

## Crows and Cormorants: Homer Odyssey 5 and 12, Aratus Phaenomena 949-953, and Cicero Prognostica IV. 8-9

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**Abstract:** *The word in Greek for both crow and cormorant is 'κορώνη'. This sets both Aratus, and Cicero a difficult challenge as they seek to explain how these birds' behaviour constitutes signs of a change in the weather. How do these authors distinguish between the different meanings of 'κορώνη' which also include 'garland' 'culmination of a festival' even 'bones in the jaw'? Faced with such diversity, the authors weave a form of literature that is at once chameleonic and kaleidoscopic in movement. We are eventually brought to the realisation that the subject of the poem is the meaning and behaviour of words as viewed through the behaviour of birds. The subject ceases to be the behaviour of birds as articulated by words. As one meaning of a word rises above the textual horizon another disappears only to reappear, like a celestial body setting and rising. This image of the way the text operates derives from the main subject of Aratus' poem, namely the behaviour of the constellations. To set the work of Aratus and Cicero in context, we first discuss the treatment of cormorants by Homer in Odyssey Books 5 and 12.*

**Key-words:** *Crow, Cormorant, Cicero, Aratus, Homer, Odysseus, Nausicaa, Promontory, Sea, River, Waves, Sand, Shore, Mating, Talkative, Cawing, Chattering*

Aratus, the Hellenistic author, wrote the poem *Phaenomena* in around 270 BCE<sup>2</sup>. In the second part of the work, subtitled 'Diosemeia', the author deals with the natural phenomena that presage changes in the weather<sup>3</sup>. At line 949, he begins a section on the behaviour of the bird he calls 'κορώνη'. The adjective 'λακέρυζα' ('cawing') has convinced commentators that the bird in question is a crow. Hesiod and Aristophanes are cited as sources for the phrase 'the cawing crow'<sup>4</sup>. However, whilst the crow certainly caws, it is not the only bird bearing the Greek name 'κορώνη'. Nor is the meaning of 'κορώνη' restricted to the nomenclature of birds. Nor indeed is the adjective 'λακέρυζα' monochromatic. This article will explore the ways in which Aratus and his Latin translator Cicero, attempt to defeat the reader's expectations of the text by creating a 'polyphonous' ('many-voiced') form of literature, which is designed to transmit a wealth of didactic material at a subtextual level. In order to get a handle on Aratus' strategy we accept the omen contained in the adjective 'many-voiced' appended to the crow at *Phaenomena* 1002 ('πολύφωνα κορώνη'). Whilst the adjective relates superficially to the crow's ability to produce several different sounds, the nuance of 'many-voiced' that we require is that implied by Aristophanes at the beginning of his play

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<sup>2</sup> Douglas Kidd *Aratus Phaenomena* (1997) p.5

<sup>3</sup> *Diosemeia* is an oracular title. It could mean 'Signs from Zeus' or 'Signs from the Sky' or, if deconstructed etymologically 'the sky as [a series of] signs' ('signs' meaning 'constellations' but also 'allegorical indicators').

<sup>4</sup> Kidd (1997) p.502. Hesiod *Works and Days* 747; Aristophanes *Birds* 609; Apollonius Rhodius 3.929. See D. Snider & C.W. Brunschön *Theophrastus of Eresos On Weather Signs* (2007) p.129 note on line (16) 104.

The Birds (‘ἦδε δ’ αὖ κρώζει πάλιν’: 2; ‘οὐ ταύτ’ κρώζει μὰ Δία νῦν τε καὶ τότε’:24). The crow’s ‘croak’ is ‘of many meanings’<sup>5</sup>.

Whilst exploiting the different meanings of a single word, all the authors we examine also create the possibility of enriching the texture of their poetry by intruding intertextual words which are often also intermetrical. In simple terms the letters of their lines may be redivided to produce an alternative text, the syllables of which will frequently be found to vitiate the scansion of the relevant line. These new words conspire with the adjacent words of the received text to create ‘polyphonous’ poetry.

