

PHOENIX OF COLOPHON FR. 5 DIEHL

(ap. Athen. XI, 495 D)

Θαλῆς γάρ, † ὅστις¹⁾ ἀστέρων²⁾ † ὀνήματος
καὶ τῶν τότ', ὡς λέγουσι, πολλόν³⁾ ἀνθρώπων
ἔων⁴⁾ ἄριστος, ἔλαβε πελλίδα χρυσῆν.

(1) Either (a) ὅστις or (b) ἀστέρων plus ἔων must be corrupt. If (b) is the case, then Casaubon's ἀστέων (for the transmitted ἀστέρων) combined with Gulick's ἔην (for the transmitted ἔων) seems to be the most likely emendation.

(2) However, I hate to sacrifice the transmitted ἀστέρων. For, after all, Thales was the first Greek astronomer. Cf. Diog. Laërt. I, 23: δοκεῖ δὲ (sc. Θαλῆς) κατὰ τινας πρῶτος ἀστρολογῆσαι... ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἡρόδοτος (I, 74, 2) θανμάζει, μαρτυρεῖ δ' αὐτῷ καὶ Ἡράκλειτος καὶ Δημόκριτος. Timon. fr. 23 Diels:

οἷόν θ' ἐπὶ Θάλητα σοφῶν σοφὸν ἀστρονόμημα.

A. G. VII, 83 (both ap. D. L. I, 34):

τόνδε Θαλῆν Μίλητος Ἰᾶς θρέψασ' ἀνέδειξεν
ἀστρολόγον πάντων πρεσβύτατον σοφίῃ.

(Incidentally, the form ἀστέων, for ἀστῶν, does not seem to be established).

(3) Consequently, I would consider the trivial ὅστις as a corruption. So did Gerhard, but his reading ἴστωρ (for ὅστις) is not convincing palaeographically. Thus read:

Θαλῆς <δέ>, γνώστης ἀστέρων ὀνήματος

Γνώστης was misread by some scribe as γὰρ ὅστις, that is all (cf. perhaps also πολλῶν A, for πολλόν).