

THE SEA OF LOVE

The sea of love (a convenient heading under which to group the various marine and nautical metaphors, similes, parallels, allusions, and analogies applied to love and sex) was one of the more important amatory figures. It featured in both Greek and Latin from earliest until latest times, was employed in several genres of verse (dominating whole poems on occasion), appearing in prose as well, and reached an advanced stage of development in the hands of the Alexandrians and particularly the Augustans. The purpose of this article is to provide the first comprehensive and detailed study of the sea of love from the archaic period until late antiquity.¹

In surviving early Greek, the figure was infrequent and occurred only in verse.² Unfortunately what may be the initial instance is highly problematical. Alcaeus frag. X14 col. ii *PLF* consists of a commentary on some lines of Alcaeus, wherein much must remain obscure, but (unless the commentator was quite wrong in seeing allegory) it seems likely that an old ship and an old courtesan were compared by the poet.³ If it was the courtesan who was likened to the vessel (rather than vice versa), then this would appear to be an example of the sea of love, with reference (in view of 8f. and 26) probably to sexual intercourse in the voyages (τοὺς πολλοὺς πλοῦς καὶ πυκνοὺς) of 18–20, and possibly to the cessation of intercourse in the details of being brought into harbour and restrained from sailing in 24f. and 28. More certain is Theognis 457–60, of an adulterous wife who ignores her ties to her old husband and his attempts to control and keep her, often slipping away from his home to spend the night in the house of another man. She is like a boat that does not answer the rudder, her anchors do not hold, she slips her moorings and often has another harbour overnight:

Οὔτοι σύμφoron ἐστι γυνή νέα ἀνδρὶ γέροντι·
οὐ γὰρ πηδαλίῳ πείθεται ὥς ἄκατος,
οὐδ' ἄγκυραι ἔχουσιν, ἀπορρήξασα δὲ δεσμὰ
πολλάκις ἐκ νυκτῶν ἄλλον ἔχει λιμένα.

The imagery is quite full and ambitious, with various elements combined in a coherent whole. Theognis 1361f. is similar, of a boy this time, and with novelty in the collision and the rotten rope, although one cannot be sure of the picture (e.g. to what/whom was the πείσμα of 1362 connected?) or the precise implications of striking the rock:

Ναῦς πέτρῃ προσέκυρσας ἐμῆς φιλότῃτος ἀμαρτῶν,
ὦ παῖ, καὶ σαπρὸν πείσματος ἀντελάβου.

¹ Most full so far have been J. Kahlmeyer, *Seesturm und Schiffsbruch als Bild im antiken Schrifttum* (Hildesheim, 1934), pp. 22–26; A. La Penna 'Note sul linguaggio erotico dell'elegia latina', *Maia* 4 (1951), pp. 202–5; R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I* (Oxford, 1970), 78f. and J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 161–6. On such imagery in non-erotic contexts in Greek and Latin see C. Bonner, 'Desired Haven', *Harvard Theological Review* 34 (1941), pp. 49–67 and A. S. Hollis, *Ovid Ars Amatoria Book I* (Oxford, 1977), p. 40.

² The nearest approach to it in Homer is *Od.* 23.233ff. (in connection with marriage), where the returned Odysseus is as welcome to Penelope as land is to shipwrecked sailors. Cf. also Semonides 7.27ff. (the changeable type of woman is like the sea).

³ On the various difficulties here and for explanation see especially D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 191ff. and G. L. Koniaris, 'Some thoughts on Alcaeus Frs. D15, X14, X16,' *Hermes* 94 (1966), pp. 385–97.

The context is also homosexual for a briefer metaphor in Pindar frag. 108.2ff. Bowra:

τὰς δὲ Θεοξένου ἀκτίνας πρὸς ὄσσω
μαρμαρυζοίσας δρακίς
ὅς μὴ πόθῳ κυμαίνεται, ἐξ ἀδάμαντος ἢ σιδά-
ρου κεχάλκευται μέλαιναν καρδίαν
ψυχρᾷ φλογί.

Economically πόθῳ κυμαίνεται suggests that the normal beholder of the boy Theoxenus is in a turmoil, carried along helplessly this way and that by wave after wave of passion, and the verb plays its part in a piece that consists of a highly developed and audacious complex of images, with intricate correspondences and contrasts throughout (so here water is enclosed by and opposed to fire).

The figure became established in Comedy, as is shown by its frequency therein (although in the case of puns and innuendo it is not always easy to be certain that it is really present), the various advances in complexity and detail, and the fact that it is readily combined with other imagery and verbal play (all of which also suggests that it may well have been more common then, and earlier, than the extant examples intimate). Wit and humour in this sphere first made a definite appearance in Comedy. Aristophanes in particular was fond of the sea of love in its sexual form. The basic idea is that a person copulating resembles somebody on a boat: with a boat propelled by sail the point would seem to be that the person on top has, as it were, climbed on board the other and experiences a pitching and tossing motion;⁴ with a boat that is rowed the rhythmical movement (at varying speeds) of the rower would be relevant also, as would the dipping in and out of the (phallic) oar⁵ in the case of a male in a dominant position 'rowing'.

The basic form appears in Aristoph. *Eccl.* 37ff., where a woman talks about her husband having intercourse with her ('rowing' her) throughout the night:

ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ὦ φιλότατη,
Σαλαμίνιος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὃ ξύνειμ' ἐγώ,
τὴν νύχθ' ὅλην ἤλαυνέ μ' ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν.

Elsewhere elaboration and development are in evidence. Later in the same play we find several references to the sea of love in close succession, as Aristophanes the skilled comedian builds on the joke and exploits its potential by returning to it. At 1086f. there is the following exchange between a young man and one of the two old women who are both claiming his sexual favours under the new dispensation:

Νῆ. χαλεπαί γ' ἂν ἦστε γενόμεναι πορθμῆς. Γρ.^β τῆ;
Νῆ. ἔλκοντε τοὺς πλωτήρας ἂν ἀπεκναίετε.

In addition to the description of the copulating male as a 'passenger', there may be further play in ἔλκοντε (of handling the penis and/or pulling males closer during coitus) and ἀπεκναίετε (of wearing away metaphorically and literally).⁶ At 1091 the absurd notion of the young man satisfying the two hags simultaneously is conveyed by the image of plying two sculls at once, when he exclaims:⁷

πῶς οὖν δικωπεῖν ἀμφοτέρας δυνήσομαι;

⁴ For the motion cf. e.g. *A.P.* 5.54.4.

⁵ Cf. Hesychius ἐρετμόν· κώπη. καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον αἰδοῖον.

⁶ Cf. Henderson (op. cit. n. 1) p. 164.

⁷ So e.g. R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes: Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford, 1973) *ad loc.* This is the standard and, I believe, correct interpretation, but cf. also J. E. G. Whitehorne, 'Rowing with two oars at Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 1091', *Hermes* 117, 3 (1989), pp. 363–6.

At 1105ff. the young man remarks to the audience:

ὅμως δ' ἂν τι πολλὰ πολλάκις πάθω 1105
 ὑπὸ τοῖνδε τοῖν κασαλβάδων δεῦρ' ἐσπλέων,
 θάψαι μ' ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ στόματι τῆς ἐσβολῆς,
 καὶ τήνδ' ἄνωθεν ἐπιπολῆς τοῦ σήματος
 ζῶσαν καταπιττώσαντες εἶτα τὼ πόδε 1110
 μολυβδοχοήσαντες κύκλῳ περὶ τὰ σφυρὰ
 ἄνω 'πιθῆναι πρόφασιν ἀντὶ ληκύθου.

The passage appears to contain several new details: the literal reference in 1106 is to going into a house through the doorway, as though entering a harbour, with the two females acting as tugs or pilots, but, particularly in view of the sexual context and the earlier nautical jokes, very probably ἐσπλέων hints at coition, with the tugs/pilots; the young man's death here implies shipwreck; and there may even be allusion to the vagina in the harbour-mouth of 1107.

