

PHOENIX OF COLOPHON FR. 5 DIEHL

(ap. Athen. XI, 495 D)

Θαλῆς γάρ, † ὅστις¹⁾ ἀστέρων²⁾ † ὀνήματος
καὶ τῶν τότε, ὡς λέγουσι, πολλόν³⁾ ἀνθρώπων
ἑὼν⁴⁾ ἄριστος, ἔλαβε πελλίδα χρυσῆν.

(1) Either (a) ὅστις or (b) ἀστέρων plus ἑὼν must be corrupt. If (b) is the case, then Casaubon's ἀστέων (for the transmitted ἀστέρων) combined with Gulick's ἔην (for the transmitted ἑὼν) 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 τινος πρῶτος ἀστρολογῆσαι... ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἡρόδοτος (I, 74, 2) θαυμάζει, μαρτυρεῖ δ' αὐτῷ καὶ Ἡράκλειτος καὶ Δημόκριτος. Timon. fr. 23 Diels:

οἷόν θ' ἔπιτὰ 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 γάρ ὅστις, that is all (cf. perhaps also πολλῶν A, for πολλόν).