Although the heroes of the Trojan War were known to the Middle Ages as dukes, counts, and knights, their histories and personalities did not depend on Homer but rather on Ovid, Virgil, Statius, Dictys, Dares, Benoit, and Guido. The medieval Iliad was the Pindarus Thebanus de bello Trojano, a synopsis of the Greek epic in eleven hundred wretched Latin hexameters. A few true lines of Homer were known, as they were to Dante, from quotations in Horace or Cicero, but the original epics on which Homer's great reputation among the ancients rested seemed hopelessly lost. Petrarch tells in his letters about his lifelong search for a manuscript of Homer and the eventual gift of one from Sigeros. The Latin prose translation of Homer, commissioned by Boccaccio and executed by Pilatus, filled Petrarch with "pleasure and joy"; but he undoubtedly read it, as

1 Homer, Ilias, ed. T. W. Allen (Oxford, 1931), I, 203-4; A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stebbing, A Companion to Homer (London, 1926), pp. 226-29. We possess information about Byzantine Homeric scholars like Arethas, Tzetzes, Moschopolos, Planudes, Thomas Magister, Triclinius, Michael Psellos, but only the commentary of Bishop Eustathius remains. It was once thought that Homer was read in ninth-century Germany, but this theory is no longer accepted; see Ernst von Leutsh, "Homeros im mittelalter," Philologus, XII (1857), 366-68. P. M. Marty's assumption that Walfrid Strabus owned and read a manuscript of Homer is seriously questioned by Georg Finsler, Homer in der Neuzeit (Leipzig and Berlin, 1921), p. 475.
2 The text can be found in Poetae Latini minores, ed. E. Baehrens (Leipzig, 1881).
4 Lettere senili, ed. G. Fracassetti (Florence, 1892), I, 326-27. The opinion that Petrarch read classical literature for undermeanings is advanced by Gustav Koerting, Petrarca's
he read the *Aeneid*, to find the moral meaning. Pilatus' rendering was followed by several other attempts at translation by Italians who had some Greek; yet it was not until Angelo Poliziano, the "Homeric Poet," set himself to complete the Latin version of the *Iliad* begun by Carlo Marsuppini that Homer began to be read in the West.  

As his *Ambra* shows, Poliziano had substantial knowledge of Greek and Greek literature, but like Petrarch he read classical authors for their ethical undertones. In a preface to Plato's *Charmides*, Poliziano praises the Christian implications of Hermes' remarks to Odysseus and Diomedes' prayer to Athena; in his "Oratio in Expositione Homeri" he describes the epics as absolute expositions of vices and virtues, exact mirrorings of universal humanity. For him Homer's term for "essence of air" is "Olympus," and he finds in the device on Achilles' shield a complicated allegory. He also advises the Venetians at his lecture to learn the perfect literary interpretation of Homer from the Greek allegorizers, Dio Chrysostom, Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Crates, Zeno, and Heraclitus of Pontus. The first editors of Homer, Chalcondyles and Acciaiuoli, may have accepted Poliziano's recommendation because they furnished the Florentine edition of 1488 with the discourse on Homer by Dio Chrysostom, the biography of Homer ascribed for so long to Herodotus, and the *Life and Poetry of Homer* of the pseudo-Plutarch. The same retinue of Greek biographers and explicators was retained in Latin dress when within the first decades of the sixteenth century the Greek text was translated into that language. Between 1500 and 1505 Homer's *Iliad* was supplemented with poetic accounts of the war at Troy by Quintus Smyrnaeus, Colluthus, and Tryphiodorus, and in 1517 the commentary of Didymus was added. The allegorical readings suggested by some of these exegetes were greatly supported in 1521 by the publication of Porphyry's *Homeric Questions and Cave of the Nymphs*. This series of Neo-Platonic readings was followed in 1531 by the anonymous *Moral

---

5 Ficino, who gave Poliziano his Homeric title, describes his Latin version, which got no farther than Book Five, as "so good one did not know whether or not the original was better"; *Opera omnia* (Basel, 1576), p. 618.

Interpretations of the Wanderings of Odysseus, in 1542 by the massive commentary of Bishop Eustathius and the Homeric Commentaries of Proclus, and in 1554 by the Homeric Allegories of Heraclitus of Pontus. With this apparatus in print and generally in Latin, Renaissance men were able to read the Iliad and the Odyssey as sagely as their grandfathers read Virgil and Ovid.\(^7\)

Although fragments of Greek interpreters who used allegory to defend Homer against the charges of impiety levelled against him by the Platonists could be read in familiar Greek and Latin authors, it was in Heraclitus’ long but still incomplete allegorization of the epics that men of the sixteenth century found both theory and example.\(^8\) Heraclitus was born in the Christian era, but he was confused with his better, Heraclitus of Ephesus, and thought to be a contemporary of Socrates. This false identification seemed reasonable enough because the Republic contained most of the charges against Homer that Heraclitus pretended to refute. He attempted no feints but met the Platonic complaints head-on by stating openly that if the epics did not have hidden meanings Homer was the most blasphemous of men. The real accusation of impiety in Heracl-

\(^7\) The earliest Homeric allegorizer is the pre-Socratic Theagines of Rhegium, who explained the quarrel of the gods in the twentieth book of the Iliad as a lesson in physics. Poseidon (essential water) opposes Apollo (essential fire), and Hephaestus (earthly fire) stands against Scamander (earthly water). Hera, or air, is properly cut through by Artemis or moon, whose name means “air-cutter.” Hermes, or wisdom, fights Leto, or forgetfulness; and Ares, or foolishness, is routed by sagacious Athena. This allegory attributed to Theagines is preserved by Porphyry; see Quaestiones Homericarum, ed. H. Schrader (Leipzig, 1880), p. 241. It is also repeated in the pseudo-Plutarch, De vita et poesi Homeri, in Moralia, ed. D. Wittenbach (Leipzig, 1832), V. 2, p. 399. See also P. Decharme, La critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs (Paris, 1904), pp. 273-75; J. Pépin, Mythe et allégorie (Paris, 1958), pp. 97-98; F. Wehrle, Zur Geschichte der allegorischen Deutung Homers in Altertum (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 89-91. The allegorical interpretation of the same passage was used in 1517 to illustrate the moral mode of reading Homer by Erasmus’ friend Lodovico Ricchieri, who repeats from the pseudo-Heraclitus, the pseudo-Plutarch, or Eustathius the early Greek underreadings of the revolt of the gods against Zeus, of the adultery of Mars and Venus, and of the fable of Argus. He also knows Julian’s moralization of the legend of Castor and Pollux: Lectiones antiquae (Lyons, 1560), II, 555-57. Poliziano seems not to have heard of Theagines; his knowledge of Metrodorus may have come from the Ion; and his acquaintance with Zeno and Crates from either Dio Chrysostom (Orationes LIII, 4-5) or the pseudo-Heraclitus (Heraclitus of Pontus, Allégories, p. 27).