We begin our analysis by setting out the texts of the three authors that will most concern us here, namely Homer, Aratus, and Cicero:

Πιερίην δ’ ἐπιβάς ἐξ αἰθέρος ἔμπεσε πόντῳ:  
σεύατ’ ἔπειτ’ ἐπὶ κῦμα λάρῳ ὄρνιθι εἰοικώς,  
ὅς τε κατὰ δεινοῦς κόλπους ἀλὸς ἀτρυγέτιο  
ἰχθῦς ἀγρώσσω πυκινὰ πτερὰ δεύεται ἄλμῃ:  
τῷ ἴκελος πολέεσσιν ὀχήσατο κύμασιν Ἑρμῆς.  
ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ τὴν νῆσον ἀφίκετο τηλόθ’ ἐοῦσαν,  
ἔνθ’ ἐκ πόντου βὰς ἰοειδέος ἠπειρόνδε  
ἦεν, ὄφρα μέγα σπέος ἴκετο, τῷ ἔνι νόμφῃ  
ναῖεν ἐνπλόκαμος: τὴν δ’ ἔνδοθι τέτμεν ἐοῦσαν.  
πῦρ μὲν ἐπ’ ἐσχάροφιν μέγα καίετο, τηλόσε δ’ ὀδμή  
κέδρου τ’ εὐκεάτιο θύου τ’ ἀνὰ νῆσον ὀδώδει  
δαιομένων: ἡ δ’ ἔνδον αἰοιδιάουσ’ ὀπί καλῆ  
ἰστὸν ἐποιχομένη χρυσεῖη κερκίδ’ ὕφαιεν.  
Ἕλη δὲ σπέος ἀμφὶ πεφύκει τηλεθόωσα,  
κλήθηρ τ’ αἴγειρός τε καὶ εὐώδης κυπάρισσος.  
ἔνθα δέ τ’ ὄρνιθες τανυσίπτεροι εὐνάζοντο,  
σκῶπές τ’ ἴρηκές τε τανύγλωσσοί τε κορῶναι  
εἰνάλιαι, τῆσιν τε θαλάσσια ἔργα μέμηλεν.  
ἡ δ’ αὐτοῦ τετάνυστο περὶ σπείους γλαφυροῖο  
ἡμερὶς ἠβώωσα, τεθήλει δὲ σταφυλῆσι.  
κρῆναι δ’ ἐξείης πίσυρες ῥέον ὕδατι λευκῷ,  
πλησίαι ἀλλήλων τετραμμέναι ἄλλυδις ἄλλη.  
ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμῶνες μαλακοὶ ἴου ἠδὲ σελίνου  
θήλεον.

Homer *Odyssey* 5.50-73

‘Having stepped forth towards Pieria from the aether, he [Hermes] swooped onto the sea; then he sped over the wave like the bird, the cormorant, which even over the dread bays of the unharvested sea bedews its thick plumage with the brine as it hunts down fish. Like to that bird, Hermes leapt over many a wave. But when finally he arrived at the island which lay far off, there he went landwards from the sea, the colour of violets, until he arrived at a huge

<sup>5</sup> The crow’s croak can indicate both ‘all-clear’ and ‘danger’ depending on its delivery. The allegorical significance of this lies dormant behind our texts, The same text can be read in different ways.

cave in which dwelt a fair-tressed nymph. He found her at home. A great fire was burning on the hearth. The odour of easily chopped cedar and juniper, as they burned, was carried across the island. She herself was singing inside with a fine voice as she went up and down her loom weaving with a golden shuttle. Around the cave there had grown a forest that was in bloom; alder, and poplar, and aromatic cypress. There birds wide of wing were roosting' owls and falcons and talkative cormorants, that had a care for fishing out to sea. Just there the cultivated vine, in full vigour, trailed around the hollow cave, sprouting bunches of grapes. And four springs one after the other flowed nearby, white with water, one turning one way another another. And around and about soft meadows were blooming with parsley and violet'

