὑποστεγάζει for Page's ὑποστενάζει after a correcting hand in manuscript B. As Page himself says of codex M (not of this locus where he retains M): *contra multis in locis lectio in codice Mediceo corrupta in aliis multo seri-oribus sincera servatur*. Evidence from an Aeschylean fragment (298) preserves the idea and the vocabulary: Ἄτλαντος ἄθλον οὐρανοστεγῆ. The vocabulary of the passage from *Iliad* 8, from which Aeschylus may have drawn this image, does not help us, for the image of covering (ὑποστεγάζω, ἐπιθεῖναι in Homer) and the sound effects of groaning (ὑποστενάζω, μύχον in Homer) are both present in that passage.

of the two Gates, his brother Prometheus with the eastern, and, although he was not explicitly known as a supporter of the sky, Prometheus was identified with a mountain or range of mountains (the Caucasus) as Atlas was with the western, Atlas range.

If this image taken from a text – Atlas as doorway or gateway, with his legs as the pillars and his back and shoulders as the lintel – seems out of keeping with the traditional depiction in myth, it must be pointed out that in Greek art Heracles, *vice*-Atlas, is depicted in a pose like that of a Caryatid, helping to support the burden he bears with reflexed forearms held overhead<sup>23</sup>); compare his description in the *Theogony*:

Ἄτλας δ' οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχει κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης  
πείρασιν ἐν γαίης, πρόπαρ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων,  
ἐστηὼς κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ἀκαμάτησι χέρεσσιν. (517–19)

Having constructed a composite image from three sources, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and *Prometheus Bound*, we will find that composite justified completely by a passage from the *Theogony* (736–757):

Ἔνθα δὲ γῆς δνοφερῆς καὶ Ταρτάρου ἠερόεντος  
πόντου τ' ἀτρυγέτοιο καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος  
ἐξείης πάντων πηγαὶ καὶ πείρατ' ἔασιν  
ἀργαλέ' εὐρώεντα, τά τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ,  
740 χάσμα μέγ', οὐδέ κε πάντα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν  
οὐδας ἵκοιτ', εἰ πρῶτα πυλέων ἔντοσθε γένοιτο,  
ἀλλὰ κεν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα φέροι πρὸ θύελλα θυέλλη  
ἀργαλέη· δεινὸν δὲ καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι  
τοῦτο τέρας. Νυκτὸς δ' ἔρεβεννῆς οἰκία δεινὰ  
745 ἔστηκεν νεφέλης κεκαλυμμένα κυανέησιν.  
τῶν πρόσθ' Ἴαπετοῖο πάϊς ἔχει οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν  
ἐστηὼς κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ἀκαμάτησι χέρεσσι  
ἀστεμφέως, ὅθι Νύξ τε καὶ Ἡμέρη ἄσσον ἰοῦσαι  
ἀλλήλας προσέειπον, ἀμειβόμεναι μέγαν οὐδὸν  
750 χάλκεον· ἦ μὲν ἔσω καταβήσεται, ἦ δὲ θύραζε  
ἔρχεται, οὐδέ ποτ' ἀμφοτέρας δόμος ἐντὸς ἔεργει,  
ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ἐτέρη γε δόμων ἔκτοσθεν εἴουσα  
γαῖαν ἐπιστρέφεται, ἦ δ' αὖ δόμου ἐντὸς εἴουσα  
μίμνει τὴν αὐτῆς ὄρην ὁδοῦ, ἔστ' ἂν ἵκηται,  
755 ἦ μὲν ἐπιχθονίοισι φάος πολυδερκῆς ἔχουσα,  
ἦ δ' ὕπνον μετὰ χερσὶ κασίγνητον Θανάτοιο,  
Νύξ ὀλοή, νεφέλη κεκαλυμμένη ἠεροειδεῖ.

<sup>23</sup>) On one of the metopes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia.