Elsewhere Aristophanes compares the male to a ship and the penis to a ship's beak.⁸ At frag. 317K he has:

οἶνον δὲ πίνειν οὐκ ἐάσω Πράμιον,
 οὐ Χιον, οὐδὲ Θάσιον, οὐ Πεπαρήθιον,
 οὐδ' ἄλλον ὅστις ἐπεγερεῖ τὸν ἔμβολον.

At *Birds* 1253ff., where τριέμβολον may denote a penis strong enough to stand three rammings or one as big as three beaks,⁹ the aged Pisthetaerus says to the goddess Iris:

σὺ δ' εἴ με λυπήσεις τι, τῆς διακόνου
 πρώτης ἀνατεῖνας τὼ σκέλει διαμηριῶ
 τὴν Ἴριν αὐτήν, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ὅπως
 οὕτω γέρων ὦν στύομαι τριέμβολον.

This is all variously suggestive. The beak is obviously phallic in shape, readily permits exaggeration regarding size and hardness, and conjures up pictures of a swift, menacing and inexorable approach, violent collision, and penetration. This detail of ramming presumably lies behind the references to sea-battles in the *Frogs*. At 45ff. there is an interchange between Heracles and Dionysus:

Ηρ. ἀλλ' οὐχ οἶός τ' εἴμ' ἀποσοβῆσαι τὸν γέλων 45
 ὀρών λεοντὴν ἐπὶ κροκωτῷ κειμένην.
 τίς ὁ νοῦς; τί κόθορνος καὶ ῥόπαλον ξυνηλθέτην;
 ποῖ γῆς ἀπεδήμεις; Δι. ἐπεβάτευον Κλεισθέναι—
 Ηρ. κἀναυμάχησας; Δι. καὶ κατεδύσαμέν γε ναῦς
 τῶν πολεμίων ἢ δώδεκ' ἢ τρεῖς καὶ δέκα. 50

Erotic innuendo seems likely in κἀναυμάχησας; ('did you fight a sea-battle/see some action?') in 49, and may be present in Dionysus' boasting reply (he sank twelve or thirteen enemy ships) to that query too,¹⁰ particularly after the probable play on ἐπιβαίνειν (= 'mount') in ἐπεβάτευον (48, 'I was serving as a marine under') in connection with the allegedly effeminate Cleisthenes.¹¹ Subsequently, at 430,

⁸ Cf. Hesychius ἔμβολον· Ἀριστοφάνης ἐν Θεσμοφοριαζούσαις τὸ αἰδοῖον, Eustath. in *Od.* p. 1405, 20.

⁹ See A. H. Sommerstein, *Aristophanes: Birds* (Warminster, 1987) on 1256 and Henderson op. cit. p. 164.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Lossau, 'Dionysus fortiter pugnans', *Mnemosyne* IV, 39 (1986), 389f.

¹¹ See W. B. Stanford, *Aristophanes The Frogs* (Basingstoke and London, 1963) and K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes Frogs* (Oxford, 1993) on 48.

ναυμαχεῖν is open to the same inference (especially given *Ἴπποβίνου* in 429 and *κύσθου* in 430), and to add to the fun there is a new development – a mythological allusion (to Heracles' lionskin) is worked in too. The sea-battle is given a piquant twist at *Lysistrata* 671ff., where the men's leader says:

εἰ γὰρ ἐνδώσει τις ἡμῶν ταῖσδε κᾶν σμικρὰν λαβήν,
οὐδὲν ἐλλείψουσιν αὐται λιπαροὺς χειρουργίας,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ναὺς τεκτανοῦνται, ἀπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι
ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ Ἀρτεμισία· 675
ἦν δ' ἐφ' ἵππικὴν τράπωνται, διαγράφω τοὺς ἱππέας.
ἱππικώτατον γὰρ ἔστι χρήμα κάποχον γυνή,
κοῦκ ἂν ἀπολίσθαι τρέχοντος· τὰς δ' Ἀμαζόνας σκόπει,
αἷς Μίκων ἔγραψ' ἐφ' ἵππων μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν.

Here it is the women who are doing the 'sailing', who are the active, dominant and aggressive sexual partners, and who are somehow doing the ramming. As part of a quite complex and advanced blend, a mock-solemn historical reference is also present, and the sea of love is immediately succeeded by equestrian erotic imagery.¹²

The sexual form of the figure is also evident in other writers of Comedy, as is the non-sexual form. Plato 3K presents an oracle about Adonis:

ὦ Κινύρα, βασιλεῦ Κυπρίων ἀνδρῶν δασυπρώκτων,
παῖς σοι κάλλιστος μὲν ἔφν θαυμαστότατός τε
πάντων ἀνθρώπων, δύο δ' αὐτὸν δαίμον' ὀλείτον,
ἡ μὲν ἐλαυνομένη λαθρίοις ἐρετμοῖς, ὁ δ' ἐλαύνων.

In line 4, where the allusion is to Aphrodite being 'rowed' by Adonis, and Dionysus or Apollo 'rowing' him,¹³ the basic image of rowing is enlivened by the dexterous concentration (female and male, passive and active, within a single line) and the fact that it occurs in an oracle (there will be mock-solemnity here, especially in view of *δασυπρώκτων* in 1, and sport with the riddling nature of oracular pronouncements). Less sure is Epicrates 10K:

κατάβαλλε τὰκάτια, καὶ κυλίκια
αἶρον τὰ μείζω, κεῦθ' τοῦ καρχησίου
ἄνελκε τὴν γραῦν, τὴν νέαν τ' ἐπουρίσας
πλήρωσον, εὐτρεπῇ τε τὸν κοντὸν ποιοῦ,
5 καὶ τοὺς κάλως ἔκλυε καὶ χάλα πόδα.

Several scholars suspect obscene undertones in the language here,¹⁴ and this would give the lines more point and interest and humour. If these suspicions are correct,

¹² A. H. Sommerstein, *Aristophanes: Lysistrata* (Warminster, 1990) on line 60 explains the major ambiguity there, but there could just possibly also be a simultaneous sexual 'sailing' pun as well. At *Peace* 341 perhaps an underlying erotic sense for *πλεῖν* is brought to the surface by *βινεῖν*. Henderson (op. cit. pp. 161ff.) suggests many more examples of the sea of love in Aristophanes (and other Comic poets) which I regard as improbable for various reasons (e.g. they seem strained and contrived, there is no clear or specific marine or nautical reference, context is uncertain). Related river-imagery of love is also found in this period, at Eur. *Hipp.* 443; cf. also *A.P.* 12.139.3f. (Callimachus), 184.4 (Strato), Plaut. *Bacch.* 85f., Tib. 1.5.76 (see my commentary = *Tibullus I*, repr. Bristol, 1991, *ad loc.*), Prop. 1.9.16, 2.4.19f., Ovid *A.A.* 1.620, 2.181f., *Rem.* 97f., 121f., 445, 617f., 651f., Philostratus *Epist.* 32 Benner-Fobes (Loeb).

¹³ See Athenaeus 456B, Photius *Bibl.* 151B.

¹⁴ See especially T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1880–1888) *ad loc.* and Henderson (op. cit. p. 161, n. 49). To their parallels for the erotic senses of the words add (e.g.) *A.P.* 5.161 and 204, where females are described as boats.

there is a lengthy and involved mixture of hair-raising simultaneous puns on drinking, sailing, and copulating; and four new usages in the sea of love. Much remains uncertain, but there may be puns at least in *τάκάτια* (of light boats and women, with *κατάβαλλε* referring to getting them on their backs), *πλήρωσον* (= 'man' and 'impregnate'), *κοντὸν* (of a punting-pole and the penis) and *χάλα πόδα* (meaning 'loosen the sheet' and 'have intercourse'). There could also be an explicitly sexual image in Theophilus 6K. The fragment is about an old man's adulterous young wife and follows Theognis 457ff. (quoted above) very closely, the first instance of such imitation of a predecessor in the figure. One difference, however, seems significant, and seems to constitute a subtle and humorous variation on the original. At 3f. Theophilus says that the wife does not obey one rudder: *οὐδὲ μικρὸν πείθεται / ἐνὶ πηδαλίῳ*. That *ἐνὶ* ('one') makes me and others think of more than one steering-oar, i.e. another man's penis.¹⁵

In Eubulus 67K a nine-line criticism of men who prefer adulterous affairs to using prostitutes is followed rather abruptly, it seems, by this little coda:

‘Ελλάδος ἔγωγε τῆς τалаιπώρου στένω,
ἢ Κυδῖαν ναύαρχον ἐξεπέμψατο.

