Classical Quarterly **49.2** 503–514 (1999) *Printed in Great Britain*

HOOKING IN HARBOURS: DIOSCURIDES XIII GOW–PAGE

Kamaki: lit. 'harpoon', young Greek male who pursues tourist women, especially in seaside resorts. (from a guidebook for tourists to Greece)

drosia . . . the Greek word for dew, for freshness and cool, a word that like a trembling molecule is set into the Greek notion of erotic desire. (P. Storace, *Dinner with Persephone*, p. 22)

Klaus Alpers[1] has recently recovered from the obscurity of Byzantine lexica the fragments of what appears to be a novel dating from *c.* A.D. 100, and notable to us, as it was for the Byzantine excerptor, for the elegant verbal borrowings from ancient comedy, always a favourite source of good Attic Greek for the atticists of imperial times. One of these glosses gives occasion to look again at fishing metaphors for erotic business, a subject discussed often enough by scholars,[2] but still perhaps capable of revealing new nuances. These hunting and fishing metaphors are used as one would expect in many non-amatory contexts,[3] but in both love poetry and its allied genres they occur throughout antiquity in such quantity that the metaphorical complexity reaches into very allusive language. Long ago Preston[4] had already pointed out that 'Figures from hunting, fowling and fishing as parallel to the arts of the meretrix, are very frequent, and are developed at unusual length.' There was undoubtedly a realistic side to all of this metaphorical hunting.[5] 'The lover is a fish to be baked, as long he has juice in him', says the bawd at Plautus, *Asinaria* 177, and one needs little imagination to realize what plays can be made on such a theme, and indeed were made at all levels throughout antiquity.

* This paper was given as a seminar to the Department of the Classics at Harvard in November 1998, exactly twenty years after I first spoke on the symposium at sea there. I am exceedingly grateful for the warm reception and the ensuing discussion, in particular to Kathleen Coleman and Albert Henrichs. One could wish no better forum to test one's ideas.

[1] K. Alpers, 'Zwischen Athen, Abdera und Samos', in M. Billerbeck and J. Schamp (edd.), *Kainotomia: Colloquium Pavlos Tzermias* (Freiburg, 1996), 19–55, fr. 7 with p. 51.

[2] Eric Jacobsen, 'Die Metamorphosen der Liebe und Friedrich Spees Trutznachtigall', *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab: hist.-fil. Meddelelser* 34,3 (Kopenhagen, 1954), 105ff. Werner von Koppenfels, *Esca et Hamus. Beiträge zu einer historischen Liebesmetaphorik* (SBAW, phil.hist. Kl. 1973, 3: Munich, 1973); these were cited by Alpers in a letter to me; P. Flury, *Liebe und Liebespsrache bei Menander, Plautus und Terenz* (Heidelberg, 1968), 87ff. Of older and useful collections of material, one can in particular mention Birt's pupil V. Hoeltzer, *De poesi amatoria a comicis atticis exculta, ab elegaicis imitatione expressa* (diss. Marburg, 1899), 73ff., whose examples are augmented by K. Preston, *Studies in the Diction of the Sermo amatorius in Roman comedy* (Chicago, 1916), 55ff.; P. Murgatroyd, 'Amatory Hunting, Fishing and Fowling', *Latomus* 43.2 (1984), 362–8 collects examples without citing these. Flury, *Liebe und Liebespsrache*, 87 cites Menander frr. 570 and 656 Thierf. from monologues by lovesick youths for the metaphor of being hooked, but one cannot agree with him that there is any tragic parody.

[3] For example, E. Fantham, *Comparative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery* (Toronto, 1972), 39ff.

[4] Preston (n. 2), 55. I have not found anything of interest in either O. Moll, *Dioskorides* (diss. Zürich, 1920), or M. B. di Castri, 'Tra sfoggio erudito e fantasia descritta: un profilo di Dioscorida: 3 epigrammi erotici e scoptici II', *Athene e Roma* n.s. XLII (1997), 51–73 at 61–3 who deals laboriously with the poem under discussion.

[5] *R.E.* VIII (1913) s.v. Hetaira 1346ff. (K. Schneider) with list of hetaira-names, including *Korone*, *Drosis*; H. Herter, 'Die Soziologie der antiken Prostitution', *JbAC* 3 (1960), 70–111.

[6] Alpers (n. 1), 51 noting Aristainetus, *Ep.* 2.1.17 lines 22–4 Mazal.

Alpers's fragment is quoted by the glossographer as

ἠσπαλεύθην ὡς οὐκ οἶδ' εἴ τις ἰχθῦς ὑπὸ τοῦ δελέατος τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ ἐνείχετό μοι τὸ ἄγκιστρον

because of the interesting use of the extremely rare *ἀσπαλεύω*, and Alpers demonstrates that the lost novel, from which the gloss was drawn, was also the source for Aristainetos' use of the same word,[6] while the idea itself is modelled on a Platonic original. The word itself means here clearly something close to 'I was hooked like some fish', and it is inevitable that this word, like all such elegant antiquarianisms, had exact parallels in Middle Comedy or its close surroundings. One could have derived from other hints the conclusion that 'amatory fishing' had a long and distinguished lexical history, as we shall see, and there was never much justification for believing that it originated in Alexandrian poetry,[7] though Hellenistic poetry is certainly one of the genres most likely to invent variants on the theme.

In what follows, I offer suggestions about how such a theme can give rise to complex plays of ideas. I am trying to demonstrate why the mechanical assemblage of well-attested literary topoi is an inadequate reponse to the complexity of ancient culture.