And there, in all their order, are the sources and ends of gloomy earth and misty Tartarus and the unfruitful sea and starry heaven, loathsome and dank, which even the gods abhor. It is a great gulf, and if once a man were within the gates, he would not reach the floor until a whole year had reached its end, but cruel blast upon blast would carry him this way and that. And this marvel is awful even to the deathless gods.

There stands the awful home of murky Night wrapped in dark clouds. In front of it the son of Iapetus stands immovably upholding the wide heaven [Ouranos] upon his head and unwearing hands, where Night and Day draw near and greet one another as they pass the great threshold of bronze: and while the one is about to go down into the house, the other comes out the door. And the house never holds them both within; but always one is without the house passing over the earth, while the other stays at home and waits until the time for her journeying to come; and the one holds all-seeing light for them on earth, but the other holds in her arms Sleep the brother of Death, even evil Night, wrapped in a cloud.<sup>24)</sup>

Day and Night alternate with each other as is implied in *Iliad* 8. Night is viewed as a cloud both here and in that passage. In both places the alternation of the two takes place at a doorway. The passages are elaborated from the same astronomical and meteorological conceptions, conceived of in terms of doorways, axes and thresholds. But the conception of Ouranos in this picture enables us further to compare this passage with that in *Iliad* 18 with which this discussion began, for Ouranos is worn on Atlas's head like a crown.

But what aspect of the sky is like a crown, and how can this be a crown to the constellations? We have already concluded that in certain passages Ouranos is horizon-sky and in others he is Dusk sky. In this image from the *Theogony*, the time of day described is between day and night. The bronze threshold over which Day and Night pass is reminiscent of the coloration of the sky at that time of day.<sup>25)</sup> The fact that one of Ouranos's traditional epithets is *χάλκεος* "brazen,"<sup>26)</sup> leads one to conclude that Ouranos himself is the colored sky of twilight, symbolized at once by the brazen threshold

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<sup>24)</sup> Text edition and translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White in *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric*. Loeb Classical Library. London, 1920.

<sup>25)</sup> The same coloration (gold and silver) attaches to the doorway leading into the awesome house of Alcinous. Interestingly enough the doorway to the house of Odysseus is to become such a place of appearance and disappearance for Melanthios when Dawn on her golden throne arises from the streams of Ocean (*Odyssey* 23.176 ff.).

<sup>26)</sup> *Iliad* 17.425; 5.504. Some poet took this at face value, fool of the age of Iron, and thought of the whole vault of the sky as being brazen; then he refashioned the formula to suit his own time giving us the *σιδήρεος οὐρανός* "steely sky" of *Odyssey* 15.329. The idea stuck; cf. Empedocles DK I.209.

and by the crown as well. The idea of Ouranos as brazen threshold can be linked to certain lexicographical facts about *οὐρανός*: 1) The sun rises not into the sky of day (*αἰθήρ*) nor sets from it, but into and from Ouranos:

*Ἥλιος φαέθων ἐπιδέρεται ἀκτίνεσσιν  
οὐρανὸν εἰς ἀνιῶν οὐδ' οὐρανόθεν καταβαίνων. Theogony, 760–61*

2) Sounds reaching the home of the gods in Ouranos from earth must first pass from the earth and through the *αἰθήρ*:

*... σιδήρειος δ' ὄρυμαγδὸς  
χάλκεον οὐρανὸν ἵκε δι' αἰθέρος ἀτρυγέτιο. 27)*

3) Zeno defined Ouranos as the *αἰθέρος τὸ ἔσχατον*.<sup>28)</sup> Ouranos, therefore, is the colored sky<sup>29)</sup> which in the evening is the limit of *αἰθήρ* in the west and in the morning in the east. This idea provokes the image of the threshold with Day on one side and Night on the other.

Ouranos is also seen as a diadem which encircles the forehead of the dome of the sky. We must imagine that Atlas has a Janus-head, one face looking across the threshold east, the other west; and so the crown of Ouranos will have a morning aspect and an evening one. Ouranos, then, is also the name given to that “crack” of light remaining visible as the celestial gates swing open or swing shut.