Given the context, one presumes that the novel *ναύαρχον* ('admiral') denotes a respected expert who gives a lead in erotic matters.¹⁶ In Anaxilas 22K an onslaught on prostitutes introduces some mythological parallelism which was subsequently popular, combining several *exempla* and returning to them for emphasis. The fragment begins thus:

ὅστις ἀνθρώπων ἑταῖραν ἠγάπησε πώποτε,
οὐ γένος τίς ἂν δύναίτο παρανομώτερον φράσαι;
τίς γὰρ ἢ δράκαιν' ἄμικτος, ἢ Χίμαιρα πύρπνοος,
ἢ Χάρυβδης, ἢ τρίκρανος Σκύλλα, ποντία κύων,
5 Σφίγξ, ὕδρα, λέαινα, ἔχιδνα, πτηνά θ' Ἀρπυιών γένη,
εἰς ὑπερβολὴν ἀφίκεται τοῦ καταπτύστου γένους;
οὐκ ἔνεσθ', αὐταὶ δ' ἀπάντων ὑπερέχουσι τῶν κακῶν.

In 4 Charybdis and Scylla are well chosen, as highly abusive and pregnant comparisons for prostitutes (conjuring up supreme savagery, inhuman monstrousness, great rapacity, deadly violence and so on). At 15ff. more specific points are added to those implications, as particular courtesans are considered:

15 ἢ δὲ Νάννιον τί νυνὶ διαφέρειν Σκύλλης δοκεῖ;
οὐ δύ' ἀποπνίξας ἑταίρους τὸν τρίτον θηρεύεται
ἔτι λαβεῖν; ἀλλ' ἐξέπεσε πορθμῖς ἐλατίνῳ πλάτῃ.
ἢ δὲ Φρύνη τὴν Χάρυβδιν οὐχὶ πόρρω που ποιεῖ,
τόν τε ναύκληρον λαβοῦσα καταπέπωκ' αὐτῷ σκάφει;
20 ἢ Θεανῶ δ' οὐχὶ Σειρήν ἐστιν ἀποτετιλμένη;
βλέμμα καὶ φωνὴ γυναικός, τὰ σκέλη δὲ κοίχου.

Amidst obvious Homeric echoes¹⁷ the lines intimate that Nannion (like Scylla) has financially ruined two men, although a third has escaped her clutches; Phryne, who

¹⁵ See Kock op. cit. ad loc., where Aristoph. *Peace* 142 is cited for *πηδάλιον* of the male member.

¹⁶ On Cydias cf. Kock op. cit. vol. II p. 188 and the note on Athenaeus 569A in C. B. Gulick, *Athenaeus The Deipnosophists* (Cambridge, Ma and London, 1959), vol. VI p. 73.

¹⁷ So too 29f. recall Hom. *Od.* 12.248f.

lives nearby, has ruined a man too, completely (there could also be a hint of sexual voracity in the Charybdis image); and Theano (compared to a Siren) in addition entices men to their doom, as well as having bird-like legs (and there may be an idea that, as with the Sirens,¹⁸ so men who approach her are lost to their wives and children). At Menander 536K the speaker says that he cannot find a suitable comparison for what has happened to him: love hit him and did for him more quickly than a cyclone or a *συγκλυσμός* ('meeting of waves'), which at least gives one time to cry to Zeus and shout a warning and await a second and third surge, and one can always seize on some wreckage; but in this case ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαξ/ἀψάμενός εἰμι καὶ φιλήσας ἐν βυθῷ. Especially after the foregoing, ἐν βυθῷ will refer to the depths of the sea, and the idea will be that the speaker was immediately shipwrecked and sunk, i.e. felt a violent impact, fell deeply and inescapably in love and 'died' of love (cf. ἀπολλύει in line 3). The rejected comparison is a novelty in this connection, as is the blending with death imagery of love; shipwreck and death had figured at Aristophanes *Eccl.* 1105ff., but here the point is different.

Prior to progressing to the Hellenistic period, one should note the earliest surviving example of the figure in prose (interestingly put into the mouth of a poet). At Plato *Symp.* 197E Agathon in a list of the numerous qualities and kindnesses of Love near the end of his speech describes Him as a guide and defender: ἐν πόνῳ, ἐν φόβῳ, ἐν πόθῳ, ἐν λόγῳ κυβερνήτης, ἐπιβάτης, παραστάτης τε καὶ σωτὴρ ἄριστος. The combination in adjoining metaphors of two distinct nautical figures (pilot and marine) is striking, as is the stylistic polish here in a climactic rhetorical flourish.

In the Hellenistic era there is consolidation and extension. There are fifteen definite occurrences of the sea of love then,¹⁹ almost all in the epigrammatists, amongst whom Meleager was particularly fond of it. Typically, the Alexandrians did much to enliven and elaborate the figure, exhibiting a high degree of inventiveness, ingenuity, dexterity and sophistication, and in the process demonstrating that this kind of imagery was by now so accepted that confusion was unlikely to result from original and bold treatment.

Only four Hellenistic examples of the sea of love with reference to sex have survived, but advances can still be discerned. In *A.P.* 5.54 Dioscorides associates the figure with the *praeceptor amoris* pose and offers some witty and risqué advice on an area which had not been considered hitherto—relations with a pregnant woman (do not have face-to-face sex in bed with such a female, because [3f.] in the middle there is a great wave and much hard work is involved as she is rowed and you are tossed about):

Μήποτε γαστροβαρὴ πρὸς σὸν λέχος ἀντιπρόσωπον
 παιδογόνῳ κλίνῃς Κύπριδι τερπόμενος,
 μεσσόθῃ γὰρ μέγα κύμα, καὶ οὐκ ὀλίγος πόνος ἔσται
 τῆς μὲν ἐρεσσομένης σοῦ δὲ σαλευομένου.
 5 ἀλλὰ πάλιν στρέψας ῥοδοειδέϊ τέρπεο πυγῇ,
 τὴν ἄλοχον νομίσας ἀρσενόπαιδα Κύπριν.

In the graphic 3f., in addition to the paraprostdokian (the reason for the prohibition in 1f. is not that the woman might be uncomfortable or she or the child might be

¹⁸ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 12.42f.

¹⁹ The figure may be present at the start of the highly fragmentary Theoc. *Id.* 31 (see A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* [Cambridge, 1952], II p. 519). In *A.P.* 7.217.4 (Asclepiades) *πρωτοπλόου* is a variant reading for *πρωτοβόλου*, and also occurs in an alternative version of the quatrain ascribed to Plato in Diog. Laert. 3.31 (see A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology Hellenistic Epigrams* [Cambridge, 1965], II pp. 144f.).

harmed), the rowing metaphor is expanded and given life by some new and imaginative touches, and there may well be play on the sense of 'fetus' in *κύμα*.²⁰ In *A.P.* 5.55.6, possibly as a deliberate twist to 5.54.4, Dioscorides depicts the female as the one being tossed about. At 3f. he describes Doris during coition:

ἡ γὰρ ὑπερφνέεσσι μέσον διαβάσά με ποσσὶν
 ἤνυσεν ἀκλινέως τὸν Κύπριδος δόλιχον,
 5 ὄμμασι νωθρὰ βλέπουσα· τὰ δ' ἤυτε πνεύματι φύλλα
 ἀμφισαλευομένης ἔτρεμε πορφύρεα.