ἢ που καὶ λακέρυζα παρ' ἠϊόνι προύχουση  
κυματος ἔρχομένου χέρσῳ ὑπέτυψε κορώνη,  
ἢ που καὶ ποταμοῖο ἔβάψατο μέχρι παρ' ἄκρους  
ὤμους ἐκ κεφαλῆς, ἢ καὶ μάλα πᾶσα κολυμβᾷ,  
ἢ πολλὰ στρέφεται παρ' ὕδωρ παχέα κρώζουσα'

Aratus *Phaenomena* 949-953

'Or even the chattering cormorant in front of the projecting headland has thrust down with its feet on the rock as the wave arrived or it has even dipped in the river from its head right up to over the shoulders, or it even completely dives in or goes to and fro along the water croaking hoarsely'

Fuscaque non numquam cursans per litora cornix  
demersit caput, et fluctum cervice recepit

Cicero *Prognostica* IV. 8-9<sup>6</sup>

'And the hoarse crow continually scuttling up and down along the shore, lowered its head and received a wave on its neck'.

The task before the reader of ancient literature is to keep in view the historical literary context. For Aratus' reader the broader context begins with Homer and the features he attributes to 'κορώνη'<sup>7</sup>. In *Odyssey* 5, Homer describes the cave of Calypso, the divine mistress of Odysseus<sup>8</sup>. The cave is in the woods and, amidst the tall trees (alder, poplar, cypress), there are three species of bird, including what is termed the 'sea-crow' on the basis of the literal meaning of the nexus 'κορώναι / εἰνάλαι'<sup>9</sup>. All three species of bird are 'long-winged' but only the 'κορώναι εἰνάλαι' are concerned with 'matters out to sea' (*Odyssey* 5.63f)<sup>10</sup>. These 'κορώναι' must be the same birds as those which Aristotle knows as 'κορακες' (normally the word for 'raven' in Greek)<sup>11</sup>. When he declares that the 'κοραξ' is the *only* bird of the sea that makes its nest in the trees, the possibility that Aristotle is referring to the cormorant under another name becomes a near certainty. Furthermore, our own eyes confirm

<sup>6</sup> According to the text of Jean Soubiran (ed. Bude, 2002)

<sup>7</sup> See W. Geoffrey Arnott *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z* (2007) p. 115-116 s.v. 'Korōnē' (2)

<sup>8</sup> *Od.* 5.63-69

<sup>9</sup> *Od.* 5. 66-67: 'κορώναι / εἰνάλαι'

<sup>10</sup> 'τανυσίπτεροι' (5.65); 'τῆσιν τε θαλάσσια ἔργα μέμηλεν' (5.67)

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle *Historia Animalium* 593b18-20. See Arnott op. cit. (2007) p.112 s.v. 'Korax (2)'

that the cormorant inhabits, or roosts in, all the trees mentioned by Homer, including the 'fragrant cypress'<sup>12</sup>. In sum, Homer's 'κορώνη [εἰνάλια]' and Aristotle's 'κοραξ' seem to be the one and the same bird: the cormorant.

Homer's text throws the cormorant into association with the cypress tree. The order in which owl, falcon, and cormorant are presented can be aligned with the three trees, namely alder, poplar, and cypress such that the cypress is inferred to be the cormorant's preferred overnight roost ('εὐνάζοντο'). The cormorant and cypress are strange bedfellows however. The adjective given to the cypress is 'εὐωδης' ('sweet-smelling'). Meanwhile Homer also insists on the sweet smell produced by Calypso's burning of the cedar and juniper both of which belong to the cypress family. Yet anyone approaching Puffin Island, off the Welsh coast in the UK, will be met by the pungent smell given off by its vast cormorant population.

Yet in one sense the cormorant does share the scent given off by the leaves of the cypress. For their relationship is guaranteed by a singular verbal coincidence. The word 'λαρος' ('sweet-smelling') is a homonym of λαῖρος ('cormorant'). Although scanned differently, the ancients would have been sensitive to the potential for paronomasia between the two. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (4.21.29) makes it clear that different lengths of syllable were no bar to word play ('adnominatio')<sup>13</sup>. This homonymic association of 'fragrance' with the 'cormorant' constitutes a literary sanctioning of our efforts to relate 'sweet-smelling' ('εὐωδης') to the cormorant via the cypress tree.