These three images of *χάλκεος Οὐρανός* are consistent with the astronomical facts. But we still must explain how Ouranos acts as a diadem to the constellations. Furthermore, if Ouranos is Brazensky and not Nightsky, why is it that epic poetry often accords him the epithet “starry” (*ἀστερόεις*)? The first question is answered simply by appealing to the facts of dusk on a cloudless evening: the dimmer stars forming the constellations first appear on the side of the sky opposite that of the failing day, i. e., in the east; conversely those in the west stay in the sky longer in the morning than those near to the break of day. Hence Brazensky acts as diadem to these stars which lie scattered across the dome of heaven behind him.<sup>30)</sup>

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<sup>27)</sup> *Iliad* 17.425; 2.458, etc.

<sup>28)</sup> Fragment I.33.

<sup>29)</sup> Compare Varuna, the Vedic god of sky, sea and night, whose name clearly derives from a root, meaning “colored.” Since Wackernagel’s observations on *ouranos*, that it is not to be taken as a cognate of Varuna, few etymologists have had the temerity to claim that it is; see Chantraine and Frisk ad. loc. Perhaps the issue needs to be re-examined.

<sup>30)</sup> And now the “companion” passage to ours, *Theogony* 381–2, is seen to be

“Starry” is more complicated. Significant apparitions of heavenly bodies occur for the ancients not at any time of day or night, but in between, in the sky of dawn or dusk. Such apparitions we call heliacal risings and settings; the heliacal rising of a star or planet occurs in the morning light as close to the eastern horizon as the brightness of the object allows, viz. Venus will be visible in the sky when just a few degrees distant from the sun, while the fainter Pleiades must be sixteen degrees (about one hour) separated from the sun to be visible. Each subsequent morning the body will be higher up in the sky at a given hour. The heliacal setting is the last visible appearance of a star or planet after sunset. The next evening the body will have disappeared into the glow of sunset. Hence “ἀστερόεις”<sup>31)</sup> refers not to all stars and constellations, but to those apparitions of the planets or stars appreciated by Greek observers, i.e. in the brazen light of Ouranos.

These conceptions also fit in with Ouranos as the equivalent of the seat of the gods, lofty Olympos. When the gods come to earth from Olympos, they also depart Ouranos, as Athena does to give counsel to Achilles: ἦλθε δ' Ἀθήνη οὐρανόθεν (*Iliad* 1.195).<sup>32)</sup> As communication from man to gods must pass through the bright sky to reach Ouranos, so the reverse is true; the gods in reaching earth (as they usually do in the guise of birds) must pass from Ouranos through the bright sky:

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spurious: τοὺς δὲ μετ' ἀστέρα τίκτεν Ἐωσφόρον Ἠριγένεια / ἄστρο τε λαμπρόωντα, τὰ τ' Οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωνται. Early born (bearing?) Dawn produces a child sired by Astraios (Night? or an alter Ouranos?) The child, Morningstar, is appropriate to dawn since it appears at or just before first light. It could also be an offspring appropriate to Ouranos, the bronze sky, which begins to appear at the same time. But the ἄστρο of the next line are not appropriate as children of Dawn. While they are still visible at Dawn's early light, they have been visible all night long and so can in no way be equated to Morningstar as children of Dawn.

<sup>31)</sup> The appropriateness of this epithet is questionable in some passages, e.g. *Odyssey* 9.527. This lack of fitness is due not to the poet's inattention to semantics in favor of metrical considerations (as is implied in W. B. Stanford's note ad. loc.), but to the fact that semantic change altered the field of this Ouranos. Thus cautioned, we should not be too ready to refer to specific occurrences of an epithet as “pointless.” Helios rising into the starry Ouranos (*Od.* 11.17 and 12.380) i.e. into the Brazensky, is a case in point. The epithet, formerly thought to be seriously inappropriate, now assumes a “normal” meaning.