The nautical metaphor is highlighted by the unique, polysyllabic ἀμφισαλεύομαι ('toss about'), comes shortly after a racing image, appears in the middle of a simile and could also glance at the mythological Doris. The representation of females as ships and the situation of them ruining men financially are developed in *A.P.* 5.161 (ascribed variously to Hedylus, Asclepiades and Simonides), of three old prostitutes who prey on sailors:

Εὐφρῶ καὶ Θαῖς καὶ Βοίδιον, αἱ Διομήδους
 γραῖαι, ναυκλήρων ὀλκάδες εἰκόσοροι,
 Ἄγιν καὶ Κλεοφῶντα καὶ Ἀνταγόρην ἔν' ἐκάστη
 γυμνοὺς, ναυηγῶν ἥσσονας, ἐξέβαλον.
 5 ἀλλὰ σὺν αὐταῖς νηυσὶ τὰ ληστρικὰ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης
 φεύγετε, Σειρήνων αἶδε γὰρ ἐχθρότεραι.

Note in particular (applied to the old women) the second line's creative ὀλκάδες (significantly these are trading vessels and carry cargo) and εἰκόσοροι = 'twenty-oared' (intimating that they have twenty lovers, or can take on twenty men in succession²¹ or even at once²²), the combination in 4 of men stripped of their belongings and sexually exhausted and exploitation of two meanings for ἐξέβαλον ('they turned out of doors' and 'they cast ashore'), and the way in which as the poet's fancy flits in the course of the epigram the picture shifts (perhaps with a certain blurring in consequence), with the women both merchant ships and pirate ships after other craft, and managing to cast men ashore, and compared to Sirens as well. Meleager seems to try to improve on that poem in *A.P.* 5.204, on a worn out courtesan (perhaps with an eye also on the Alcaeus poem mentioned above):

Οὐκέτι Τιμάριον, τὸ πρὶν γλαφυροῖο κέλητος
 πῆγμα, φέρει πλωτὸν Κύπριδος εἰρεσίην·
 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν νώτοισι μετάφρενον ὡς κέρας ἰστώ
 κυρτοῦται, πολὺς δ' ἐκκλύται πρότονος,
 5 ἰστία δ' αἰωρητὰ χαλᾷ σπαδονίσματα μαστῶν,
 ἐκ δὲ σάλου στρεπτὰς γαστρὸς ἔχει ῥυτίδας,
 νέρθε δὲ πάνθ' ὑπέραντλα νεώς, κοίλῃ δὲ θάλασσα
 πλημμύρει, γόνασιν δ' ἔντρομός ἐστι σάλος.
 δύσανος †τε ζωὸς ἔτ' ὦν δ' ἄχερουσίδα λίμνην
 10 πλεύσεται ἄνωθ' ἐπιβὰς γράος ἐπ' εἰκοσόρου.

There is much originality here (the female/yacht has failing timbers, a back bent like a yard-arm, slack forestays, breasts like hanging sails, wrinkles on the belly and flooding down below (of semen), the same craft is powered by both oars and sails, and

²⁰ So Gow and Page *HE* II, p. 241.

²¹ Gow and Page *HE* II, p. 144.

²² Cf. e.g. Catullus 11.17ff.

there is allusion to Acheron), as Meleager considerably amplifies the comparison and works out the parallels at rather relentless length, although some may feel that in the course of taking things too far he produces equivalents that are at times strained and unclear (especially *πολιὸς δ' ἐκλέλνται πρότονος*, the forestays, in 4).²³

More common then was the non-sexual form. Here some of the already invented items recur (often with a different application or spin), most notably the harbour, at *A.P.* 10.21, 12.100 and 12.167 (on which see below), the rudder (from being that of a husband or lover it becomes Persuasion's rudder in Cercidas 5.8, 15 Powell, the rudder of judgement in *A.P.* 5.190 and the rudder of Meleager's soul held by the helmsman Eros in *A.P.* 12.157; all three pieces are discussed further below) and shipwreck (at *A.P.* 5.209.5f. it is presented with neat antithesis and with the paradox of a man being shipwrecked on land,²⁴ and in 12.156 it is elaborated over four lines and linked with a storm).

There are also many new details and developments, and much else to add interest and vivacity. Cercidas 5.1–17 Powell presents a lengthy treatment:²⁵

Δοιά τις ἄμιν ἔφα γνάθοισι φυσῇ
τὸν κυανοπτέρυγον παῖδ' Ἀφροδίτας,
Δαμόνομ', οὔτι γὰρ εἰ λίαν ἀπευθής·
καὶ βροτῶν γὰρ [τῷ] μὲν ἄν
πραεῖα καὶ εὐμενέ[ουσα] 5
[πνεύματα] δεξιτερὰ πνεύση σιαγών,
οὗτος ἐν ἄτρεμία τὰν ναὺν Ἔρωτος
σώφροσι πηδαλίῳ Πειθοῦς κυβερνή,
τοῖς δὲ τὰν ἀριστερὰν λύσας ἐπόρση
λαίλαπας ἢ λαμυρὰς Πόθων ἀέλλας, 10
κυματίας διόλου τούτοις ὁ πορθμός·
εὐ λέγων Εὐριπίδας. Οὐκοῦν δὴ ὄντων
κάρρον ἐστὶν ἐκλέγειν
τὸν οὐρίον ἄμιν ἀνήταν,
καὶ μετὰ Σωφροσύνας οἶακι Πειθοῦς 15
χρώμενον εὐθυπλοεῖν,
ὅκ' ἢ κατὰ Κύπριν ὁ πορθμός,
μη[...]

In addition to the rather quaint and vivid picture of Eros blowing out of different sides of his mouth, here are the earliest extant appearances of calm on the sea of love (cf. *A.P.* 5.156), winds (cf. *A.P.* 5.190, 9.143, 12.157, 167) and, unless the anonymous *A.P.* 12.156 antedates Cercidas, storms (cf. also *A.P.* 5.190).

At *A.P.* 5.156 Meleager displays his usual ingenuity and economy, of Asclepias, who with her blue (*χαροποις*) eyes like a calm sea invites all to love-voyage:

Ἀ φίλερως χαροποις Ἀσκληπιάς οἶα γαλήνης
ὄμμασι συμπεῖθει πάντας ἔρωτοπλοεῖν.

The adjective *χαροπός* fits well with the marine imagery and is suggestive: it is itself applied to the sea, and as well as denoting colour can mean 'bright' and also 'grim',

²³ On which see Gow and Page *HE* II, p. 640.

²⁴ For this cf. also *A.P.* 5.11.2 (anon.).

²⁵ As J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* (Oxford, 1925) *ad loc.* suggests, Cercidas could be alluding to Trag. Frag. Adesp. 151 Nauck δισσὰ πνεύματα πνείεις, Ἔρως. If so, that could be another instance of the figure in Classical Greek.

so that it hints at a deceptively glittering and calm sea.²⁶ The simile in 1 smoothly gives way to metaphor in 2, where the strikingly bulky and novel *ἐρωτοπλοεῖν* ('to love-voyage') is placed at the very end for a climactic flourish. In another poem by Meleager (*A.P.* 12.84) the speaker, having just landed from a voyage at sea, is shown a handsome boy by Eros, and at 7f. concludes by asking if he has escaped the bitter sea only to traverse on land the much more bitter sea of Cypris:

ἀρά γε τὴν πικρὰν προφυγὼν ἄλα πολὺ τι κείνης
πικρότερον χέρσῳ κύμα περὶ Κύπριδος;

In a single (polished)²⁷ distich Meleager plays on the literal and metaphorical senses of bitter in *πικρότερον*²⁸ and produces paradox (the man who has escaped the sea is still at sea, a sea on land), while also, for the first time in such imagery, referring to a named sea with *κύμα...Κύπριδος*²⁹ and blending the sea of love with allusion to a type of sepulchral epigram (on the death on land of a sailor saved from the sea).³⁰

Three other pieces by Meleager are interconnected, which is also a first for the figure. In *A.P.* 12.157 he really explores the notion of the lover as a ship, where Aphrodite is the captain, Eros is the helmsman, and Desire blows and tosses the poet:

Κύπρις ἐμοὶ ναύκληρος, Ἔρως δ' οἶακα φυλάσσει
ἄκρον ἔχων ψυχῆς ἐν χερὶ πηδάλιον·
χειμαίνει δ' ὁ βαρὺς πνεύσας Πόθος, οὐνεκα δὴ νῦν
παμφύλῳ παίδων νήχομαι ἐν πελάγει.