In Dioscurides XIII Gow–Page (*A.P.* 12.42) we read:

Βλέψον ἐς Ἑρμογένην πλήρει χερί, καὶ τάχα πρήξεις,
παιδοκόραξ, ὧν σοι θυμὸς ὀνειροπολεῖ,
καὶ στυγνὴν ὀφρύων λύσεις τάσιν· ἢν δ' ἁλιεύῃ
ὀρφανὸν ἀγκίστρου κύματι δοὺς κάλαμον,
ἕλξεις ἐκ λιμένος πολλὴν δρόσον· οὐδὲ γὰρ αἰδὼς
οὐδ' ἔλεος δαπάῳ κόλλοπι συντρέφεται.

Gaze at Hermogenes with hand full, and soon you will achieve, *paidokorax*, what your heart dreams of, and you will relax the fearsome frown on his brow; but if you go fishing by offering the sea a rod bereft of hook, you will haul out of the harbour a lot of dew; for consideration and pity are not natural to an expensive *kollops*.

Meineke's correction of *ἁλιεύῃ* from the MS *ἁλιθύῃ* is palmary, and there are no textual problems. But the interpretation has been less happy, and I address first some linguistic points.

Gow–Page guessed that the unique *παιδοκόραξ* means 'ravenous (from raven) for boys', but this is without parallel and 'boy-crow' is meaningless. Hesychius gives us two glosses that might seem helpful:

κ3587 *κοράσσει· ὀρχεῖται. καὶ ἀκληται† ἐλήλυθε*

κ3588 *κοράττειν· κορακεύεται*

But the first explanation of 3587 looks rather to be a mistake from *κόρδαξ*, and the second part *καὶ ἀκληται† ἐλήλυθε* may belong to *κόλαξ* rather than *κόραξ*, or be attached to the following gloss. There can be no certainty here. Gloss 3588, however, belongs with Hesychius' gloss κ3583 *κοράξαι· ἄγαν προσλιπαρῆσαι*.[8] The Suidas lexicon gives a related gloss: κ2068 *κοράττειν· τὸ ἄγαν προσμένειν καὶ λιπαρεῖν* and attaches a silly explanation about crows thronging around doors.[9] All these

[7] Murgatroyd (n. 2), 363; see also the commentary on Cratinus fr. 231K–A.

[8] Earlier Hesychius gives κ3584 *Κοραχοί· . . . καὶ τὸ γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον*; but this looks like a confused explanation of a comic joke of the *ἐκκορεῖν* type. The unexpected appearance of an Apollo Korax from Libya (*BE* 1996 no. 117) makes one realize how little one knows.

[9] I suppose this is where Passow in his Greek–German *Lexikon* got the explanation of *κοράττω* as 'vom Anklopfen der Bettler an die Thüren'. But he might have been thinking of the

glosses come from the same source, an explanation of an otherwise unattested verb κοράσσω meaning allegedly 'to be importunate'. This would of course be very appropriate behaviour for the addressee of our poem. κόρακες are in fact in modern Greek proverbially opportunistic and greedy, though the begging children who called themselves *koronistai*[10] in antiquity probably have nothing directly to do with this.

But I suggest that a solution to the use of the noun here and the meaning of the verb lies elsewhere: κόραξ, apart from its literal meaning of 'crow', means anything hook-shaped. It is, for example, the hook that closes a door in Hellenistic times,[11] and which was previously called a κορώνη. We could then postulate the development crow > hook > to hook (metaphorically) and so 'to be importunate'. This is essentially what Frisk thought,[12] citing the use of κορακόω 'to hook in, lock up', and a nice parallel for the meaning we need is the use of κόραξ as a grappling iron (like the similar 'iron hands') in Hellenistic naval warfare.[13] There are no ready parallels for the formation in -κόραξ, though ἱεροκόραξ, νυκτικόραξ exist, but a formation like Διονυσοκόλαξ 'flatterer of Dionysus' gives the ready analogy: 'grappler of boys'. In view of the other references to fishing that follow, the 'integrity of the metaphor' (to use Page's words) would suggest that we understand the unique formation as 'boy-hooker'. Whether it is an adjective with θυμός or a vocative is of little consequence; but one would prefer the vocative to set the metaphorical tone for what follows, and for reasons to be discussed. We can explore this assumption, in the awareness that even the ancient reader was probably as puzzled as we are.

'But if you go fishing without a hook . . .' This must mean 'baited hook', thought Page, by some kind of synecdoche. But why? If the unfortunate hooker of boys goes fishing with only a rod, and no hook, he will be even more foolish and self-deluding. Hermann and Meineke, cited by Page, were prepared to see an obscene allusion in 'rod' but more surprisingly also in 'hauling a quantity of dew from the harbour'. Unfortunately for them, there is absolutely no parallel for κάλαμος—or indeed *harundo*—in an obscene sense, surely something that even our exiguous sources would not have omitted to reveal; if they had been able to consult modern handbooks of obscenity, while they might have felt their suspicions about δρόσον tweaked, they could have found that in fact the words cannot produce anything like the meaning they wanted.[14] Page was right to say that any such metaphorical interpretation simply has no point, and is 'destructive to the coherence of the epigram'. The sense of the poem demands that the would-be suitor is going to achieve nothing at all if he has no hook or bait. But just why this is expressed by the phrase 'hauling a lot of dew from the harbour' requires elucidation.

begging songs of the *koronistai*, widely attested in Greece; on these see N. Robertson, 'Greek ritual begging in aid of women's fertility and childbirth', *TAPA* 113 (1983), 143–69, esp. 142.

[10] Athenaeus 8.359E. But they got their name from the object they carried, and other groups had a swallow.

[11] Pollux 7.111 citing Posidippus fr. 8K–A. It would lead too far to pursue all the possibilities, but obviously the use of κορώνη in marriage songs (*PMG Carm. Pop.* 35: LSJ Suppl. s.v. κορικορώνη), and words like κυσθοκορώνη suggest old word plays on κόρη and κορώνη, not immediately relevant here.