\(^8\) A Peri apiston, much later than the first-century Heraclitus, was ascribed to him and printed with his Allegories in the Renaissance. It is a series of chapters on individual myths and follows the euhemeristic method of Palaephatus. Orpheus and Hercules did not really descend into Hell; but when they returned from arduous adventures, men said “they had been through Hell.” The modern version of this text is reprinted in Mythographi Graeci, ed. N. Festa (Leipzig, 1902), III. 2. 73-87. The attack on Homer, as men of the Renaissance knew, went as far back as the so-called descent into Hell of Pythagoras described by Diogenes Laertius (VIII. 21), and everyone had known of Zoilus from Ovid’s Remedia amoris (365-68) if not from more recondite sources. Heraclitus disposes of Zoilus by calling him a “Thracian slave” and, hence, degrading him socially.
tus' opinion was not to be levelled at Homer but against the shallow, uneducated, not "truly purified" readers of poetry who are unable to follow "the lead of the epics towards holy truth" (1–3). Plato and Epicurus are in Heraclitus' words "enemies of those who have taken the ablutions" and, consequently, understand how these poems, or "gath­erings of allegories," must be read.

The Iliad begins, of course, with the bad shooting of Apollo, who hits dogs, mules, and men by the score but not the hated Agamemnon, who had offended his priest. The foes of Homer pointed scornfully at the absurdity of this episode, but Heraclitus allegorizes the god's bad aim in physical terms. The Greeks were camped near a sea-bog and were, consequently, liable to summer plague because of the sun's rays. Plagues, he explains, manifest themselves by first striking down animals and common people. This plague is a nine-day fever and is terminated by Achilles, pupil of Aesculapius the physician, who is assisted by Hera, or a change of air (63–68). Homer's account of the conspiracy against Zeus of some of the major gods also shocked the pious, but not Heraclitus, the scientific expounder. Zeus, or fire, is naturally opposed by Hera, or air; Poseidon, or water; and Athena, or earth. The conspiracy is betrayed by Thetis, or Providence, who is aided by her manifold powers, or many-armed Briareus. From this poetic event, Heraclitus assumes Thales and Anaxagoras got the basis of their philosophical systems, just as Epicurus, the ingrate, got his theory of pleasure from Odysseus' initial speech to Alcinous (39–41). As he looked through the Iliad Heraclitus found a spring myth in Hera's seduction of Zeus, a creation story in Zeus' seemingly brutal punishment of Hera, and "philosophical riches" in the ungodly battle of the gods, which is for him actually a fatal conjunction of planets, a conflict of vices and virtues, or, to credit Theagines' early reading, a struggle between the four elements (52–58). The essays of Dio Chrysostom⁹ and Plutarch¹⁰ which can be

⁹ The allegorical readings of Homer found in every edition as their endorsement Chrysostom's criticism of Plato's criticism and a recounting of the interpretive methods of Crates, Heraclitus, and Zeno as well as that of Antisthenes (Xenophon, Symposium III. 6) and Persaeus (Cicero, De natura deorum I. 14–15). Chrysostom states that there is a question whether Homer erred in his poetical presentations or really intended "after the custom of his age," to transmit theories "about the phenomena of nature in fictional form."

¹⁰ For the author of the pseudo-Plutarch's De vita et poesi Homeri (see note 7), the genius of the poet resides in his ability to "exhibit one thing by another" (70). He conveys his wisdom in "dark sentences" and "mythical expressions," but this procedure permits those "who desire to know" to be led "by the pleasures of the intellect" to the discovery of truth. "For what is stated directly is not valued, but indirection stimulates" (92). The gods of Homer are much more than they seem and are given bodies so men can comprehend them (113). The adultery of Mars and Venus is read as an allegory of Harmony, and seen as the
found in most sixteenth-century editions of Homer firmly supported the allegorical interpretations of the pseudo-Heraclitus. Further service was given the notion of a concealed meaning by the methods of the highly regarded Plotinus\(^\text{11}\)—methods which were fully reflected in the Homeric analyses of his pupils, Porphyry and Proclus.

Though they only contain allegorical fragments, the Homeric Questions of Porphyry were only known to the Renaissance in the epitomized Vatican text, a deficiency somewhat remedied by the light thrown on the Odyssey in his fully developed Cave of the Nymphs. Proclus' commentary on the Iliad, excerpted from his discourses on the Republic, was in Latin in 1542 together with the unknown allegorizer's Moral Interpretations of the Wanderings of Odysseus and was, consequently, available to men who could not read Greek. His critical effort is devoted to resolving the contradiction between Plato's praise of poets in the Phaedrus and his disapproval of Homer in the Republic. Proclus assumes that Socrates' basic objection to the Iliad arose from Homer's assigning human attributes to purely intellectual powers; but this could hardly be a valid objection since Homer, like Plato himself, used myth to shroud truth, filling his fable with "traces of mystical discipline" in order to stimulate a higher contemplation in his readers. Simple minds, Proclus proposes, prefer literalness; but Homer's mysterious meanings are for godlike intelligences, enabling them to penetrate to the limits of nature. With this hypothesis in mind he unfolds a deeper meaning in each of Homer's difficult episodes. When nothing arcane can be found he follows

---

source of Empedocles' philosophical theories (101-2). The combat of the gods, the seduction of Zeus by Hera, and her punishment by Zeus are interpreted traditionally (96-97).

\(^{11}\) When one looks at the Enneads (V. 8. 6.), translated for the Renaissance by Ficino, one finds the allegorical process working hard because Plotinus believes that all of men's artistic creations were reflections of divine truth and thinks that the Egyptians were wise to use pictures that exhibit "the absence of discursiveness in the realm of the intellect" in order to arrive at precise knowledge. Sculptors and men of letters knew the divine soul required a receptacle "serving like a mirror to catch its image." In the legend of Cronus, or the Intellectual Principle, Plotinus sees the god looking up to Uranus, or the Absolute, and down to his son Zeus, the All-Soul (V. 8. 3). Zeus looks up to both gods (V. 5. 3). Cronus is said to devour his children because the Intellectual Principle wishes to contain ideas and let none of them descend into matter, or be nourished by Rhea (V. 1. 7), whose sterility is suggested by her entourage of eunuchs (III. 6. 19). A philosopher's effort to stay in the realm of the intellect is allegorized in the myth of Narcissus, who was enchanted by "copies," or by Odysseus, who sailed home discontent with Circe and Calypso, "the delights of sensation" (I. 6. 8). Epimetheus, by rejecting Pandora ("all sensual gifts"), symbolizes those who would remain in the realm of the Intellect; but the rescue of Prometheus by Hercules indicates he was fettered with external bonds of his own creation (IV. 3. 14). Plotinus gives a great amount of attention to the Aphrodites of the Symposium (III. 5. 1-9; VI. 9. 9) and to the confusing legend of the Celestial and Infernal Hercules (I. 1. 12; IV. 3. 27, 32).
the advice of the great Alexandrian editor Aristarchus and permits Homer to explain Homer.¹²

When Proclus looked beyond the lines of the *Iliad* he saw cosmological propositions in the Homeric myths. The chaining of Cronus is the binding of the material to the “intelligible,” and the emasculation of the god symbolizes the evolution of first causes into secondary manifestations. The expulsion of Hephaestus is a parable of sensible creation, whereas the conflict of the gods is a description of the generation of secondary causes. In essence the gods are unity, although the causes emanating from them are often contrary to one another. Many gods are one and the same with Zeus; but others, the multiple Apollos, Poseidons, Hephaestuses, clearly are not, and from this diversity dissension arises. Because of this dissension Homer’s gods, to the distress of the friends of Homer, seem to be evil causes as well as good ones; but the distinction between good and evil is a human discrimination and by no means divine. There is good in evil, evil in good. The evil events related in the *Iliad* are generally not heaven-sent but the outcome of human depravity. Some of them demand a very subtle interpretation. When, for example, the gods laugh at the embarrassment of the embracing Venus and Mars trapped under the web of a cuckolded Vulcan, they are actually rejoicing because they themselves are really assisting Vulcan, who represents pure thought, which is static and thus lame, in the creation of the universe. The so-called lubricious Homeric account of Hera’s seduction of the marriage-tired Zeus is likewise a creation allegory: Original Reason seeks union with the One, and by this sexual act Hera portrays the joining of the Inferior to Order and Unity.