In these dense four lines, with wit (a female for a captain, a boy taking such responsibility at the helm, the pun in *παμφύλῳ*), several points which had already appeared are given individual handling, and an advance is made in the complete control of the ship-lover by three amatory powers. Some of the wording in *A.P.* 12.167 is similar:

Χειμέριον μὲν πνεῦμα, φέρει δ' ἐπὶ σοί με, Μνίσκε,
άρπαστὸν κόμοις ὁ γλυκύδακρυς Ἔρως·
χειμαίνει δὲ βαρὺς πνεύσας Πόθος· ἀλλὰ μ' ἐς ὄρμον
δέξαι τὸν ναύτην Κύπριδος ἐν πελάγει.

Of the variations on 12.157 here³¹ most relevant for our purposes are two innovations introduced by Meleager: the metaphorical wind in line 3 (Desire blowing and tossing him) clearly picks up and parallels the real wind in line 1 (brought out by verbal echoes), and the lover on the sea of love is combined with the komast. That same combination also figures in *A.P.* 5.190, where the picture of Meleager as a ship and the concentration of items is also reminiscent of 12.157:

Κύμα τὸ πικρὸν Ἔρωτος ἀκοίμητοί τε πνέοντες
ζῆλοι καὶ κώμων χειμέριον πέλαγος,
ποὶ φέρομαι; πάντῃ δὲ φρενῶν οἴακες ἀφείνται·
ἢ πάλι τὴν τρυφερὴν Σκύλλαν ἐποψόμεθα;

²⁶ Cf. Hor. C. 1.5.13 and Nisbet-Hubbard *ad loc.*

²⁷ Note in particular the alliteration in both lines and the placement of words in the pentameter.

²⁸ Cf. *A.P.* 5.190.1.

²⁹ The sea of Cypris is also found in *A.P.* 10.21.6, 12.167.4; cf. 5.190.2 and 12.157.4 as well.

³⁰ See Gow and Page *HE* II, p. 667.

³¹ For these see S. L. Tarán, *The Art of Variation in the Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden, 1979), pp. 109f.

Among the various twists to established motifs particularly worthy of note is the fourth line, in which there is a pun on the girl's name Tryphera³² and arresting inversion in the attribution of the epithet *τρυφερός* ('delicate, dainty, voluptuous') to Scylla and in the sailor's wish to see Scylla.

The figure was common enough in Latin of the Republican period,³³ but, although variations do seem to be made and some elements are without prior parallel, there were no really substantial advances then, as far as we can tell. It was most popular in Plautus (who utilized it especially in connection with money), a fact which reinforces suspicions that it was more frequent in Greek Comedy than appears from the remnants of that genre.

To begin with the sea of love with financial reference in Plautus, the idea of prostitutes as pirate ships (cf. *A.P.* 5.161) also occurs in *Men.* 344 (connected with the motif of the harbour = the brothel where the girl is stationed) and 442 (where the pirate ship now leads or tows a *lembus* = a lover); reminiscent of Anaxilas' allusion to Charybdis is the description of hetaerae and their doors as whirlpools in *Bacch.* 471 and *Truc.* 350f.; similarly at *As.* 134f. a procuress (a character not found in the figure before Plautus) and a courtesan are depicted as a *mare acerrimum* in which the speaker's goods have been washed away (a point not encountered before here), and at *Truc.* 564ff. Phronesium is compared to the voracious and insatiable sea. Also financial, but for a change not of economic ruin, is an analogy employed at *Epid.* 49 of a man who after buying one girl bought another one, as the fancy took him: *utquomque in alto ventust, Epidice, exim velum vortitur* (the initial appearance of this detail in surviving examples of the figure).

Reference to both money and love occurs at *As.* 156ff. in an exchange between the bawd Cleareta and the lover Argrippus outside a brothel:

- CL. fixus hic apud nos est animus tuo' clavo Cupidinis.
remigio veloque quantum poteris festina et fuge:
quam magi' te in altum capessis, tam aestus te in portum refert.—
ARG. ego pol istum portitorem privabo portorio.

In addition to the combination of the sea of love with the *clavus Cupidinis* and the play on the amatory sense of *aestus*, this is the first instance we possess of the lover trying to escape from and being driven back into port, the harbour-dues and the harbour-master. The other Plautine images relate to love alone. The figure of the maid and the tender to which she is likened at *Miles* 986f. and 1006 are also firsts in what has come down to us, while at *Cist.* 221ff. (of Amor) unusually the comparison to a shipwreck is in part rejected:³⁴

maritumis moribu' mecum expetitur:
ita meum frangit amantem animum;
neque, nisi quia miser non eo pessum,
mihi ulla abest perditio perimities.

Rather like *κυμαίνεται* in Pindar frag. 108.3 Bowra is *fluctuo* at Lucretius 4.1077 *fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum*, but this time the context is sexual and the

³² Cf. Tarán, op. cit. pp. 112f.

³³ Other possible Republican examples are Plaut. *As.* 519f. (where there could be a pun on sexual 'rowing'), *Merc.* 875ff. and 890f. (perhaps the sea of love specifically, in view of 887, rather than a sea of troubles in general), Caecilius 243f. Warmington (context and reference unclear), Ter. *Eun.* 1083 (*in tranquillo* may denote a tranquil state or the calm of the sea), *Andria* 846 (G. P. Shipp, *P. Terenti Afri Andria* [Melbourne, 1960] *ad loc.* explains this as a swimming metaphor), Cic. *De Oratore* 3.163 (*Syrtim patrimonii* and *Charybdim bonorum* may allude to courtesans) and Catull. 68.3 (which could be our figure, in view of 5f., or a sea of troubles generally).

³⁴ For the rejection cf. Menander 536K.

reference is the the lover's inability to decide what to enjoy first when granted access to the woman's body. Akin is Catullus 64.62 *magnis curarum fluctuat undis*, of Ariadne watching Theseus depart, but the allusion now is to a mixture of anxiety and love (as it is in the very similar 64.97f.), and there is subtle point here in employing the metaphor of somebody standing on a shore and looking out to sea. At Catullus 68.107f. (of Laodamia) *tanto te absorbens vertice amoris / aestus in abruptum detulerat barathrum* the Charybdis / whirlpool image is given a new application (to somebody deeply in love: cf. 68.117); it is also fused at 109ff. with a unique comparison to underground drainage-channels near Pheneus. Finally there is Catullus 68.63ff.:

ac velut in nigro iactatis turbine nautis
lenius aspirans aura secunda venit
iam prece Pollucis, iam Castoris implorata,
tale fuit nobis Allius auxilium.

The background situation (a friend's help in an affair) is without earlier parallel in this sphere, as are the calm after the storm with the gentler breeze, and Castor and Pollux and the prayers to them; and this is the first time that we come across a nautical simile that is so lengthy, dense, and expressive (especially concerning Catullus' initial fear, misery, and despair in the midst of a very serious amatory disturbance and his subsequent relief, joy, and gratitude to Allius, who is here complimented on his godlike power and beneficence).