[12] H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* s.v. κόραξ· . . . κοράξαι 'wohl eig(entlich) "sich anhaken" '; Chaintraine's *Dictionaire étymologique* s.v. gives: 'probablement issu de κόραξ "crochet" '.

[13] LSJ gives Polybius 1.22.3 as the earliest example. There was also a siege machine of the same type. For 'iron hands', see Diod. Sic. 17.44.4 used along with 'crows' in warfare.

[14] J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (Yale, 1975) gives Aristophanes, *Equites* 1285 and *Nubes* 978, but they bear no relation to the metaphors here; he deals with δρόσος = semen on p. 145.

If Hermann had suspicions of obscenity, it was because he was sure there was some point here, but did not know what it was, a feeling that many will have when faced with Hellenistic epigram. Page also may have had suspicions but he kept them to himself. 'A harbour is a natural place to fish', he observes, 'but the noun is somewhat unexpected, and Brunck's λίμνης (in the meaning *sea*) should perhaps be considered.' This will not do. Why should fishing in the sea be superior to fishing in a harbour? And why is fishing in a harbour unexpected if it is a natural place to fish? Why indeed should our suitor be fishing anywhere at all specifically with his rod and baitless hook or hookless rod, especially if all he can catch is πολλὴ δρόσος? The harbour is what was intended, and can be explained.

More intractable is the concluding line: 'Neither consideration nor pity are natural to an expensive κόλλοψ.' This word is a Homeric hapax (*Od.* 21.407), as the lexicon of Apollonius Sophistes[15] points out, and therefore attracted more than the usual amount of speculation about its meanings. In Homer, Plato, and Aristophanes it means primarily the winding peg to tighten the strings of a lyre, otherwise called πασσαλίσκος, στρόβιλος. Hesychius, cited by Page, and other lexicographers, explain that it also means a tough youth past his prime, which would fit well enough here, and they derive it from 'tough skin'. This creates a problem, for there is no passage in our surviving literature that actually justifies the meaning, 'tough piece of skin' which the lexicographers (and LSJ) allege to be the source of the metaphor,[16] and the word at least once seems to mean part of a male piglet, a delicacy for cooking,[17] which does not agree in the least with the meaning 'tough' or 'skin'. Perhaps there would be a strong suspicion that 'tough skin' is a lexicographic invention, if it were not for the authority of Aristophanes of Byzantium, who is quoted by Eustathius as saying explicitly, fr. 36:

ἐν δὲ τοῖς τοῦ γραμματικοῦ Ἀριστοφάνους φέρεται ταῦτα· κόλλοπα τὸ παχὺ δέρμα φασὶ λέγεσθαι καὶ τὸν τῶν ὀργάνων κόλλαβον κ.τ.λ.

And indeed, as early as Augustan times, the word was alleged to mean the part of the animal which when boiled would create glue (κόλλα),[18] but this too has been rightly suspected of being an etymologically inspired invention, combined with the alleged

[15] P. 102, 6 Bekker.

[16] This was observed also by E. Poehlmann and Eva Tichy, 'Zur Herkunft und Bedeutung von Kollops', *Serta Indogermanica* (Göttingen, 1982), 287–315 at 294. This important discussion, which came to my attention late in the writing of this article, is referred to hereafter as Poehlmann–Tichy. I am glad to find it echoes my scepticism about much of our lexicographical material, which the authors discuss in detail, as well as the history of lyre-pegs; there are a few errors, but not such as to affect the usefulness of the conclusions.

[17] Aristophanes, *Tagenistae* fr. 520K–A, where the cook gives a list of desirable things to cook; the list consists possibly of sexual *double entendres* and therefore Poehlmann–Tichy argue that we cannot be totally certain it was meant to make sense at a practical level. The fragment is also badly corrupted. Taillardat on Suetonius, *Περὶ βλασφημιῶν* 3.67 compares *scortum* for the alleged semantic shift from 'leather' to 'prostitute'.

[18] Aristonicus, the Homeric commentator of Augustan times, is cited by the *Et. Gudianum*, s.v. κόλλοψ, deriving from the scholia on the *Odyssey*, according by Poehlmann–Tichy, 290, n. 29. The gloss derives from the *Et. Genuinum* at this point, and the citation comes from Orion, as Klaus Alpers reminds me. Apollonius Sophistes and others also makes this same deduction about glue. In fact, ἐκολλόπωσε in Achaeus Tragicus fr. 22.1 will not mean 'glued together' (as LSJ alleges) but 'pegged together' like κολλοπίζω. We can await Martin de Leeuw's edition of the Antiatticist for a proper discussion.

'thick skin'.[19] Poehlmann and Tichy have therefore ingeniously argued that the words 'thick skin', preserved by Eustathius as the first explanation in Aristophanes, are in fact an early misunderstanding of an epitomator for 'thick-skinned (person) = tough character', though it is not obvious that it could then = *pathicus*, as Poehlmann and Tichy would have it.[20] It seems to have been forgotten that Aristophanes' words, when read correctly, make it clear that the meaning 'thick skin' was alleged by others, and therefore that he does not need to have maintained or supported this meaning at all. In fact, since it comes from a work *Concerning Words Suspected of Not Being Attested by the Ancients*, there was plenty of room for polemic about earlier allegations.