When philosophy does not help Proclus to disclose the second meaning of Homer, he falls back on a comparison of literals. Achilles’ savage mistreatment of Hector’s corpse yields no deeper philosophical comprehension; hence, Proclus informs the reader that military customs of the Homeric age demanded that a victor mutilate his enemy’s body. Eventually he manages to make his allegorical case against the Platonic opponents of Homer by finding parallels with the three stages of the life of Plato in the three major divisions of the *Odyssey* and by arguing that of the three types of poetry—the divine, the didactic, and the imitative—Plato disapproves only of the last, because it is “conjectural and imaginative.” But the commentary of Proclus was a candle in the sun compared to that of Eustathius, Bishop of Thessalonica.

The oceans of information with which Eustathius surrounded the Homeric poems contained grammatical instruction, etymological discourses, cross-references to Greek and Roman literature, historical evidence, and what appears to be his own sometimes sensitive analyses of character and episode. To provide himself with erudition he turned to almost five hundred early authorities, many of whom owe their meager survival to one of his citations. Although his sources are not always named, it is clear that the bishop overlooked no etymological explanation, no moral or physical allegory, and no euhemeristic conclusion that had come down to him. Some of these explanations may be original, but there is no way to judge Eustathius’ personal attitude toward this subtle type of interpretation. In the “Prooemium” to his commentary on the Iliad Eustathius states that Homer invented some of his fables but that “others are purely allegories.” He observes that on occasion Homer wrote in myths invented by his predecessors, “but there the allegory does not concern Trojan affairs but what the first composer intended.” Some scholars, he hastens to add, “and Aristarchus is one of this number,” think Homer means exactly what he says.

Like Cornutus, Eustathius cannot silently pass over the meaning of a proper name or a euhemeristic possibility. Eustathius rationalizes the statement in the twentieth book of the Iliad about the miraculous fecundation by Boreas of Erichthonius’ horses by relating it to the sexual activity of all animals in cool weather (1205. 40). The influence of Palaephatus’ method appears in Eustathius’ explanation of Deucalion’s story. Survivors of floods, he observes, are always surprised to discover that others have also escaped. When they notice that stones alone are unchanged by roiling water they assume that the other survivors were produced from these stones, because they also believe that Heaven can change men into stone (23. 27–24. 4). Some of Eustathius’ allegorical readings are unattributed but clearly traceable; others are not. Many

13 Eustathius, Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem (Leipzig, 1827–29), 1. 27–2. 1.
14 Ibid., 3. 22. There are in Eustathius at least seventy references to Aristarchus, the Alexandrian editor who divided the epics into books and even estimated the number of troops in each army (190. 40). Nettled by allegorizers and perhaps annoyed by his predecessor, Zenodotus, who emended or elided Homeric passages which were impious, Aristarchus insisted on absolute literalness. “Thanks to an inborn inclination to lying,” he says of the allegorists, “they put aside the literal for a moral, physical, or historical meaning.” On occasion, Aristarchus, if his remarks are faithfully repeated by Eustathius, skates close to allegory to get out of trouble (3. 22; 40. 38; 426. 30–31; 614. 5–7).
15 Eustathius knows Democritus’ physical explanation of ambrosia, Crates’ allegory of Agamemnon’s shield, and Heraclitus’ exposition of the plague or bad shooting of Apollo.
16 Some of the equivalents more difficult to work out are the symbolism of Zeus, who is fate (612. 33–35), the circle of heaven, Anima Mundi, air, prudence, mind-turning-in-on-it-
of the interpretations are traditional in part but have new twists and
turns that may be original with this commentary. 17 Often, however,
Eustathius, like a good medieval preacher, sees a sound moral parable.
When, for example, Dionysus is chased into the sea by Lycurgus, the
careful reader is advised thereby to temper his wine with water (626.
21). 18 In similar fashion the reader learns that women are the cause of
wars when Aphrodite takes Ares by the hand (1244. 40), or he gets
instruction in oratory when Priam pleads with Achilles in the Iliad's final
book (1353. 35). With Eustathius' folios before him, a sixteenth-cen­
tury reader of Homer would find the Iliad almost as full of hidden
meaning as the Bible.

II

It was, however, only the troublesome places in the Iliad that
required an allegorical apology; the whole of the Odyssey was explaina­
ble in the elucidating second sense. The Iliad, Eustathius wrote, "is
august, sublime, truly heroic," whereas the Odyssey is "the real product
of Homer's genius and filled with instruction for men" (4. 36–39). In
announcing this opinion Eustathius was following a pattern marked out
by generations of pagan and Christian readers of Homer who competed
with each other in following the travels of Odysseus, or Everyman, as he
wandered from temptation to temptation, or didactic experience to di­
dactic experience, through the Mediterranean Sea of human life. Clem­
ent of Alexandria, Augustine, the orthodox, and the heretical saw in the
Odyssey not only an account of Christian progress but also something
reminiscent of the life of Christ. 19 By the fifth century the relationship

17 The gathering of the gods at the beginning of the fourth book of the Iliad may,
according to Eustathius, be an astrological conjunction, but the golden floor and the cup of
gold carried by Hebe suggest serenity. The cup is the sun which draws ambrosia or humidity
from the earth to feed the planets (435. 31–436. 32; 438. 14–21; 446. 31–37; 448. 7–8), and
when Athena descends, Homer intends her to be seen as a comet. Eustathius adopts
Heraclitus' understanding of the real meaning of the conspiracy against Zeus but appends
others. The three opposing elements may be suppressed by Order in their assault on the
Anima Mundi, or they may be checked by Order and Time in their rebellion against Life
(122. 47–123. 24; 124. 12–16; 1194–97).

18 Zenodotus, distressed by this event told in Iliad VI. 130–36, changed Homer's
"frightened Dionysus" to "angered Dionysus" because gods could have no fear.

between the two heroes is so well established that Maximus can use the adventure with the Sirens as a pulpit exemplum: Christ tied Himself to the cross as Odysseus did to the mast to avoid the "desires of pleasure" in order that "all men might be saved from shipwreck in this world." Bishop Fulgentius, writing about six hundred years before Eustathius, follows the same procedure and finds "stranger" in Odysseus' name; "wisdom is, indeed, a stranger from the affairs of this world," he concludes, "but it enables a pious man to escape from the Sirens whose song is death."

The allegorizations of the Odyssey are almost always centered on the adventures related by the man of Ithaca for the entertainment of Alcinous and his court; they are intended to emphasize the moral meanings of the fight with the Cicones, the adventures with the Lotos-eaters, the Cyclopes, Aeolus, the Laestrygonians, Circe, the Cimmerians, the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and Calypso. Certain of these adventures had been expounded by earlier Greek experts in hermeneutics, but the pseudo-Heraclitus surpassed them all in maintaining that the Odyssey was "a vast allegory," teaching the avoidance of vice and its conquest. He begins, unlike many Homeric allegorizers, with the first book of the Odyssey and finds in the intentions of Telemachus an allegory of the development of intelligence in a young man whose ship of life is fitted by Noeman, or Prudence, and has Athena at its helm. The tale in the fourth book that Menelaus tells of his wrestling with Proteus is translated into physics—the lion is ether, the dragon is earth (61–64). Eustathius,
faced with the same story, sees Proteus as primitive matter or as a euhemeristic and generalized figure of wizards like Skymus or Philip of Syracuse. The incident can also be resolved into a practical parable of the rules of friendship, because Proteus tests Menelaus; had Menelaus similarly tested Paris, the Trojan War would have been avoided (1503. 7–30). As others before him, Heraclitus uncovers the Empedoclean doctrine of harmony in Demodocus' ballad of the adultery of Venus and Mars, but the story may also be an emblematic veiling of the nature of ironworking. Ares, or iron, can be softened by Hephaestus, or fire, with the aid of Aphrodite, or artisan grace (69).