At the start of Book 5 the 'λαρος' is introduced in a simile to express the speed of Hermes (Od. 5.51). Here its behaviour marks it out as a cormorant. As it speeds low over the water towards its fishing grounds we are reminded that it is the remains of regurgitated fish that are responsible for part of the stench the cormorants produce. We are also reminded that the 'λαρος' will nevertheless return to roost on its etymological bedfellow, the 'sweet-smelling' cypress ('εὐωδης - λαρος - λαῖρος'). Clearly however the cormorant is anything but 'fragrant' in the real world. This casts doubt on the credentials of the fragrantcy of the cypress and the meaning of word 'εὐωδης'.

The cormorants prefer to sleep in Calypso's inland wood ('εὐνάζοντο': Od.5.65)<sup>14</sup>, perhaps because the aromatic leaves provide shelter from the sun by day and protection from any residual sea breeze by night. If this is the reason then the link we have posited between the cypress and the cormorant is reinforced since it is the leaves that provide the cypress' fragrance<sup>15</sup>. On the one hand, nature is in full bloom around Calypso's cave. 'Fragrant' spring is fully sprung ('ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμῶνες μαλακοὶ ἴου ἠδὲ σελίνου / θήλεον ...'; 'ἡμερὶς ἠβώωσα, τεθήλει δὲ σταφυλῆσι': Od 5.69; 72-73)<sup>16</sup>. The parsley reminds us that the plant was used in the Hebrew celebration of Passover as the symbol of spring. The violet and budding vine tendril were conventional signs of the Italian spring as recalled by Ovid from Tomis (Tristia 3.12.5-6; 13). However the brevity of spring reminds us that decay and putrescence will soon follow. Calypso's cultivated vine is termed a 'ἡμερὶς' which, as the feminine of 'ἡμερος,' is etymologically linked to 'the [transient] day' ('ἡμερα'). The word for 'violet' meanwhile is

<sup>12</sup> In the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, we are told that 'κορώναι λακέρυζαι' ('chattering crows') roost in a poplar tree (3.929). The verb used here 'ἐπαλιζομαι,' ('I roost') also means 'encamp' or spend the night' (Hesychius).

<sup>13</sup> E.g. between 'vñit' and 'vñit'

<sup>14</sup> Note the hint here of the 'habit' of Calypso and Odysseus 'to sleep together'.

<sup>15</sup> Cypress - εὐωδης - λαρος - λαρος - cormorant

<sup>16</sup> So compendious are the symptoms of Spring that Summer cannot be far off.

synonym of the word for ‘poison’ (‘lov’), and poisonous fecal matter is the stock-in-trade of the cormorants, as we shall see.

It seems most likely that Calypso, through burning sappy conifer wood, is already trying to stave off the smell of the cormorants (& the whiff of mortality) given that even when roosting, cormorants will be inflicting damage on the tree through defecation<sup>17</sup>. The leaves may well be smeared with faeces rather than evergreen sap. Indeed it is only because these leaves are not required as lining for cormorant nests that they still survive in the wood by the cave.

Meanwhile, a particular deduction can be made about the real world that exists on the far edge of the island<sup>18</sup>. It is very odd that the timber there is ‘long-since dried and fully seasoned’ even before Odysseus fells the trees to construct his ship (‘κλήθηρη τ’ ἀγείροζ τ’, ἐλάτη τ’ ἦν οὐρανομήκης, / αὔα πάλαι, περὶ κηλα, τὰ οἱ πλώοιεν ἐλαφρῶς: Od. 5.239-240). There seems to be only one explanation for this. The cormorants must have wreaked their devastation on all of these trees, stripping them of leaves to line their nests and destroying their roots through the poison of their fecal matter. Nevertheless, these trees, despite being ossified trunks, are even now (in spring) ‘bearing’ fruit in the form of cormorant chicks. Once felled, they will find another life-affirming role as raw material for the ship. They will serve to reconnect Odysseus to his ‘real life’. As commonly in nature, death leads to new life, even in the case of evergreen trees.