<sup>32)</sup> In one such passage Hermes's theophany is said to take place from the bright sky, ἐξ αἰθέρος (*Odyssey* 5.50), but the view given above is more usual and correct (e.g. *Iliad* 17.545).



ἡ δ' [Ἀθήνη] ἄρπη εἴκυϊα τανυπτέρουγι λιγυφώνω  
οὐρανοῦ ἔκ κατεπᾶλτο δι' αἰθέρος. *Iliad* 19. 351

Ouranos Brazensky, at the edges between the bright sky of day and the sky of night was the home of the gods, Olympos, – or rather Ouranos was conceived of as the brazen threshold of the celestial palace.<sup>33)</sup>

In one instance the deity travelling from Olympos did not pass from Ouranos to earth, but was suspended there in heaven to be a spectacle for gods and men; Hera was suspended from on high, two anvils hung from her feet, bound by golden bonds:

ἦ οὐ μέμνη ὅτε τ' ἐκρέμω ὑπόθεν, ἐκ δὲ ποδοῖν  
ἄκμονας ἦκα δύω, περὶ χερσὶ δὲ δεσμὸν ἦλα  
χρῦσεον ἄρρηκτον; σὺ δ' ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλησιν  
ἐκρέμω. *Iliad* 15. 18–21.<sup>34)</sup>

Occasionally, however, the theophany, while coming from the same direction and with the same goal, takes on a startlingly different form. Apollo appeared in midday like a star shooting off many sparks (ἀστήρ here = meteor), and the gleam from it reached broad heaven.

ἔνθ' ἐκ νηὸς ὄρουσεν ἄναξ ἐκάεργος Ἀπόλλων,  
ἀστέρι εἰδόμενος μέσῳ ἡματι· τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ πολλαὶ  
σπινθαρίδες πωτῶντο, σέλας δ' εἰς οὐρανὸν ἴκεν.  
*H. Apollo* 441–443

Likewise Athena appeared as a shooting star<sup>35)</sup> seen by Zeus to be a sign for men.

οἶον δ' ἀστέρα ἦκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω,  
ἦ ναύτησι τέρας ἠὲ στρατῶ εὐρέϊ λαῶν,  
λαμπρόν· τοῦ δέ τε πολλοὶ ἀπὸ σπινθήρες ἴενται·

<sup>33)</sup> Olympus as mountain with its snow and brightness-epithets seems equivalent to that αἰθήρ which borders on Ouranos.

<sup>34)</sup> Compare 15.192. αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλησι seems to be a hendyadys for “Ouranos” (νεφέλησι refers to the obscure sky of Night and αἰθέρι to bright sky; between them is Ouranos).

<sup>35)</sup> Leaf has a rather confusing note ad loc. He claims that Athena's transformation is metaphorical only: “We cannot suppose that Athena changed herself into a fireball or meteor.” Yet when he refers to the passage from the Hymn to Apollo he is forced to admit that Apollo is actually metamorphosed into a fireball. Then why not Athena? Homer reports the real (not imagined) reaction to the fireball; folks are unaware that it is Athena and believe that it is sent by Zeus. Their interpretation is tantamount to juridical astrology.

*τῶ εἰκυῖ' ἦιζεν ἐπὶ χθόνα Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη,  
καὶ δ' ἔθορ' ἐς μέσσον. θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εἰσορόωντας.  
Τρῳάς θ' ἵπποδάμους καὶ εὐκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοῦς·  
ᾧδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον·  
"ἦ ῥ' αὖτις πόλεμός τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνὴ  
ἔσσειται, ἦ φιλότητα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι τίθησι  
Ζεύς, ὃς τ' ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται."* *Iliad* 4.75–84.