The anonymous Moral Interpretation of the Wanderings of Odysseus describes each episode in the hero's narrative to Alcinous as a symbolic trial of or obstacle to a morally educated man. The Cyclopes are representations of savage and inhuman customs contrary in every respect to natural reason; when Odysseus comes to his senses and avenges himself on them, he discovers how blind he himself has been.22 Eustathius states that the Cyclopes have one eye to indicate they have only animal souls; hence, having no insight, they are useless when blinded (1622). The Moral Interpretation describes the visit to Aeolus' den as suggesting the variant possibilities of any human action; but Heraclitus, considering the same event, finds it only a representation of the year and its months, or twelve children (71). In the famous sojourn with Circe, to which all interpreters ascribe lavish ethical meanings, Heraclitus hears a conflict of conscience in the dialogue with Hermes; Odysseus is talking to himself, and the disenchancing moly is the symbol of human reason (72–73). Eustathius thinks that the sorceress is only the vice of gluttony, or the pleasure of taste, which produces obesity and dullness; consequently, her symbolic animals, the hogs, never look to heaven (1659. 10–19). In the land of the Cimmerians, according to Eustathius, Odysseus entered Homer's "philosophy of symbols," and as a competent allegorist the bishop uncodes each of them (74); on the other hand, in The Moral Interpretation the same adventure shows "how rightly a man must live in order to emerge from the shadows." For Eustathius, Scylla is arrogance, and her dogs, shamefastness.

22 Besides the edition of 1531 in Greek by V. Opsopaeus and C. Gesners' Latin translation of 1542, this work has been edited by J. Columbus and published at Stockholm in 1678 and at Leyden in 1745. It appears to be unknown to Homeric scholars, but its Greek would suggest a late Byzantine origin. Since it is a short work with headings referring to each adventure, I shall not give page references. The "Protheoria," followed by eleven sections, states that all poetry has noble meaning which the poet wishes his readers to deduce from the literal.
(1714. 47); but the moral interpreter sees in the dangerous sea-crossing the colliding passions drowning both body and mind. The Sirens, in Eustathius' euhemeristic imagination, may be no more than some Greek seaman's recollection of a sailors' whorehouse, though morally they symbolize the allurements of the voluptuous life. The hero stops the ears of his companions with the wax of philosophy, informing other leaders by this cautious act how they should be careful of their subordinates' welfare. Odysseus listens to the songs of the Sirens "to teach us" that Sirens are likely to sing to us but that we should never invite them into our bodies; nonetheless, the bishop adds, "it would be sensible if philosophers permitted a little of the Sirens' sweetness to seep into their prose" (1707. 40–1709. 30). Calypso gets a great deal of Eustathius' attention. She is the daughter of Atlas, or Providence, and her father has taught her astronomy, a science in which she instructed Odysseus. She is, moreover, the emblem of the body in which Odysseus, or the soul, repose; hence, her name translates as "she who hides." Like human flesh, her island is hot and moist, continually washed by seas of passion (1389. 42–65). Odysseus refuses her godlike gift of immortality because it would nullify his active but human pursuit of virtue (1709. 2). He learns how alien she is to his ambitions when Hermes, or Reason, urges him to leave her for the intelligible world, for Penelope, or Philosophy (1389. 46–1390. 2). We understand this significance of Penelope when we see her weaving and unravelling her web like a logician making and destroying syllogisms (1437. 19).

All of these competent allegorizers said something occult about the return to Ithaca but none of them is capable of finding in a few lines of verse all that Porphyry can draw out of the Odyssey XIII. 102–12 for his essay on The Cave of the Nymphs. The seaside cave that shelters Odysseus is, for Porphyry, the dark world of matter whither the souls or nymphs descending enter by the northern gate of life to depart for immortality by the gate at the south. The few Homeric hexameters enclose the Neo-Platonic doctrine of generation, and Porphyry admittedly builds on a lost allegory by Cronius, reminding his readers that Numenius also considered Odysseus a wanderer over the dark sea of being, who finds "harbor where storms and seas are unknown." After perusing this symbolical translation of Homer's charming description of Phorcys' cavern, a man of the Renaissance would have some inkling of

23 The Greek text may be found in Porphyry, Opuscula, ed. A. Nauck (Leipzig, 1886); it has been translated by Félix Buffiere, Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée Grecque (Paris, 1956), pp. 597–616.
the explication of the “Sacred Marriage” read by Porphyry at the Feast of Plato; however, he might have some difficulty in reconciling this Porphyry with the one who criticized Origen’s compatriots for attributing all sorts of arcane meanings “to things Moses said plainly.” The Odyssean allegory composed by Porphyry is mentioned approvingly by Eustathius, who recommends it after he has removed “certain of its subtleties.” Sustained by the symbolic caves of Plato and Aristotle, it is undoubtedly responsible for the numerous anagogical holes and grottoes that are found throughout the landscape of Renaissance poetry.

III

The positive moral interpretations of the adventures of Odysseus which the Renaissance inherited from antiquity did much to stabilize the saintly status of the hero whose reputation had been dubious since the earliest times. When Lodovico Dolce reduced the Odyssey to ottava rima in 1573, he wrote an allegorical preface for each section; in 1549, Simon Lemnius prefaced his translation into Latin hexameters with an original poem supplying the moral reading of each major event. The learned mythographers collected or invented double readings of Odys-

---

21 According to Dolce, L’Ullisse (Venice, 1573), Calypso is a libidinous woman who does not hesitate to trap worthy men; the visit of Athena to Telemachus tells us about the promptings of the Holy Spirit; Odysseus’ resistance to Circe is a lesson in continence.

22 In Porphyry’s “Life of Plotinus,” prefaced to the Enneads, one reads the following anecdote. “I read at the Feast of Plato a poem on the Sacred Marriage, and as I discussed its fable, according to mystic and hidden senses, someone said, ‘Porphyry is a fool.’ Plotinus then said to me in a way that all heard, ‘You have shown that you were at one and the same time a poet, a philosopher, and a priest.’ ” The episode was known to the sixteenth century in Ficino’s translation of Plotinus’ Opera (Basel, 1580), p. B5.


24 Aristotle’s not-so-well-known cave is described in Cicero’s De natura deorum II. 37.

25 W. B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme (Oxford, 1954). The moralizations discovered by the Renaissance were undoubtedly helped by the sympathetic treatment by Ovid in the Metamorphoses and Heroides and the dignified portrait by Statius in the Achilleid. The hostile party which found comfort in the Odysseus of Virgil and Dictys of Crete may have secured additional support from the Odysseus described by Philostratus in his Heroes of the Trojan War, a book Latinized by Stefano Negri in the early part of the sixteenth century.