Most later explanations may derive ultimately with additions from this discussion of Aristophanes of Byzantium,[21] and Aristophanes' milder explanation of the slang sense as τὸν περιτρέχοντα καὶ ἑταιροῦντα, derived perhaps from the 'turning around' of the lyre-peg, is perfectly appropriate to this poem; but the very fact that the meaning is a subject for Alexandrian debate ought to be good evidence for its difficulty.[22] It was also alleged to mean ἀνδρόγυνος, which looks like an extension of the same slang, and the surviving examples show that it was not restricted to young people.[23] We cannot now tell how this clearly popular usage relates to other meanings of the word: the peg to tighten the strings of a musical instrument, and the alleged sense of tough skin on a cow or pig's neck. So, while there was not much doubt about the well-attested slang meaning, which suggested effeminacy and prostitution, it was never agreed just how this meaning was acquired.[24] For our purposes here, however, there can be no doubt that our *paidokorax* belongs firmly in the company of the 'peg-hunters', the *kollopodioktai*, οἱ ἄγριοι περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, as Eustathius says.[25]

But once again, one suspects that something more is meant here, when Dioscurides is airing his knowledge of an Alexandrian grammatical gloss. It is just too moralizingly pompous to end an epigram by intoning that you can expect no decency from a luxury tart. The use of the rare adjective δάπανος seems to demand attention, and 'expense' in the ancient world is a grand word, associated with euergetism and generosity from Pindar onwards.[26] The strange word κόλλοψ—both Hellenistic slang and a Homeric gloss—comes as a peculiar twist after the high language that has consistently preceded it. Surely one should feel that the linguistic oddity of the phrase calls for a specific response from a reader. I hazard therefore the following two possible explan-

[19] Poehlmann–Tichy (n. 16), 294. I had come to this conclusion independently and on different grounds.

[20] Ibid.

[21] See Kassel–Austin on Eubulus fr. 10, and my brief comments on Aristophanes of Byzantium fr. 36. The comments of R. Tosi, 'Osservazioni sul rapporto fra Aristofane di Bisanzio e L'antiatticista' in *MOUSA: Scritti in onore di Giusseppe Morelli* (Bologna, 1997), 171–7 at 176 appear to forget that the aim of Aristophanes' book was to show that some forms and meanings were genuinely classical, and that aspect is not now preserved in Aristophanes' discussion of κόλλοψ, which must necessarily be incomplete.

[22] Poehlmann–Tichy (n. 16) attribute most of the subsequent Eustathian discussion to Diogenianus; R. L. Hunter, *Eubulus: The Fragments* (Cambridge, 1983), fr. 11 does not attempt to separate the sources.

[23] As pointed out by Hunter (previous note).

[24] Since πάσσαλος has in comedy and epigram the expected obscene sense of penis, it is perhaps surprising that that specific meaning is never alleged for κόλλοψ. On the other hand it is evident that words like 'peg' or 'screw' invite sexual innuendo in all languages, and it would seem that there is no obvious need for an explanation in terms of thick skin at all.

[25] Sch. Aristophanes *Nub.* 348; and the gloss must be from comedy: fr. 849K–A.

[26] Most recently P. Hummel, 'Le Labeur et la Grâce', *RPh* 70 (1996), 247–54.

ations for this final phrase. First, we know that the word κόλλοψ was confused and equated with κόλλαβος in Hellenistic Greek,[27] and κόλλαβος in turn with κόλλυβος. Perhaps, then, there is a play on κόλλοψ/κόλλαβος 'playboy' and κόλλυβος 'small change'. This last was like κόλλαβος a cake and then a standard small coin, and used metaphorically for small change. A character in Eupolis fr. 247K–A boasts that he can get a woman or a boy or an old man for the night for a κόλλυβος. Dioscurides' phrase, at a punning level, would then be an oxymoron . Some similar confusion of money and music with harbour sex seems to be at the root of the joke at Diphilus fr. 42.22, where the rich merchant comes back from a profitable voyage, boasting of the profit he has made, and apparently spending it on harbour prostitutes:

> λαλῶν τὰ ναῦλα καὶ δάνει' ἐρυγγάνων,
> ἀφροδίσι' ὑπὸ κόλλοψι μαστροποῖς ποιῶν·

The situation is not far different from Dioscurides, and 'celebrating Aphrodisia[28] to the accompaniment of money-grubbing screws' establishes a connection with the talk of profits that precedes, since μαστροί are financial officials, even if the word μαστροπός means 'pimp' or 'procuress' at Athens; and on the other hand ὑπὸ + dative along with κόλλοψ = 'lyre peg' suggests music.

The second suggestion, which can be simultaneously valid in this context of word play and glosses, is that the peg which tightened the lyre-strings, being the same as πάσσαλος, belonged in the same category as κόραξ, a word denoting a hook or latch-key (Posidippus fr. 8K–A). In fact the word κόλλοψ is glossed by πάσσαλος in other scholia[29] and Heron tells us that κόραξ meant κατακλείς.[30] Hooks and pegs go together. The joke announced in line 2 of Dioscurides would then continue to the end. But puns do not respond to logical explanation, and this one must remain insoluble for want of parallels.

Why, then, to return to our main puzzle, would the unhappy and allegedly hookless hooker be supposed to haul dew in a harbour? Not, I think, because it was a natural fishing place, though it may be, but because it was a good place to pick up his kind of fish. One normally bought fish in a harbour, and metaphorical fish therefore were to be had in a metaphorical harbour, the harbour of love. That this was a developed metaphor we can see from the use of the word ἐλλιμένιον[31] (Lat. *portorium*, 'harbour tax') already in ancient comedy, apparently to mean the price to be paid for entering a brothel. Pollux quotes Eupolis fr. 55K–A for the technical term:

> ἐλλιμένιον δοῦναι πρὶν εἰσβῆναί σε δεῖ.

It is reasonably assumed that the entrance fee is for a house of ill-repute, a place

[27] The first example of the equation is given by Aristophanes grammaticus, fr. 36 *c.* 200 B.C., by which time it was normal. The scholia minora on Homer, *Od.* 21.407, like Apollonius Sophistes' lexicon, gloss one word with the other. In Aristophanes and classical authors the word means a cake of some form.

[28] For 'celebrate Aphrodisia' as the correct meaning, see the examples in LSJ ποιέω A.II.3. For 'to the accompaniment of', see LSJ s.v. ὑπό B.4.