We may conclude that when they wish to make a theophany, the gods appear to men as sign-stars (whether suspended or shooting) in the (twilight) sky. The image is clear: stars appearing into Ouranos from Aither (i. e. at their heliacal rising) are as portentous and auspicious of the gods' apparition on earth as morning birds of omen coming from certain quarters of the sky. But such is also the apparition of sign-stars whose names are divine, but not Olympian<sup>36</sup>):

*οἶος δ' ἀστὴρ εἶσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ  
ἔσπερος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν οὐρανῶ ἴσταται ἀστῆρ,  
ὧς αἰχμῆς ἀπέλαμπ' εὐήκεος, ἦν ἄρ' Ἀχιλλεύς ...  
*Iliad* 22.317–319<sup>37</sup>)*

"As a sign-star (*ἀστῆρ*) moves among the stars in the milky sky of twilight, Hesperus who rises up the most beautiful sign star in Ouranos, so shone the light from the spearpoint of Achilles.

The context makes it clear that *νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ*, "in the milk of night"<sup>38</sup>) corresponds to Ouranos, and in this part of the sky Hes-

<sup>36</sup>) That Olympus, home of the gods, is Ouranos, and that the Olympian gods sometimes appear as stars would imply, contrary to opinion accepted since the appearance of Franz Cumont's "Les noms des planètes et l'astrolatrie chez les Grecs," *L'antiquité classique* 4 (1935), 5–43, that one avatar of the archaic Olympian deities was as astral gods, planets, meteors or stars. This question invites re-examination, viz. the author's unpublished "Greek Astronomical Terms Prior to 400 B.C." delivered before the History of Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Association, in Tucson, Arizona, 13 January 1985.

<sup>37</sup>) Compare 22.26–31.

<sup>38</sup>) There is a large literature on this phrase; an important recent treatment is Adrian Parvulescu, "Homeric (*ἐν*) νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ" *Glotta* 63 (1985), 152–59. A list of the secondary with some primary sources which debate the meaning of this phrase appears in his note 29. Since the appearance of this article in *Glotta* yet another work has been published: L. Gil, "Sobre una vieja crux homérica: νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ," *Estudios Clasicos* 26 (1984) # 87, 119–133. Parvulescu cites *Iliad* 22.317–19 to substantiate his claim that the phrase refers to late evening. While I agree with his conclusion about the time of day, his point of view that the phrase refers to milking time is insufficiently demonstrated. Some scholia, Appollonius, and Hesychius support this claim, and Parvulescu does muster interesting phrases from other Indo-European languages which refer to milking

perus appears in brilliance and beauty overriding the ordinary stars which may have appeared in darker parts of the sky. This is just where and when a Greek would have been looking for a sign from heaven. Hence Ouranos is *ἀστερόεις* because significant sidereal apparitions occur by definition in Ouranos, *νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ*. Ouranos, while playing the crown to the lesser stars of the darker sky, may wear a jewel, Hesperus, or one of the Olympian *ἀστέρες*.

And now we may offer a corrected translation of the problem-ridden line with which we began: "And on it [he placed] the whole field of enconstellated stars which Ouranos encompasses like a diadem."

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and to other regularities in the pastoral day. These phrases, however, refer to the various times of the day via ellipsis: "at milking[time]" Therefore they are not really parallel, because in our phrase there is no ellipsis – *νυκτὸς* is explicit. Furthermore when Parvulescu demonstrates that *ἀμολγῶ* is to be derived from the verbal root *ἀμέλω* "to milk," he does not follow the pattern of his parallels in deciding to translate *ἀμολγῶ* with "milking" (the process). The other words he cites, derived analogously from verb stems, do not denote processes like milking but resultant-things or concrete-things-acted-upon, e.g. *λοπός*, "peel" from *λέπω*, "to peel;" *δορός* "leathern bag" from *δέρω* "to flay;" *νομός* "alotted pasture" from *νέμω* "distribute." Hence, if it is to be derived from the verb stem "to milk," *ἀμολγός* ought to mean "milk," and the phrase "in the milk of night," i.e. late evening, when the sky is dark except in the very heart of the sunset point where it is still pale like milk in a dark bucket. A second quote from Hesychius glosses *ἀμολγῶ* with *ζόφω*, which definitely relates the term to the growing gloom.