26 According to Dolce, L’Ullisse (Venice, 1573), Calypso is a libidinous woman who does not hesitate to trap worthy men; the visit of Athena to Telemachus tells us about the promptings of the Holy Spirit; Odysseus’ resistance to Circe is a lesson in continence.

27 W. B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme (Oxford, 1954). The moralizations discovered by the Renaissance were undoubtedly helped by the sympathetic treatment by Ovid in the Metamorphoses and Heroides and the dignified portrait by Statius in the Achilleid. The hostile party which found comfort in the Odysseus of Virgil and Dictys of Crete may have secured additional support from the Odysseus described by Philostratus in his Heroes of the Trojan War, a book Latinized by Stefano Negri in the early part of the sixteenth century.

28 According to Dolce, L’Ullisse (Venice, 1573), Calypso is a libidinous woman who does not hesitate to trap worthy men; the visit of Athena to Telemachus tells us about the promptings of the Holy Spirit; Odysseus’ resistance to Circe is a lesson in continence.
Odysses' wanderings when they related them to the general reading public of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The process of allegorization begins as early as Boccaccio's *Genealogie of the Gods*, where the attention of the reader is directed to the encounter with Aeolus, or God. Boccaccio states that the winds, or the concupiscible appetites, are enclosed in an oxhide, or virile age, and fastened with a silver wire of virtue, or divine love; hence, when Odysses' companions, or the senses, unloose the wire, they are driven into the ocean, or Hell, far from their homeland, or Peace. The popular Renaissance mythological authority Natale Conti makes much of the allegory of the *Odyssey* because "it expresses the whole course of human life and gives its readers encouragement in adversity." He observes, for example, that those companions of Odysses who succumb to anger, sorrow, or the enticements of an effeminate life disappear from the poem as adventure follows adventure; consequently, each episode of the poem holds a lesson for the wise reader. The affair with the Cyclopes shows the importance of temperance and prayer; that with Aeolus warns against avarice and lax leadership; that with the Sirens, who are illicit pleasures, proves that reason should deafen one to temptation. By his return to Ithaca Odysses demonstrates that a wise man, patiently enduring calamities and bridling fleshly desire, will eventually live in "his true fatherland, sharing with other faithful men in the councils of God." Continuing this exposition Conti also finds the etymological, moral, and physical meaning of the *Odyssey* hidden by Homer in "the tents of fiction," so that "they would be spared the corruption of vulgar understandings and preserved for the good reader in the highest purity."

The second readings in Homer, perceived by his Greek exponents and accepted and enlarged by his Renaissance students, probably stimulated those fictional expansions of individual episodes written during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *La Circe* of G. B. Gelli, which appeared in 1549 and became rightfully popular, was succeeded by similar works of less merit, like Ciro Spontone's *Hercole defensore*.

---

32 Ibid., pp. 305-9. Conti begins with a physical explanation of the Circe episode, which is incorporated with an etymological analysis of her name and that of her island. She is subsequently (p. 543) connected with animal heat, whereas Odysses, temperance or the middle way of Aristotle (pp. 552-53), can always steer between moral dangers like Scylla and Charybdis (p. 550).
33 In Gelli's ten dialogues Odysses tries to convince his former companions, who are now anything from oysters to elephants, that their human condition was better. He has success only with the elephant, who was the philosopher Aglaphemus, when he convinces the animal that only man can know the First Cause. He explains his ill-luck to a rather pleasant Circe by arguing that the others "did not esteem their nobility" when they were men. As
\textit{d'Homere} in 1595\textsuperscript{34} and Fortunio Liceti's \textit{Ulysses apud Circen} in 1636.\textsuperscript{35} The tone of all these enlargements suggests that every literate man of this era was informed about the allegorical nature of the \textit{Iliad} and especially of the \textit{Odyssey}. When Ascham wanted to draw a warning picture for the Englishman about to take ship for Italy, he could find no better whetstone on which to sharpen his analogues than the travels of Odysseus.

For, he shall not always in his absence out of England, light upon the gentle Alcinous and walk in his fair gardens full of all harmless pleasures; but he shall sometimes fall either into the hands of some cruel Cyclopes or into the lap of some wanton and dallying Dame Calypso and so suffer the danger of many a deadly den, not so full of perils to destroy the body as full of vain pleasures to poison the mind. Some Siren shall sing him a song, sweet in tune, but sounding in the end to his utter destruction. If Scylla drown him not, Charybdis may fortune swallow him. Some Circes shall make him of a plain Englishman a right Italian. And at length to Hell or to some hellish place is he likely to go from whence is hard returning although one Ulysses and that by Pallas' aid and good counsel of Tiresias once escaped that horrible den of deadly darkness.\textsuperscript{36}

Almost any edition of Homer used by Ascham would have supported his allegorical inclination, but in 1583 Jean de Sponde published a text which was almost modern in most respects and was often praised for its lack of moral annotations. None of the ancient allegorizers are animals, giving no thought to their divine nature, the former companions, consequently, have more bodily pleasures; Gelli, \textit{La Circe} (Milan, 1804), p. 137.

\textsuperscript{34} In this book published at Verona, Hercole Bottrigano lectures his companions on the value of the \textit{Odyssey} in showing "the worth of religion, the constant presence of God, what man owes God, and what man may expect from God." He is given to etymological analyses: nectar is ne + kteino or "to kill" and ambrosia is a + brotos or "deathless." Nepenthe is "the eternal light"; Athena, the guardian angel (pp. 40-45). The companions who stay with the Lotos-eaters are Odysseus' senses; the Cyclopes depend only on Natural Light (pp. 69-73). Odysseus' desire to return to Ithaca is the desire of all men to return to their Creator (p. 83). Circe represents the sun and heat (pp. 91-93) and the moly, which subdues her, is the "universal incorruptible element" as well as an experiment in alchemy. The colors of the moly, black and white, show the effect of the active virtue of heat on passive moisture which results in dryness and whiteness, the tint of new generation. Mercury is sent with the flower because mercury is used to extrac natural virtue "from the center of the universe" (pp. 147-57).

\textsuperscript{35} This rather charming jeu d'esprit was published at Udine and presents Odysseus guided by the Cumean Sibyl as he walks through Circe's garden, where even the flowers, which can understand Latin but speak their own blossom tongue, are formerly good men transformed by the witch. The Sibyl identifies them and tells their histories. Stupid or immoral men have become insects or lesser animals. Circe informs Odysseus that she has altered people according to the mythological, physical, or moral rules of allegory.

\textsuperscript{36} Ascham, \textit{The Scholemaster}, ed. Arber (London, 1927), pp. 72-74. O. Gifnio, whose edition of Homer appeared at Basel in 1572, states in his preface that the \textit{Iliad} is for the instruction of soldiers, the \textit{Odyssey} for that of travellers. F. Porta in his Geneva edition of 1609 writes (sig. iii-iv) that one is to learn patience, constancy, and high-mindedness from the \textit{Odyssey}. Women are to find in Penelope instruction in modesty and conjugal love.
included in his critical apparatus, although he reprints the *Ilias Latina* and the *History* of Dares the Phrygian in an appendix and notices an occasional euhemeristic reading\(^{37}\) or recalls that some episode has a moral or physical interpretation without setting it down. Before it is assumed that this edition broke the back of the allegorical obsession, it must be remembered that this was the text from which Chapman made his translation. There is no doubt that Chapman read Homer as occultly as Ascham, and while he found little to encourage him in de Sponde’s marginalia, he may have learned the nature of the editor’s creed from the preface.