[29] The passages are adduced by Poehlmann–Tichy (n. 16), 290: Sch. Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 574, as well as Lucian and Homer scholia. κόλλοπες are pegs sticking out of a windlass, used as handles to turn it, like a capstan, in ps-Aristotle, *Mech. prob.* 852b11ff.

[30] Heron, *Belopoiika* 9.11, cited by LSJ.

[31] Eupolis fr. 55K–A with further references, and Herter (n. 5), 80 with a discussion of known prices. Theognis 560 first uses the metaphor but in a very general sense of a woman having 'another harbour' = 'an affair'.

where sailors on the sea of love were often wrecked. It is true that this has been doubted recently[32] but βαίνω is certainly not the word to use of a ship entering port[33] and the phrase must be metaphorical. As a result, the often adduced parallel at Plautus, *Asinaria* 129 makes it extremely likely what metaphor is being implied. The bawd explains that you cannot escape Love by sailing away from him.

> fixus hic apud nos est animus tuos clavo Cupidinis.
> remigio veloque quantum poteris festina et fuge:
> quam magis te in altum capessis, tam aestus te in portum refert.

To which the young man brightly replies

> Ego pol istum portitorem privabo portorio—

a joke made easier in Latin by the equation of *portus* with *porta*. The metaphor is made explicit later at lines 241–2, if we accept Lindsay's emendation:

> port{it}orum simillumae sunt ianuae lenoniae.
> si adfers, tum patent. si non est quod des, aedes non patent.

It is in such a *portus* that the pirate ships of Aphrodite lie in wait, as Plautus[34] elsewhere affirms.

But it is important to observe that the joke is much earlier, for a similar brothel/port must underpin the joke at Aristophanes, *Eccl.* 1106, where the young man expecting the worst 'sails in' to the door of the brothel, hauled along by its occupants, and prays to be buried at the mouth of its entrance.[35]

> ὅμως δ' ἐάν τι πολλὰ πολλάκις πάθω
> ὑπὸ τοῖνδε τοῖν κασαλβάδοιν δεῦρ' ἐσπλέων,
> θάψαι μ' ἐπ' αὐτῷ στόματι τῆς ἐσβολῆς, . . .

Once one understands the brothel as harbour, the sense is clear: the long-suffering sailor, if he comes to grief, will be glad to be buried in his home port. In Philodemus *A.P.* 10.21 (so later *A.P.* 5.235) the lovelorn mariner on the sea of Kypris begs her to rescue him into such welcome harbours; while Meleager (*A.P.* 12.167) seeks only anchorage. A harbour therefore is an appropriate place for a lover to go fishing—or even to meet his fate—but particularly appropriate when cash is involved; for the sailor is not to be turned away, if he has cash in his hand, as Propertius claims:[36] then, as now, sailors are fair game for those with favours to sell.[37]

[32] N. Zagagi, *Tradition and Originality in Plautus* = *Hypomnemata* 62 (Göttingen, 1980), 125, n. 72. writes: 'There is nothing to be gained by comparing Asin. 159 with Eup. fr. 48K [i.e. 55K–A] . . . : the latter may not refer at all to admission into a *lupanar* as Kock suggested . . . indeed as the fragment stands there is no means of knowing whether *ellimenion* is not meant in a purely literal sense.' She does not mention lines 241ff., as far as I see.

[33] Cf. *A.P.* 9.41. [34] *Menaechmi* 344.

[35] R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford, 1973), ad loc. gives the nautical parallels but misses the point, as does P. Murgatroyd, 'The sea of love', *CQ* 45 (1995), 7ff., who, while claiming to provide the first comprehensive and detailed survey of the topos, does not mention Eupolis fr. 55K–A (or indeed Kassel–Austin), and on this passage concludes with neither sense nor sensitivity: 'there may even be allusion to the vagina in the harbour mouth of 1107' (p. 11).

[36] Prop. 4.5.50; *A.P.* 5.159 attributed to Simonides; Diphilus fr. 42.22 with the note of Kassel–Austin, referring to Herondas 2, and Headlam ad loc.

[37] Priapus is the harbour god *par excellence*, according to several epigrams at the beginning of *A.P.* 10.

The harbour of love is a backwater of the hackneyed sea of love, for words like κῦμα are used of the sea of love often enough.[38] It and the other permutations on the theme of lovers at sea resist any reduction to a rational schema. Lovers are fish or boats or fishermen as the requirements of a joke demand, and hooks can belong to anyone. For example, Strato (*A.P.* 12.241) says: 'You have made a hook, and you have me (as a) fish, boy; haul me anywhere you will.' There the hook is the boy's and not the would-be customer's, as with Dioscurides. The metaphors are constantly reinvented as further themes evolve. Such jokes go back to the remotest past, when Epicharmus (fr. 191 Kaibel) could use the word ἄγκυρα in the sense of αἰδοῖον, and Alcaeus could equate prostitutes and old ships.[39] Just where slang overlaps with the wild inventions of comedy and the sophistications of sympotic epigram[40] at any given time we cannot tell, but we can say that the theme in endless variations was always extremely common.

But a second and better reason for the 'hookless fishing' by 'crows' can be adduced. There was a proverb,[41] to which this passage and indeed the whole poem seem to be alluding:

κόραξ ὑδρεύσει· ἐπὶ τῶν δυσχερῶς τινος τυγχανόντων.

'The crow will fetch water' is the equivalent of 'will have a tough time of it'. Why this should be so is not worth the effort of speculation. The elegant language of 'will catch dew' conceals this proverb, which is unexplained even in our paroemiographical sources, though their aetiologies are almost always false in any case;[42] more regrettably, it is unattested in ancient literature, as far as I know. Despite this, one thing is certain: the point of calling the would-be lover a crow is now obvious, since the proverb enables Dioscurides to move from the crow as first word of the proverb to the futile water-haulage of the second. The first word leads to hooking and angling, the second word to water and erotic harbours. If the crow goes fishing without bait, he is going to 'haul water', a phrase to which we shall return; the crow will have a difficult time.