During the Augustan era there was a great resurgence of interest in our figure. It was employed more frequently and more regularly than it was at any other time, being most common in Propertius and especially Ovid, although the financial (only Horace C. 1.27.19, Ovid *A.A.* 1.399ff.) and sexual (only Ovid *A.A.* 2.725f., 731) forms were rare.³⁵ Amid much novelty, numerous details were added, to produce a fuller and clearer picture. The sea of love plays a role of distinct importance in Horace C. 1.5 and in Ovid's didactic poetry (where it is one of the main figures utilized in the description of love), and, as will be seen, there are several extended instances which attain quite a high degree of sophistication and which consist of a rather complex blend of elements, layers, and levels.³⁶

³⁵ In addition to the definite examples noted in my main text there are some other possible instances. At Prop. 2.33B.43 interpretation is problematical but *aestus* could be the tide of love (so W. A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book II* [Cambridge, 1967] *ad loc.*). At Prop. 3.20.2, although the primary reference is to an actual voyage, there may also be allusion to our figure (cf. P. Fedeli, *Properzio Il Libro Terzo delle Elegie* [Bari, 1985] *ad loc.*). In Prop. 3.24.12 the shipwreck and the Aegean may be metaphorical, but text and reference are much disputed. At Tibullus 2.1.79f. *urget* could mean 'drives' (as a wind does), and *placidus* (in the sense of 'favourable, tranquil') and *adflat* (= 'blows') could denote a gentle breeze that leads to an untroubled amatory voyage, and at 2.4.9f. just possibly Tibullus intimates that like the *cautes* he wants to withstand the wild wind and shipwrecking waves rather than being tossed and wrecked on the sea of love (see my commentary = *Tibullus, Elegies II* [Oxford, 1994] on both passages). In Ovid *Am.* 2.4.8, 2.10.9 and *Rem.* 635 one cannot be sure whether the sailing is at sea or on a lake or river. At *Her.* 15.72 the reference may be to the sea of love or the sea of life, and at *Her.* 18.207f. the naval imagery may be amatory. I cannot agree with those critics who maintain that the figure is present in Hor. C. 1.14 (esp. W. S. Anderson, 'Horace Carm. 1.14: What Kind of Ship?', *CPh* 61 [1966], pp. 84–98) or Prop. 1.17 (e.g. F. Solmsen, 'Three Elegies of Propertius' First Book', *CPh* 57 [1962], pp. 73–88; E. W. Leach, 'Propertius 1.17. The Experimental Voyage', *YCIS* 19 [1966], pp. 209–32; N. E. P. Wiggers, *Heroic Love: A Study of Propertius' Adaptation of Erotic Tradition to Personal Poetry* [diss. Brown University, 1972], pp. 127ff.).

³⁶ For the sake of perspective it should be noted that the sea of love did not reach as advanced a stage of development in the Augustans as *militia amoris* and *servitium amoris* (on which see my

Many established motifs are picked up by the Augustans, and often they are enhanced by minor innovations. So we find the calm sea at Horace *C.* 1.5.13, Propertius 3.17.2 (and possibly 3)³⁷, Ovid *Her.* 16.25, *A.A.* 3.259; a voyage in Ovid *A.A.* 1.456, *Rem.* 70; the anchor at Prop. 3.24.16, Ovid *Rem.* 447; cargo in Prop. 2.14.30, Ovid *A.A.* 1.439f.; the combination of oar and sail at Ovid *A.A.* 1.368 (but of the maid inciting an angry mistress, rather than of the lover as at Plautus *As.* 157); Scylla at Ovid *Rem.* 737 (now as a parallel to spots to be avoided by the recovering lover); Charybdis in Horace *C.* 1.27.19 and (again in connection with places the lover should shun) Ovid *Rem.* 740; rope at Prop. 2.22.41 (here a ship protected by two cables is equivalent to a lover with two mistresses); tossing in Prop. 2.12.7 (but with reference to fickleness); oars and rowing at Ovid *A.A.* 2.731 and *Rem.* 532 (rowing with the current = going back to one's girlfriend); sails at Ovid *Am.* 3.11B.51, *A.A.* 1.373, 2.725 (spreading too full a sail, of having orgasm before one's partner), *Met.* 9.590, 592, 594; rocks in Ovid *Rem.* 692 (a rock lashed on all sides by waves is likened to a lover assailed by female wiles), *Met.* 9.593; shipwreck at Horace *C.* 1.5.13ff. (see below), Prop. 2.14.30, 2.25.24 (of ships destroyed in port), Ovid *A.A.* 1.411f., 3.584, *Met.* 9.593f.; harbours in Prop. 2.14.29, 2.25.34 (see above), 3.24.15 (with a complete inversion, here reaching harbour refers to falling out of love), Ovid *Am.* 2.9B.31f. (a ship just making port carried back out to sea), *Her.* 16.26, *A.A.* 2.10; and winds at Horace *C.* 1.5.7, 11, Prop. 2.5.4, 2.12.8 (a shifting wind, denoting lovers' fickleness)³⁸, Ovid *Am.* 2.9B.32 (see above), 3.11B.51, *A.A.* 1.373, 2.337f., 429–32 (in the last two passages using different winds is equivalent to trying different tactics), 514, *Rem.* 14, 531 (letting the winds blow one's ship backwards = returning to one's girl), *Met.* 9.590 (tested with a close-reefed sail) and 592. In addition, the use of the analogy, which had occurred earlier in Plautus *Epid.* 49, is taken up by the Augustans and given a new importance, at Prop. 2.22.41, 2.25.7 (rejected), 23f., 3.11.5, Ovid *Am.* 2.9A.21 (where the one rejected by Propertius is accepted), *A.A.* 1.3, 6, 400, 402, 723 (rejected), 2.514, 3.259f., 584, *Rem.* 447 and 735–7.

During this period there also appear many elements which are entirely new in the figure. So there is mention of shallows at Prop. 2.14.30 (of a *navis mediis sidat onusta vadis*, Ovid *A.A.* 1.437 and 3.469, of the Carpathian sea at Prop. 2.5.11 (angry lovers relent more quickly than that sea changes) and of the Syrtes at Prop. 2.9.33 (an angry woman breaks her *foedus* more quickly than the Syrtes shift), 3.24.16 and Ovid *Rem.* 739. Similarly a sailor predicts the winds in Prop. 3.11.5, and even the complexion of sailors (paleness is unsuitable) comes in for comment at Ovid *A.A.* 1.723 (cf. 729f.). At 2.25.23f., for the benefit of a credulous lover who thinks he can rely on a woman, Propertius introduces the quite graphic and darkly comic vignette of someone repaying his vows too soon: *an quisquam in mediis persolvit vota procellis, / cum saepe in portu fracta carina natet?* Novel (and also sharp) points of detail are the garlanding of a vessel in thanks after a safe trip (Prop. 3.24.15, Ovid *Am.* 3.11A.29) and the use of wax, to waterproof timbers and caulk seams, at Ovid *Rem.* 447.³⁹ We also find for the first time the retirement of ships in Propertius' vivid 2.25.7 *putris et in vacua*

articles 'Militia Amoris and the Roman Elegists', *Latomus* 34 [1975], pp. 68ff. and 'Servitium Amoris and the Roman Elegists', *Latomus* 40 [1981], pp. 596ff.).

³⁷ On the text of 3 see W. A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book III* (Cambridge, 1966) and Fedeli op. cit. *ad loc.*

³⁸ On the interpretation of the line see D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 85.

³⁹ For the practice, and for the point of the reference in Ovid, see A. A. R. Henderson, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Remedia Amoris* (Edinburgh, 1979) *ad loc.*

requiescit navis harena and Ovid *Am.* 2.9A.21, and the notion of a lover's success with girls expressed by the arresting picture of a craft with a female complement for a change at Ovid *Rem.* 488 *plena puellarum iam tibi navis erit*.