Poetry, de Sponde states, is a solid branch of human knowledge and of enormous value to the commonwealth. To support this statement he summarizes the symbolism of the myth of Amphion and invites “hieroglyphic” authors among the heathen to testify to transmitted wisdom about the “One Power” which enlivens all men. While these well-known experts are speaking, de Sponde brings in Christian witnesses like Eusebius, Clement, Justin, Basil, and Cyril, who add their recognized convictions. Early poets, de Sponde asserts, were often kings and philosophers, moved by the “One Power” to lead their readers to Him. As a result of this inspiration they used their poems to teach fortitude, temperance, liberality, clemency, integrity, fraternity, justice, and prudence, and recommended excellent remedies for the subjugation of all the contrary vices. Among these poetical teachers of mankind, Homer is first. Nowhere could one find a better example of a virtuous man than Achilles, of a prudent man than Nestor or Odysseus, of a chaste woman than Penelope.

De Sponde traces the origin of poetry to the singing of the angelic choirs at the end of the sixth day of Creation. Human poetry was somewhat delayed, but as soon as man had an alphabet he wrote poetry, which, contrary to the opinion of some experts, was prior to oratory. “Poetry is God’s first gift to man and man’s first response to God.” Pure song, contaminated before the Flood, was preserved by Noah but dissipated by the dispersal at Babel. Though preserved in its pristine state by David and Solomon, poetry has flowed since its origin through filthy and poisonous sewers; hence, the reader must attempt to penetrate to its deeper, purer meanings as he has learned to do when his Bible speaks metaphorically of “the Lion of Judah” or of “the serpent in the wilderness,” or relates truth upon truth in the Song of Songs. Mysterious meanings of the same nature are to be found hidden in pagan literature.

Orpheus describes the Mosaic Creation in his "Hymn to Night." The Christian struggle of the Sun (Son) with the world is described in Apollo's killing of the Python. The Greek poets refer to wisdom as "the bread of Heaven," and Christ declared, "I am the bread of life." Castor and Pollux are the premonstrative pagan counterparts of John the Baptist and Christ. Although de Sponde omitted the customary allegorical readings from his footnotes, his preface leaves little doubt about his personal attitude toward the true nature of the Homeric poems.

The allegorization of Homer's poems lasted until late in the eighteenth century, but the obsession with second meanings did not prevent the seventeenth century from discovering some sound intents and wise methods of literary scholarship. In 1640 Leo Allacci, a distinguished teacher of Greek, investigated the claims of various cities to be the birthplace of Homer and won fame for his De patria Homeri. The more exact and careful histories of Tanneguy LeFèvre, J. H. Boecler, and other students of Greek literature brought out new information about the epics and were aided by special studies like the essays on Homer's nepenthes written by Pietro Lasena in 1624, by Pierre Petit in 1689, and by G. W. Wedel in 1692. With monographs of this nature, modern classical scholarship began, and its eventual dimensions are indicated by Everard Feith's Antiquitatum Homericarum libri IV (Leyden, 1677) which illuminated the poems with chapters on Greek theology, ritual, law, games, food, and other topics.

IV

Serious studies of the culture of Homer's age and of his epics were, of course, sometimes pricked on by the traditional search for evidences

38 Ibid., pp. 9–28. Chapman is clearly aware of hidden meanings when he makes his translation: see G. de F. Lord, Homeric Renaissance (New Haven, 1956), pp. 33–126. Sandys indicates his knowledge of the Homeric allegories in the notes to his translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses; Bacon knows the meaning of the Sirens in De sapientia veterum, XXXI; and Ross knows and invents even more in the Mystagogus Poeticus. It is worth noticing that Homer was defended against Plato's charges by G. Paquelin in his Apologeme pour le grand Homère contre la reprehension du divin Platon sur aucunes passages d'iceluy (Lyons, 1577). Homer's life was compared with that of Moses to show they were almost the same person in an anonymous Discours en forme de comparaison sur les vies de Moyse et d'Homère (Paris, 1604).

39 Madame Dacier did not hesitate to publish the Homeric allegories in her edition; and the contemporary L'Omero Toscana (Lucca, 1703), of Bernardino Bugliazzini furnishes an allegory for each book. Most of Bugliazzini's symbolic equations are traditional, but he also invents a few novel ones: the nymph Ino is the Intercession of Saints, Nausicaa shows the dangers of clandestine marriage; Alcinous demonstrates the ephemerality of the happiness of monarchs, etc. As late as 1784, T. F. Benedict went over the whole matter at some length in his Leipzig published Interpretationem allegoriae Homericae de errore et precibus incipit.
of the visit of one of the epic heroes to the author-scholar’s native village. In 1625 Lorenzo Pignoria wrote *L’Antenor* to prove by literary and antiquarian evidences that the hero of that name was the founder of Padua. Conviction that real historical identifications would be euhemeristically uncovered for each one of Homer’s great names died hard in the seventeenth century. As early as 1593 Reinier Reineck, one of Raleigh’s major authorities, proved to his own satisfaction that after Odysseus had wandered through Sicily, Italy, Spain, and Germany, where his adventures occurred, he was finally received by Idomeneus, not Alcinous, in Crete and returned by him to Ithaca. “We must rely,” Reineck writes, “on solid sources and put aside the fabulous material added to fact by Homer in his noble poem.”

Bochart, depending on his Phoenician hypotheses, pointed out a town by the significant name of Circello on the west coast of Italy; hence, it is not astonishing to him that the Phoenician word for “witch” is “latim” and that this whole area abounds in poisonous herbs. Sailing southward from this place, Odysseus came, he supposes, to Mola di Gaeta where the Auruncians, or Lastrysgonians, were ruled by Lamus, a name derived from “laham” or “lahama,” Phoenician for “to devour.” The Cimmerians (Phoenician “camar” or “cimmer,” meaning “to blacken”) lived at Cuma, and the Sirens dwelled in Capri near the Sirenusae. To Bochart’s mind, the whole course of the *Odyssey* took place along the shores of Latium and Campania. The exaggeration of this euhemeristic form of historical inquiry resulted in Francesco Bianchini’s theory that the whole Greek pantheon was some sort of secret history, in which Zeus was the king of Ethiopia; Juno, the king of Syria; Neptune, the ruler of Caria; and Apollo, the ruler of Assyria. This exaggeration reached an apex in the first quarter of the eighteenth century with the fantastic historical discoveries of Herman von der Hardt, professor of oriental languages at Helmstadt.