Two further points should be made about this epigram. Opening words of such poems are important. The command to 'look, behold' is most unusual, save in epigrams deriving from epitaphs,[43] which invite the onlooker to admire or regard with sympathy a tombstone or later a work of art or beauty. No other amatory epigram, unless I am mistaken, begins in this manner, and one thinks of Horace's brilliant misuse of the funereal *Vixi puellis nuper idoneus* as a parallel opening. If Dioscurides

[38] Preston (n. 2), 49.

[39] Alcaeus, fr. 306 Voigt (mistakenly given as Alcman by Henderson [n. 14], 161); despite the difficulties, it should not be doubted that Alcaeus did deal with a prostitute-ship.

[40] I dealt with the interaction of sympotic erotic and other metaphorical ships in 'Symposium at sea', *HSCPh* 80 (1976), 161–170, incidentally with regard to Horace's *Epode* 7; that point is accepted, albeit grudgingly, by A. Cavarzere, *Orazio: il Libro degli Epodi* (Venice, 1992), 173 but the concept and its implications remain unknown to D. Mankin, *Horace: Epodes* (Cambridge, 1995) and many others. T. Gargiulo, 'Mare e Vino nei Persiani: una conjettura a Timoleo fr. 791, 61–2 P.', *QUCC* 54 (1996), 73–81 gives a bibliography of the metaphor since 1976.

[41] Zenobius 4.56; Hesychius κ3585; Suidas κ2067; it is not mentioned in E. von Prittwitz-Gaffron, *Das Sprichwort im griechischen Epigramm* (diss. Munich, 1911).

[42] As W. Bühler in his editions of Zenobius has made abundantly clear.

[43] *GVI* 1255, 1260, 1263, and other selected examples on pp. 370ff.; *A.P.* 7.322, 74, 695. 698; 11.364; 16.154, 178, etc. On the opening (*Aufforderung zum Ansehen*), see Citroni's comments on Martial, *Ep.* 1.24.1, and especially F. Grewing, *Martial: Buch VI* (Göttingen, 1997), on *Ep.* 6.73.5, who does not mention this example, because it does not fit the usual pattern. Di Castri (n. 4), 61 believes oddly that the use is paratragic, esp. Euripidean.

can command the *paidokorax* to behold Hermogenes with full hand, it suggests that the *paidokorax* is portrayed in the role of adoring him, and that this unfortunate is being told to petition the divinity as a result of his dreams, a common phenomenon, dramatized for example by Aeschylus' Clytemestra in the *Choephori*. He is advised to approach Hermogenes as a divinity to be worshipped with full hand in the hope of receiving his blessing, the alternative being the Callimachean (*Ep.* 32.1–2):

> *Οἶδ' ὅτι μευ πλούτου κενεαὶ χέρες· ἀλλά, Μένιππε,*
> *μὴ λέγε, πρὸς Χαρίτων, τοὐμὸν ὄνειρον ἐμοί.*

He will then succeed—is the Ionic form *πρήξεις* meant to sound like oracular elegiacs?—and his dreams will be fulfilled. Lovers did—and in Greece, do—consult oracles, dreambooks, and their authors, about their problems, and worshippers did dream in *incubatio* at a shrine, and, on the *do ut des* principle, did bring gifts and votives to their heroes with outstretched hands,[44] in the process known as *προστροπή*, just as lovers brought gifts to the objects of their admiration. True, this pleasant picture is rudely broken by the news that the object of worship is scowling, just as a Homeric god can *σκύζεσθαι*. Presumably Hermogenes will after the gift proceed to *ἐπιμειδιᾶν*. This image of the worshipper approaching the adored with his petition (and cash) changes to the new image of futile amatory fishing already introduced by *παιδοκόραξ*, and the tone descends suddenly to the slang pun of the last line.

This takes us to the tenses and the overall presentation of the poem. Certainly the poet can mask himself with the authority of a *praeceptor amoris*; but we are offered here no real *erotodidaxis*; and that generic approach is unrewarding. Rather, after the initial command, the future tense sounds like the advice that the local oracle would give to the lovelorn who come asking questions about how to placate a *daimon*. It is therefore reminiscent of what Kleinknecht[45] called *Weissagungstil*[46] and it is not therefore a coincidence that the proverb also is in the future tense. The poem then presents itself as a quasi-oracular answer to the question, how the suppliant is to approach Hermogenes successfully—*πότερον λώιον καὶ ἄμεινον κ.τ.λ*—and the fishing metaphor is part of the grandiose and obscurantist oracular style. Certainly the overall form of the epigram 'If you do X, you will succeed; if you do Y, you will fail' is found in oracles.[47] This is then a good reason to prefer the vocative in the second line, whereby the poem/oracle is directed as usual explicitly to the petitioner, with whom the reader/listener—and in this case, gazer—must then identify.

[44] W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge, 1902), 322ff. gives the inscriptional terminology, e.g. *ἀνατίθημι δῶρον, χαριστήριον*. The deification of the beloved is of course a hackneyed theme; examples and bibliography in Flury (n. 2), 94ff.

[45] H. Kleinknecht, 'Zur Parodie des Gottmenschentums bei Aristophanes', *ARW* 34 (1937), 294ff., esp. 309, though L. Deubner, 'Ein Stilprinzip hellenistischer Dichtkunst', *NJb* 47 (1921), 365ff. is fashionably cited (Bulloch on Callimachus, *Hymn* 5, line 107, n. 2; Mineur on Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, line 153; Heath, *ClAnt* 7 [1988] 78; etc.). But even Deubner admitted that the 'futuristic' expression was part of an old hymnal topos; see the material in R. Führer, *Form-problem Untersuchungen zu den Reden in der frühgriechischen Lyrik* (Munich, 1967), 57, 61, 77; and less clearly Nisbet–Hubbard on Horace, *Odes* I, 105, 188ff.