Some instances are noteworthy not only for novelty but also for length and density and other features.⁴⁰ The sea of love plays a major part in Horace *C.* 1.5:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa | |
| perfusus liquidis urget odoribus | |
| grato, Pyrrha, sub antro? | |
| cui flavam religas comam, | |
| simplex munditiis? heu quotiens fidem | 5 |
| mutatosque deos flebit et aspera | |
| nigris aequora ventis | |
| emirabitur insolens, | |
| qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea, | |
| qui semper vacuam, semper amabilem | 10 |
| sperat, nescius aurae | |
| fallacis! miseri, quibus | |
| intemptata nites. me tabula sacer | |
| votiva paries indicat uvida | |
| suspendisse potenti | 15 |
| vestimenta maris deo. | |

The imagery runs through the whole ode, figuring at 6f. (where it is given impact by the pregnant diction)⁴¹, in 11f. (*aurae* at the end of 11 seems to be in tension with *aurea* at the end of 9), in 13 (the graphic treacherous glitter of the sea⁴² momentarily makes Pyrrha rather than love the equivalent of the sea) and particularly at 13–16, which build substantially on the foregoing and contain the unique plaque, dedication and wet clothes (realistic touches taking the motif of the shipwreck that bit further). In addition, the figure is instrumental in conveying the significant surprises of that final stanza, where with the last word Horace reveals that, despite his earlier tone of urbane superiority towards Pyrrha's present admirer and despite the fact that Horace had not appeared as a lover in *C.* 1.1–4, he was himself personally involved with Pyrrha, and seriously so, and he announces the end of the affair with her and makes it clear that the ode is in fact a *renuntiatio amoris*.

At Ovid *A.A.* 1.3–8 the sea of love (in keeping with its importance in the poem generally) is given an extended treatment and a prominent position as the very first amatory figure in the work:

| | |
|--|---|
| arte citae veloque rates remoque moventur, | |
| arte leves currus: arte regendus Amor. | |
| curribus Automedon lentisque erat aptus habenis, | 5 |
| Tiphys in Haemonia puppe magister erat: | |
| me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori; | |
| Tiphys et Automedon dicar Amoris ego. | |

⁴⁰ At Prop. 3.24.15–17 many items are packed in (including the new garlands and Syrtes, and the twist to reaching port, which now denotes falling out of love), and there is a gorgeous mixture of marine and other imagery in the latter part of the poem. Ovid *Met.* 9.589–94 consists of an extended nautical metaphor, but apart from the testing of the wind with a close-reefed sail the individual elements are unremarkable.

⁴¹ *Aspera* means 'rough' and also 'savage', 'hostile', 'grievous' and 'formidable' (*OLD* s.v. 4c, 9, 11, 13, 15); *nigris* refers to the black storm-clouds brought by the winds but also has menacing connotations of ill omen and death (*OLD* s.v. 7, 8).

⁴² See Nisbet–Hubbard *ad loc.* for explication and parallels. The emendation *deae* in 16 (which Nisbet–Hubbard favour *inter alia* because of the analogous dedication to Venus in *C.* 3.26) seems unnecessary: *deo* could denote a goddess (*Thes. L.L.* V, 1.890.16ff.) and may be deliberately ambiguous.

The need for technique in sailing and the figure of Tiphys are innovations. More importantly, Ovid employs the sea of love to put across one of the major and basic jokes of the *Ars* (the rational, scientific approach to irrational, emotional love), gives the analogy extra bite by using it here (as elsewhere in the *Ars* and *Remedia*: see below, for example) to parody didactic analogies from mythology and other occupations⁴³ and in 8 with *Tiphys... Amoris* produces an expression which is bold, unparalleled and amusing (not least because it places this dignified character of myth and epic in a trivial and undignified context).

Later, at *A.A.* 1.399ff., Ovid writes:

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| tempora qui solis operosa colentibus arva, fallitur, et nautis aspicienda putat. | 400 |
| nec semper credenda Ceres fallacibus arvis nec semper viridi concava puppis aquae, nec teneras semper tutum captare puellas: saepe dato melius tempore fiet idem. | |
| sive dies suberit natalis sive Kalendae, quas Venerem Marti continuasse iuvat, sive erit ornatus non, ut fuit ante, sigillis, sed regum positas Circus habebit opes, differ opus: tunc tristis hiems, tunc Pliades instant, tunc tener aequorea mergitur Haedus aqua; | 405 410 |
| tunc bene desinitur; tunc si quis creditur alto, vix tenuit lacerae naufraga membra ratis. | |

There is considerable novelty here, in the analogy at 400 and 402 (the sailor's need to watch the seasons, and not always sailing) and in the subsequent development at 409ff. (*hiems*, *Pliades* and the setting of the Kid, extending the shipwreck topos). There is also considerable cleverness and wit, in all the parody of Hesiod and Virgil in connection with the figure⁴⁴ and in the mock-seriousness and exaggeration over the dangers (of only having to buy presents) at 409ff. (their extreme nature, the concentration of them, the emphatic repetition of *tunc*, with alliteration, *tristis* and *instant* in 409, the graphic 412).

Remedia 735ff. concern the avoidance of places associated with the mistress:

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Argolides cuperent fugisse Capherea puppes teque, senex luctus ignibus ulte tuos; praeterita cautus Niseide navita gaudet: tu loca, quae nimium grata fuere, cave. haec tibi sint Syrtes, haec Acroceraunia vita; hic vomit epotas dira Charybdis aquas. | 735 740 |
|---|----------------------------|

The similarities to *A.A.* 1.409ff. are obvious. In fact, it appears that, typically, Ovid has that earlier passage in mind and is trying to ring the changes on it. He includes here one more parallel for danger (for increased exaggeration), works in mythological allusions (in this flippant context), and achieves a certain piquancy in utilizing all these marine details in connection with avoiding the resurgence of the fire of passion (*flamma*, 734; note also *ignibus* in 736). Caphereus, Nauplius, and Acroceraunia are all firsts in the sea of love, and Scylla (denoted by the patronymic for a change) and Charybdis are hazards rather than symbols of rapacity.

In later Classical literature the figure does continue its existence but goes into something of a decline, particularly in Latin. I have discovered only thirty (mainly

⁴³ Cf. e.g. Virgil *Georgics* 1.204ff., 3.258ff.

⁴⁴ See Hollis op. cit. on 399–436, 399–400, 403 and 411–12.

short) instances during this whole period,⁴⁵ and there is less evidence of innovation, ingenuity and imaginativeness than in the Augustans, although more is now made of the sexual form. The sea of love at this time first became properly established in prose; in fact, it is more frequent in prose (seventeen examples, of which ten are in the Greek epistolographers) than in verse (thirteen occurrences, seven of which are in Greek epigram).