---

41 Bochart, *Opera omnia*, III, 587-92.
42 Francesco Bianchini, *La Istoria Universale provata con monumenti e figurata con simboli de gli antichi* (Rome, 1697). Von der Hardt’s obsession, which eventuated in innumerable publications, was that Greek literature is a secret account of historical events (most of them rather minor) that had been lost in the passage of time. Using both his imagination and Greek texts, he uncovered the truth. He looks through the *Odyssey* in his *Aenigmata prisci orbis: Jonas in luce in historia Manassis et Josiae, ex elegantí veterum Hebraeorum stilo solutum aenigma. Aenigmata Graecorum et Latinorum ex caligine Homer, Hesiodi, Orphii ... enodata* (Helmstadt, 1723), to disclose that Odysseus was Thesprotus of Pandosia, who fortified Mt. Hypatus, or the Trojan Horse, from which he led sorties; he then marched through Greece, establishing Thesprotian colonies in various places. Homer concealed this history in verse to baffle the kind of stupid folk who read badly and only accept the literal. As an example of Homer’s technique, Von der Hardt observes that Homer pretends Circe’s island is near Italy; whereas, it was actually off Colchis. Thesprotus did not go there, but went rather to Cirrha in Colchis, a place famous for the sort of dense wood
While some Renaissance students of Homer sought to understand him better by improving their knowledge of Greek history and literature and while others were attempting to decipher his verses for further information about pre-Periclean Greece, a third group of readers was finding in the Iliad and the Odyssey those evidences of universal Christian wisdom that they had also uncovered in Plato, Seneca, Orpheus, Virgil, and other Greek or Roman authors. A case in point is furnished by the *Noctes solitariae sive de iis quae scientifice scripta sunt ab Homero in Odyssea* (Venice, 1613), of J. B. Persona, who used texts from the epic for occasional essays on why children resemble their parents or why women talk so much but who was really engaged in proving Homer’s proto-Christian information. He discovered the Greek’s awareness of an eternal, perfect, creating, unified God, who is omnipresent, omniscient, and possessed of an unopposable will. He is pleased that Homer knew the soul to be separate and immortal; while not denying that much of this doctrine could have come to Homer via the natural reason, he suspects most of it did not. A companion to Persona’s book, the *De theologia Homeri,* was written by Nicolaus Bergman in 1689 and may have stimulated Johannes Roth of Wittenberg to publish in 1704 his better controlled and almost modern analysis, *De philosophia Homeri.* Roth, unlike Bergman and others, did not see Homer’s theology as despoiled or spoiled Judaism but as evidence of early Greek phenomenological speculation.

Toward the middle of the seventeenth century Jacques Hugues, who used up a good part of his life finding Christian prophecy concealed

---

Odysseus found round Circe’s palace. Thesproteans were enslaved in this place, and the so-called seductive efforts of Circe really symbolize the attempts of the leaders of Cirrha to get an alliance with Thesprotus. The moly was not a magic plant but the symbol of Thesprotan armed might. Odysseus’ children by Circe represent the colonies established by Thesprotus near Cirrha. The stag killed by Odysseus symbolizes Thesprotan’s capture of Bulis; the Laestrygonians are the Leukastrians; the Cyclopes are the Oukalikkians. Some samples of Von der Hardt’s other discoveries can be indicated by title: *Mythologiae Graecorum detecta* (Leipzig, 1716); *Proteus cum Phocis illustrata* (Helmstadt, 1719); *Aureum vellus Argonautum ex Orphei thesauro . . . detectum* (Helmstadt, 1715); *Hercules ex Carcharia* (Helmstadt, 1719); *Arion citharoedus a delphine in mari servatus in veteres poetas et historicos pro rebus Jonas . . . illustrandis* (Helmstadt, 1719); *De Rhea Cybele magna Deum matre* (Helmstadt, 1720). All these books uncover lost history.

44 Ibid., pp. 74–77.
45 Ibid., pp. 292–304. Lips, in his *Physiologia stoicorum,* had earlier pointed out Homer’s almost Christian understanding of Providence, the problem of evil, and the existence of demons (*Opera IV,* 548, 554, 561).
46 Bergman points out Homer’s knowledge of God’s existence, essence, perfection, simplicity, immutability, invisibility, incorruptibility, eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, goodness, holiness, and justice with line by line references to the two epics.
in the *Aeneid*, supplemented his Roman researches with a hard look at the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the myths to be found in each epic. Surmising that the recorded fall of Troy was a historical conflation of the Babylonian and Roman captures of Jerusalem, Hugues, consequently, has no problem in letting the facts fall as he chooses. The judgment of Paris, or the temptation of Eve, sends Helen, or “incarnate divinity,” to Troy, or rather to Jerusalem. Tiresias, or Abraham, is described as blind because he predicts the coming of Christ but never sees Him. Given these impressive discoveries, it becomes even clearer to Hugues that Cassandra, who predicted the fall of Troy, is Jeremiah. The gods and heroes of Homer are by deed or word proved to be Jesus Christ under a Greek varnish. Jason, for example, is not only Jesus but also the Holy Ghost, the Virgin Mary, the twelve Apostles, and the whole Christian Church. Achilles of Skyros becomes Jesus of Syria, and the identification is etymologically rational. Homer calls Achilles “the Aeacidian,” which is the same as “the Ioachidian,” and states that he is the son of Peleus, a name invented from “palaiois,” the Greek word for “old.” When all of these facts are pulled together by Hugues it can be seen that Homer is announcing that Achilles is truly “the son of old Joseph.” But Homer was not the only ancient to foresee the career of Christ. Catullus predicts the marriage of Joseph and Mary in his poem on Peleus and Thetis; though prophet Ovid appears to be writing about Ocyrhoe in *Metamorphoses* II. 635–60, he is really foretelling the mission, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus. According to Hugues’ intuitions John baptises Christ when Achilles is dipped in the Xanthus; the Triumphant Entry is foreshadowed when the unarmed Achilles, going to marry Polyxena, is wounded by Paris, or the Pharisees. Helen, bride of Menelaus or the Jews, and carried off by Paris, or the Pharisees, is Christ, who is also Hercules and Adonis. If the latter comparison is correct, Venus is plainly the Mater Dolorosa.

In Hugues’ mind the Jovian expulsion of Hephaestus is the Pentecost, and Thersites is Saul Tharsites, opponent of Achilles-Christ and Odysseus-Peter, whose conversion is predicted when Hector is pierced by the spear of Achilles, which, like the cross of Christ, no other man could lift. Castor and Pollux are Luke and Paul, brothers of Helen and, hence, brothers in Christ. Odysseus, when he carries off the Palladium and the arms of Achilles, is Peter bringing the cross and keys to Rome. His name can be broken into “ode” + “euous” or “singer of Jesus,” and his wife

---

Penelope is the Church, whereas her suitors are heretics. Homer, Hugues supposes, foretells the catacomb worship of the early church when he describes Odysseus' stay in Calypso's cave. But Hugues can read the experience with Circe even more deftly. Circe is the Lutheran Church which is frustrated by the magic moly, or the "grace of God," and the weapon of Odysseus, or the Church's censure. The Protestant animals recover their human form, or faith, but drunken Elpenor is simply sent to Hell.\textsuperscript{48} The reactions of the seventeenth century to Hugues' discoveries cannot be estimated. Nicolaus Bergman, who had no difficulty in finding Moses comforting Homer and who clearly had no ability to laugh at himself, described Hugues' book as "a piece of suave insanity." A few other solemn Germans, Protestants all, made humorless assaults on the \textit{Vera historia Romana}.\textsuperscript{49} No one else seems to have read prophecy on such a grand scale in Homer, but the search of the epics for the Mosaic message continued to be pressed on high academic levels.

Zachary Bogan, fellow of Corpus Christi, classical scholar, subscriber to Dickinson's theory that Joshua was known at Delphi, and a man mindful of Clement's description of Plato as "Moses Atticans," put together by 1658 and published at Oxford a massive compilation of parallel passages with the title \textit{EBRAISON: sive comparatio Homeri cum Scriptoribus Sacris quoad notandum}. Bogan places quotations from Homer and other poets side by side with verses from the Bible. In Genesis 28:20–21, Jacob says, "If God will be with me and keep me in the way I go. . . I shall come again to my father's house in peace." This verse is remembered in \textit{Iliad} X. 284–85, when Diomedes invokes Athena to "follow with me now even as you followed with my father, the good Tydeus." Isolated comparisons of this nature hardly make Homer speak Hebrew, but as Bogan heaps the instances up, the hypnotic effect of so many similarities is appalling. Proofs of fact are added to these numerous verbal echoes. The "strapping daughter of Antiphates" who comes down to the spring Artacia in \textit{Odyssey} X. 103–11, is Rebecca at the well as obviously as Proitos' wife Anteia's passion for Bellerophon (\textit{Iliad} VI. 160–99), is the Homeric version of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. After mentioning other pagan loan legends of this nature, Bogan shrewdly

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., pp. 138–48.