[46] Compare Radermacher's note on the futures at the end of the *agon* in his commentary on Aristophanes' *Frösche*[2], 341: 'Euripides speaks as a prophet'.

[47] For the overall form ('if you do X . . . ; but if you do Y . . . '), compare the oracle of the Pythian Apollo to Sybaris reported by Timaeus, 566 *FGrH* 50. Another example is given by R. Merkelbach and J. Strauber, 'Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros', *EA* 27 (1996), 1ff., no. 11, lines 10, 18: 'if you do as I say . . . if you do not do as I say . . .'. There will also be found examples for the kenning-vocatives common in such oracles.

To sum up: the poem presumes a very specific situation, common in the ancient world. A would-be lover had been dreaming of a beloved, and he has then gone to the local oracle to ask what he should do as a result of this dream. The epigram professes to be the answer to this question, and the poet plays the solemn oracle, wherein the beloved is portrayed as an angry *daimon*. Two pieces of advice are given. The first command is that the 'crow' placate the divine wrath with generous handouts. The second warning amounts to the same but is couched in the negative and in highly allusive but traditional metaphor, whereby 'If you do not give handouts, you will be wasting your time' becomes 'if you offer the sea a hookless rod, you will catch water'. I have argued that this relies on a proverb, also in the oracular future, about a crow hauling water as well as on standard erotic metaphor; there is no obscenity intended. Finally the last line summarizes the reasons for this pragmatic approach to such a *daimon*: pity is not to be expected from an expensive κόλλοψ. The exact point of the pun in this word escapes us, but that is because of its long and obscure grammatical history. It may continue the hook/peg metaphor; or it may be a pun on cheap coins, or perhaps both. The whole epigram relies verbally on amatory fishing metaphor and contextually on folk religion.

As a related postscript, both to suggest the possible origins of the phrase 'hauling water' and also to illustrate that even questions of poetic topology should not avoid the evidence of archaeology, I offer a new interpretation of a puzzling mosaic from the island of Melos. It was found by British excavators a hundred years ago, as the second of five panels decorating what they considered to be a Baccheion, because of a statue base found there, which speaks of *mystai* and a hierophant;[48] the excavators proposed a date at the beginning of the third century A.D. The interpretation of the mosaic has aroused considerable controversy.[49] Though damaged, it shows in a circular panel a fisherman in a boat surrounded by different kinds of fish; the panel is set in a square with masks in the corners. Above the fisherman's head are the words, *MONON MH YΔΩP*. Eisler saw a reference to initiation rituals and 'Menschenfangritus', while Geyer wanted the panel to suggest the sea as opposed to the vines of panel one, which represented the earth. The original excavators thought the words meant, 'give them water and they will swim'. Moormann believes the inscription was aimed at the visitors, warning them that they had to drink wine. None of these interpretations seem to me in the least likely. The clue to the puzzle is the flask-shaped basket which is hung from a pole held by the fisherman at the prow of the boat. Bosanquet had thought it might be the type of fishing-creel that is mentioned by Aelian, *N.A.* 12.43, but dismissed this. However, similar objects appear on several mosaics with fishing scenes from North Africa, for example, two mosaics from Leptiminus and Sousse.[50] These

[48] *IG* XII 3, 1125, 1089; C. Smith, 'Inscriptions from Melos', *JHS* 17 (1897), 14; R. C. Bosanquet, 'Excavations of the British school at Melos: the hall of the Mystae', *JHS* 18 (1898), 60–80.

[49] R. Eisler, *Orphische-dionysische Mysterien-gedanken in der christlichen Antike* (Bibl. Warburg, 1922/3), 102ff. A. Geyer, *Das Problem des Realitätsbezuges in der dionysischen Bildkunst der Kaiserzeit* (Würzburg, 1977), 140–1 with a long discussion. E. M. Moormann, 'Imperial Roman mosaics at Leiden', *OMRO* 71 (1991), 97–107 deals especially with the complex excavation history; P. Asimakopoulou-Azaka, 'Κατάλογος Ρωμαικών ψηφιδωτών δαπέδων με ανθρώπινες μορφές', *Hellenika* 26 (1973), 216–54, no. 41. There is a brief discussion of *kurtai* in A. Kankeleit, *Kaiserzeitliche Mosaiken in Griechenland*, 2 vols (diss. Munich, 1994), 65–8, who thinks of a glass bottle-trap, not really a practical possibility in antiquity. I am grateful to Dr Z. Welch and Professor K. M. D. Dunbabin for help with this bibliography.

[50] M. Blanchard-Lemée et al., *Sols de L'Afrique Romaine* (Paris, 1995), figs 81, 106, 108. In some versions '*la Tunisie*' is substituted for '*L'Afrique*' in the title.

make it clear that this flask-shaped object is indeed this *kyrtel/kyrtos* or basket-trap, which might have been at one time called in good Attic a *porkos*.[51] The fisherman lowered it into the water, waited (or slept) until a fish or crayfish or purple-snail came in—whence the proverb that 'the basket catches for the sleeper'[52]—and pulled it up. This device is evidently exactly the same as Latin *nassa*, of which Festus,[53] like many others, writes: *quo cum intravit piscis, exire non potest*, though just why this is so, we do not know. The fisherman then is a *kyrtobolos*, a profession known only from an association of Smyrna. But the trap on the Melos mosaic does not appear to show the striations of a basket weave as in the African examples. It looks, rather, exactly like a large *laguna* or small amphora which is half-full of a purple liquid, and it is difficult not to believe that this is meant to be wine; indeed, it has been taken to be such a bottle by some commentators; Geyer calls it a *Rotweinballon*.[54] We have to recognize therefore that we have a visual pun: the basket trap is made transparent so that we see that it has wine in it, not fish. Furthermore, the African examples sometimes show that these traps had a loop over the open mouth. This facilitated the lowering and raising of the trap, hopefully heavy with its load.