Many earlier elements are simply regurgitated, occasionally with some novel elaboration. The analogy recurs at Philostratus *Epist.* 19 Benner-Fobes (Loeb) and (rejected) at *Anth. Lat.* 268.1 Buecheler-Riese-Lommatzsch (ascribed to Pentadius, and others) *crede ratem ventis, animum ne crede puellis*. Nicetas Eugenianus 6.498⁴⁶ refers to calm with *κατασπορούσα τὸν κλύδωνα τοῦ πόθου*. Charybdis appears at Sidonius *Epist.* 9.6.2 *sumptuositas domesticae Charybdis* (of a venal slave-girl with whom a man was entangled), Alciphron *Epist.* 1.6.3 Benner-Fobes and Philostratus *Epist.* 50 (where rocks and winds are added, and a woman is said to be more powerful than Charybdis, since she sucks down men constantly and leaves no chance of escape). The harbour figures in *A.P.* 5.235.6 (Macedonius The Consul) and Nicetas Eugenianus 6.499f. *τὸν θαλασσοπλάγκτον ἤδη προσδέχου / σαῖς ἀγκάλαις δῆπουθεν, ὡς ἐν λιμένι*. There is mention of the helmsman at Aristaenetus *Epist.* 2.11.9 Mazal and Philostratus *Epist.* 19, passengers at Macrobius *Sat.* 2.5.9 (see below), pirate ships at *A.P.* 5.44.3 (Rufinus) and (sexual) rowing at *A.P.* 11.29.6 Automedon, 9.415.8 Antiphilus of Byzantium (see below) and 9.416.7 Philip of Thessalonica. We find the rudder at Ausonius *Cento Nupt.* 124 (quoted below), Scylla at Alciphron *Epist.* 1.21.3 (with allusion to her geographical situation and mother as well) and the sea of Venus in Porphyrius apud Fulgentius *Myth.* p. 40.18ff. Helm (of Venus) *hanc etiam in mari natantem pingunt, quod omnis libido rerum patiaturs naufragia, unde et Porfirius in epigrammate ait: 'nudus, egens, Veneris naufragus in pelago'* and Macedonius The Consul (*A.P.* 5.235.4). Shipwreck also featured in the words of Porphyrius just quoted and in *A.P.* 5.235.5 (Macedonius The Consul), Alciphron *Epist.* 1.21.3 and Sidonius *Epist.* 9.6.2, where it is combined with allusion to Odysseus, the wax plugs and the Sirens (of a man who has escaped his attachment to a slave-girl) *Ulixeeas, ut ferunt, ceras auribus figens fugit adversum vitia surdus meretricii blandimenta naufragii* (for the Sirens cf. also Aristaenetus *Epist.* 1.1 and Alciphron *Epist.* 4.11.7). Note also the storm in Chariton 3.2.6 and Nicetas Eugenianus 6.492f. *ἀποπνιγῆναι κινδυνεύω, φιλάτῃ, / ἐκ τῆς κατασχούσης με τοῦ πόθου ζάλης*, tossing at Heliodorus *Aeth.* 3.10.5 and Aristaen. *Epist.* 1.17, the amatory voyage in Lucian (?) *Amores* 3, waves at Apuleius *Met.* 5.23, Chariton 3.2.6 (with the head held up from them), Aristaen. *Epist.* 1.10.48, 1.17.30f., *A.P.* 5.235.4 (Macedonius The Consul), Maximianus 3.86 (of one who has fallen out of love) *meque videt fluctus exsuperasse meos* and Nicetas Eugenianus 6.498 (see above), and winds at Aristaen. *Epist.* 2.11.9ff. and *Anth. Lat.* 268.1 (quoted above).

There are some completely new features. Apuleius (*Met.* 2.11) introduces provisions for the (sexual) *navigium Veneris* (wine, and oil for the lamp), while Ausonius (*Cento*

⁴⁵ There are four other possible examples in addition to those mentioned in the main text. Plutarch at *Mor.* 751E will be referring to storms and calm on the sea of love if *γαλήνη* denotes quiet of the sea rather than just quiet in general. In *A.P.* 12.252.3 Strato may have in mind an actual voyage or an amatory voyage looking for boys or tossing around during *pedicatio* (see my article 'Strato A.P. 12, 252', *Hermes* 113 [1985], pp. 253–5). At Musaeus 212–15 Leander may be simply likening himself swimming to a ship sailing, but the idea could be that he will sail on the sea of love, guided by Hero's lamp, to harbour with her. The words *ὅλον σε αὐτοῖς ἀγροῖς καταπιδύσας* at Alciphron *Epist.* 2.31.2 Benner-Fobes may be intended to conjure up Charybdis.

⁴⁶ See R. Hercher, *Erotici Scriptores Graeci* (Leipzig, 1859), II p. 516.

Nupt. 124f.), parodying Virgil *Aen.* 5.852f., brings in the stars, on which the groom fixes his eyes as he deflowers the bride: *clavumque adfixus et haerens / nusquam amittebat oculosque sub astra tenebat*. Automedon (*A.P.* 11.29.5f.) is the first to mention an impotent man in this connection and depicts him as venturing to sail without tackle (as well as being a rower who has lost his oar). In *A.P.* 5.44 Rufinus, imitating *A.P.* 5.161 (quoted above), presents two dockside prostitutes who are named Lembion and Cercurion, names derived from the boats called λέμβος and κέρκουρος;⁴⁷ there also seems to be novelty in the fourth line, in which after warning young men to flee these pirate ships Rufinus remarks: ὁ συμμίξας καὶ καταδὺς πιέται apparently punning in the participle on the senses of ‘join battle with’ and ‘have sex with’ while saying that the person who so engages with them is sunk and swallowed up.⁴⁸ Aristaenetus in *Epist.* 1.17.31 has one lover say to another that they are both in the same boat and face the same danger, Philostratus in *Epist.* 59 has a man assure his beloved that if she goes into the country he will not be left behind, being τοῦ Ἐρωτος ἐφόλκιον (a small boat towed behind a ship), and Alciphron in *Epist.* 1.21.3 adds the Calydonian Gulf and the Tyrrhenian Sea to the dangers facing the amatory voyager.

More interesting and elaborate instances of innovation include *A.P.* 11.328, where Nicarchus describes how he and two other men had sex simultaneously with an old woman. The first eight lines are relevant to our purposes:

Τὴν μίαν Ἑρμογένης κἀγὼ ποτε καὶ Κλεόβουλος
 ἤγομεν εἰς κοινὴν κύπριν Ἀριστοδίκτην
 ἧς ἔλαχον μὲν ἐγὼ πολὺν ἅλα ναιέμεν αὐτός·
 εἰς γὰρ ἓν, οὐ πάντες πάντα, διειλόμεθα.
 Ἑρμογένης δ’ ἔλαχε στυγερὸν δόμον εὐρώεντα,
 ὕστατον, εἰς ἀφανὴ χώρον ὑπερχόμενος,
 ἔνθ’ ἀκταὶ νεκύων, καὶ ἔρινεοὶ ἠνεμόεντες
 δινεύνται πνοιῇ δυσκελάδων ἀνέμων.

The sea of line 3 which the speaker was allotted denotes a moist vagina⁴⁹ and quite possibly alludes to a tangy, fishy smell and taste, while the adjective for the sea πολὺν (‘grey’) will refer to grey pubic hair. At 5ff., parodying Homer *Od.* 10.509ff., Nicarchus likens the woman’s anus to the land of the dead to which Odysseus sailed, a dark, dismal and unattractive place⁵⁰ of epic terror and danger, and at 7f., while keeping Homer’s shore (close by the sea), he replaces the poplars and willows of *Od.* 10.510 with ἔρινεοὶ (fig-trees), which suggest anal sores,⁵¹ and also works in allusion to excessive flatulence. Similar, and perhaps prior to Nicarchus, is the anonymous *A.P.* 11.220, in which the vagina is again a sea (‘avoid the στόμα of Alpheus; he likes the κόλπους of Arethusa, plunging headlong into the salty sea’):

Ἀλφειοῦ στόμα φεύγε· φιλεῖ κόλπους Ἀρεθούσης,
 πρηνὴς ἐμπίπτων ἄλμυρόν ἐς πέλαγος.

The reference is to cunnilingus (another first in the figure), and the poet plays on the mythological associations of the names Alpheus and Arethusa and on different senses

⁴⁷ See D. L. Page, *The Epigrams of Rufinus* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 88f.

⁴⁸ See LSJ s.v. συμμείγνυμι II 2 and 3 for these meanings.

⁴⁹ Cf. J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), p. 167.

⁵⁰ Cf. esp. Homer *Od.* 11.14ff.

⁵¹ For figs so used and for topographical imagery of the anus see Adams (op. cit. n. 49), pp. 113f.

ἔστιν ἑταίρειος μὲν ἔμοι στόλος, εἰσι δὲ λεπτὰ 5
 κάρπασα, καὶ λεπτὸν φῦκος ὑπὲρ σανίδων.
 ναυτίλοι, ἀλλ' ἄγε πάντες ἐμῆς ἐπιβαίνετε πρύμνης
 θαρραλέως· πολλοὺς οἶδα φέρειν ἐρέτας.

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⁵² LSJ s.v. κόλπος I 2, Adams op. cit. pp. 90f.

⁵³ See A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip* (Cambridge, 1968), II p. 141.