\textsuperscript{49} Bergman, \textit{De theologa Homeri} (Leipzig, 1689), p. A2; the nature of the humorless assault can almost be sensed in the titles of two of the major critiques: Eberhard Roth's \textit{De ludicra Jacobi Hugois deliratione bello Trojano} (Jena, 1672) and the academic oration of Johann von Seelen of Rostoch, \textit{Schediasma philologicum-sacrum quo Homerus passionis Christi testis a Jacobo Hugone productus rejicitur}, in \textit{Miscellanea} (Lubec, 1734–39).
places Homer’s observations about Jehovah in an appendix, “lest I offend the minds of good men.”

Not to be outdone by an Oxford professor, James Duport, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, brought out in 1660 an extended demonstration of Homer’s Hebraic education. The *Homeri gnomologia* announces the superiority of Zion to Helicon, Christ to Apollo, David to Pindar, Paul to Seneca, and Solomon to Homer and urges its readers to be Homerians, Aristotelians, and Ciceronians but Christians before anything else. Duport cannot put Homer “on the same spiritual level” as the Major Prophets; but he regards Homer’s ethical doctrines, the consequence of his Hebrew studies in Egypt, as worthy to be compared and contrasted with their Old Testament counterparts. Duport is certain that Homer is vaguely remembering the Garden of Eden in his description of the Gardens of Alcinous and the impious intentions of the builders of Babel in his myth of the assault of the Giants and the Titans on Olympus. He does not find it difficult to date the fall of Troy because Jeptha’s sacrifice of his daughter is recalled in Homer’s legend of Agamemnon and Iphigenia. This discovery proves for Duport that Homer could not have lived before the reign of King David. Homer’s Old Testament studies are, in the mind of the Cambridge don, the prime cause of Plato’s malice towards him. Hebrew wisdom made the epics too profound, too full of religious mystery for an ordinary Greek like Plato. Although Duport has fathomed these mysteries, he does not expound them but contents himself with assembling the biblical quotations he has found in Homer. Like Bogan he works his way line by line through the two epics to crowd the margins of his pages with telling references to Scripture. For Duport *Iliad* I. 5, “and the will of Zeus was being fulfilled,” is a reworking in Greek of Psalms 33:11 and Proverbs 19:21. Entry after entry of this sort enables Duport cogently to display Homer’s great dependence on the Old Testament.

The efforts of these British philologians were consonant with the historical attempts of Vos, Bochart, Owen, Stillingfleet, and Gale and helped prepare the way for Huet’s revelation of the Hebraism behind all Hellenisms. The efforts of all these scholars are responsible for Gerard Croese’s *OMEROS EBRAIOS: sive historia Hebraeorum ab Homero conscripta*, a work of more than six hundred pages, which could be bought in Dordrecht in 1704. Its compiler, who was rather famous for his dislike of Quakers, thought that although Jews always held them-

---

selves separate and aloof, Gentiles had intimations from the earliest times of Jewish doctrines. He advances the hypothesis that exiled Canaanites, or the Phoenicians of Bochart, spread the Jewish dogmas, which were absorbed by primitive Greek poets among the Pelasgians. From these men and from the living Hebrew tradition, Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, and Plato learned all that they were later to express in their own individual ways. The earliest Greek tragedians, for example, people their plays with characters who are patient or filled with pity. These are virtues, Croese insists, that were unknown to the Greeks but had been inculcated in the Jews by Jehovah. He regards the epics of Homer as continuous borrowing from Scripture and describes how “the great mystagogue” hides much of his wisdom under the names of gods and heroes but gives himself away by writing in an un-Greek language and using a Hebraic syntax. At first Homer’s topics seemed as non-classical as his language until Croese discovered that he merely translates Hebrew proper names into Greek, retaining without linguistic alteration those of Hebraic origin like Poseidon, Hephaestus, Odysseus, Atrides, Telemachus, and Agamemnon.\[^{51}\]

It is also obvious to Croese that Homer did not reproduce Old Testament events in the Mosaic chronological order; sometimes, as in the case of the fifth book of the *Odyssey*, he slips in an episode of his own invention. He takes issue with scholars like Feith who attempt to learn more about Greek rites, precepts, politics, and military science in order to understand Homer. Such notions are both ridiculous and inept. One should read Homer for sacred Hebrew history. Homer, as Strabo states, was from Smyrna, and he certainly lived after the time of Solomon; hence, he not only had Jews for neighbors, but his age was also the one in which the Jews began to trade with other peoples in their area. Homer, consequently, had every opportunity to talk to Jews and to assimilate their religious culture; moreover, his name is Hebraic and is derived from “omer” or “orator.”\[^{52}\] But other relationships between Greeks and Jews cannot be overlooked. At that time the Idumaeans and Egyptians were flourishing, and both groups, like the Cabiri and Curites, had absorbed Hebrew lore because the Jews had become so religiously lax that they allowed their holy books, formerly withheld from the Gentiles, to be read by anyone. As a consequence of this failure of cult among the Jews, the Idumaeans were well versed in Hebrew theology and history; Homer, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Plato, and others, if

\[\[^{51}\text{Croese, *Omeros Ebraios*, pp. 17–25.}\]
\[\[^{52}\text{Ibid., pp. 56–57.}\]
not instructed by direct divine methods, could have learned from them. Hebrew words and turns of phrase stud the writings of all the Greeks and are even found among the Latins. "There are many proper names in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that are Hebraic; Orpheus is from Ouraph and Eurydice from 'aur dachava,' or 'musical song.' "

But for Croese there is no need to push hard the investigation of these Homeric origins; Homer's *Odyssey* betrays Homer. On several occasions Odysseus doubts his own existence, and once he refers to himself as "Noman." His wife is not Penelope; his son is not Telemachus; and his home is not Ithaca at all but Mesopotamia. The fall of Troy is frankly the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, just as Odysseus in Calypso's cave is Lot and his fearful daughters. When Odysseus expresses his desire to see his wife, it is Lot symbolically regretting his incest. Books One and Two of the *Odyssey* recount the calling of Abraham, the promise of a son, and the banishment of Ishmael. Isaac's sacrifice is the subject of Book Three, and the finding of Rebecca as well as the birth of Jacob and Esau are told in Book Four. In Books Six, Seven, and Eight Jacob arrives at Laban's house, converses with Rebecca, and they are married. The Gardens of Alcinous are once again converted into Eden, and Demodocus' ballad of Mars and Venus becomes the Homeric version of the history of Samson and Delilah. Croese completes his exhibition with an extended account of Hercules and Samson. Hence, we never learn what mysteries are still concealed under the literal of the remaining books of the *Odyssey*. Actually, we do not know whether Croese or his publisher tired. No matter what the reason, the eighteenth century had other things to do besides adding Homer's *Odyssey* to the canon of the Old Testament.

---

53 Ibid., pp. 143-46.
54 Ibid., pp. 295-386.
55 Ibid., pp. 555-629.