The fisherman in our mosaic, then, is in the act of hauling in the basket-trap alias amphora with his boathook. I would then submit that the meaning of the inscription, which is my main interest here, is self-evident. The fisherman says: 'only not water' with some wish or command understood. We have seen that 'to catch a lot of water' is a phrase for fishing in vain. Therefore a fisherman may well utter 'Please not water' when hauling in a line; and there are reasons to think that it was a standard saying. The Greek phrase '*μόνον μή*' is not common in classical writers, but very common with a wish or imperative in Christian writers. It occurs first in the jocular conversation of Xenophon's *Symposium* (8.6) and with only an accusative following in a much quoted passage in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 5.13, but more significant is Epictetus 3.24:

> . . . I am disturbed, trembling at every message. . . . Someone has arrived from Rome. 'Please no bad news!' . . . Someone arrives from Greece. 'Please no bad news!' . . .

The apotropaic exclamation is '*Μόνον μὴ κακόν τι*'. That is exactly what the worried fisherman says in our mosaic. He does not want <to catch> water, for that is to waste one's time, just the parallel we wish.

What, then, does he want? That is obvious: a fisherman wants fish. The Dionysiac trick here is to give him a miraculous pot of wine instead of the expected fish and anticipated water. But in a Dionysiac context that in turn requires us probably to see a further verbal joke of 'no water please', the request to the *puer* by the symposiast, always concerned, like Horace,[55] with the amount of water in his wine. The visual and verbal joke about fishing and wine would seem to suit nicely a meeting-room of Dionysiac *mystai* from a Greek island. Perhaps one might suppose that this enigmatic

[51] See especially K. Alpers, *Das attizistische Lexikon des Oros* (Berlin, 1981), fr. 136 and the references there. This word raises thoughts of connections with Phorkys. Speculations about this, a fishing Dionysus, and much else can be found in *R.E.* XXII.1 (1953), s.v. Porkos, Porkeus (Radke). I am not convinced that a discussion of these matters would advance the argument here.

[52] Diogenian 4.65 Schn.-Leutsch derived from Plato.

[53] Festus, p. 169M. [54] Geyer (n. 49), 141.

[55] Horace, *Odes* 3.10, and cf. Athenaeus 426Bff. But at this period, the Roman fashion was to ask the boy to put hot or cold water into one's wine, and the old Greek fashion of mixing in a krater did not apply. 'No water' means that one would drink pure, undiluted wine: no bad thing with the fine wines of imperial times, and a compliment to Dionysus.

mosaic would be an *ad hoc* composition by some local wit, and the composer was therefore obligated to write in the Greek words to explain what his joke meant. But, while he certainly did perceive the need for some verbal explanation, nonetheless the joke was almost certainly not new.

One might suppose a local explanation, an otherwise unknown Melian myth about a fisherman. This is possible but unlikely. The great mosaic from Dougga in the Bardo museum in Tunis,[56] showing the punishment of the pirates by Dionysus, contrasts a fishing boat hauling nets on rough seas on the right with a tranquil boat of Erotes on the left, who are fishing with a line of three *kurtai*. In the centre is the ship of Dionysus, now triumphant over the pirates: the god's victory creates apparently a divine tranquillity, represented by the fishing Erotes and the calm sea on the left, though he is sailing in the wrong direction, if this is what is really intended. These *kurtai*, however on closer inspection are not the same bulging shape as the real ones, but quite certainly elegant slender wine jars shaped like amphorae without handles. The trap, of course, should be made entirely of wicker, but these jars resemble rather flasks with a wicker covering, and the Dionysiac context suggests that they are really wine jars. All three are tied together at the neck to the line, since they have no handle. The date of this mosaic is mid third century, so that it would appear that the visual joke of the *kurte*/Dionysiac wine jar was widely known in high imperial times. The fishing basket possibly becomes an amphora filled with wine under the influence of the god's epiphany. For our purposes it is a welcome confirmation of yet another late variant of the symposium-at-sea theme[57]—the conflation of the fishing-trap with the wine jar—which in unexpected ways can overlap with amatory fishing (note the Erotes!) in both art and literature.

The explanation of epigrams is a difficult task, and the more allusive and verbally sophisticated they are, the less likely we are to meet with success. Hellenistic epigrams reach into Alexandrian glossography and sophisticated grammar on one side, but on the other into technical terminology and slang, which is not always to be found in our surviving sources. It is probably impossible to recreate the pleasure that this glossographic and irrational mixture awakened in the minds of the Hellenistic sophisticate; but it is an intriguing puzzle to make the attempt.

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[56] C. Poinssot, 'Quelques remarques sur les mosaiques de la Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse à Thugga (Tunisie)', in *La Mosaique gréco-romaine. Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S. Paris 1963* (Paris, 1965), 219–30, figs 16–21. Blanchard–Lemée (n. 50), 119, fig. 79 gives an excellent two-page photograph.

[57] For water-into-wine as a result of Dionysus' passage, see W. Slater and M. Steinhart, 'Phineus as monoposiast', *JHS* 117 (1997), 203–11.

I do not feel competent to explore here the iconography of Venus piscatrix (*LIMC* III.1, s.v. Eros 1006–7 and esp. 921, no. 842g), save to note that it goes back to the fourth century B.C. and that *LIMC* is mistaken to parallel Ovid, *Ars. Am.* 1.47–8 for an image of Venus with a fishing rod.