Now once all twenty of these desiccated trees (henceforth called ‘the copse’) are cut down by Odysseus’ axe, these cormorants will have no choice but to convert their ‘overnight roosting spot’ at Calypso’s cave into their permanent home. Ironically, this is precisely what Calypso would wish Odysseus to do. Thus the cormorant now comes to allegorise Odysseus, with the cypress representing Calypso. The reader’s projection of the fate of the cypress tree will parallel the fate of Calypso whose emotional life will be led as if Odysseus were no longer roosting at her cave but living there permanently, but with Penelope. Within one year an exploitative cormorant family will have taken advantage of everything a cypress offers. The male will strip it of its leaves to line its family home and will condemn the tree to a long ‘after-life’ during which the tree will helplessly ‘support’ the parasitical family above. This description of the effects of infestation by cormorants represents Calypso’s interior world into which the absent Odysseus is to be absorbed. The allegory is the more powerful for its representation of a reality that consists in Calypso’s ‘inhabited’ loneliness. The felling of the copse should and will bring the cormorant to Calypso’s door for ever. But that forever-ness relates to Calypso’s internalisation of the absent Odysseus-with-Penelope and the agonising pathology that the loneliness of the broken-hearted brings in its wake. Propertius seems to have understood this passage. At 1.15.10f we hear of Calypso ironically taking Odysseus’ place as now *she* weeps on the shore. She knows she will never see Odysseus again but she behaves as if concerned that she *might* not. She reproaches the sea as though the sea is to blame and might be persuaded to bring Odysseus back. Such reproofs are more appropriate in the mouth of an Alcyone viz-a-viz her Ceyx. The ancients expended their fears and longing

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<sup>17</sup> Even when roosting the cormorants will be defecating. See [www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/ser/258802/2007.pdf](http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/ser/258802/2007.pdf): [in a discussion of cormorants] ‘damage to vegetation from guano deposited while roosting’.

<sup>18</sup> Note that the desiccated trees are serviceable as homes for many families of cormorants for many years. The destruction of the cypress as a living tree marks the beginning of the tree’s after-life on earth.

on those whose return was expected. Those who wept inconsolably for one who would not return were victims of a pathological passion. Propertius goes on to mention the case of Hypsipyle, who worries about the winds that both ‘snatch away’ her Jason and are ‘ferocious’ (‘rapientibus’), Yet it is Jason who has abandoned her.

When Propertius’ Calypso is said to be ‘longae conscia laetitiae’ (1.15.14), we should take the noun as a dative of the person with whom Calypso shares her ‘secret knowledge’. The ‘long happiness’ is a living construct. It is also *her* happiness, not one shared with Odysseus, who is in any case beside himself with misery by the time Hermes arrives. Calypso and her long happiness will live together from now onwards. Propertius’ heroine will *nolens volens* cling not to hope of the lover’s return but to the image of the hope of the lover’s return. The sufferer ossifies, like the cypress tree, withering under the burden of importing the petrified present and future into a living past.

In the context of the rebirth of life in Calypso’s Ogygian spring, the cypress sounds other warning bells. For, the tree’s reputation in ancient times was as a symbol of death. As a tree that was thought not to regrow when cut, it was sacred to Dis. Horace considers the trees ‘hated’ (‘invisas’) due to their ill-omened, funereal associations (Odes 1.14.23)<sup>19</sup>. One might have expected Homer to make more of the life-affirming ‘sempervirens’ quality of the tree as a symbol of the immortal Calypso. However the paradoxical tree revels in its polarised characteristics. Its very existence in such an environment contradicts the laws of nature. The ‘sempervirens’ is said to tolerate drought and salt, yet it is far from the sea here<sup>20</sup> and the four springs by the cave (Od.5.70-71) will permanently saturate the soil. Far from there being any drought, the Mediterranean cypress here suffers the ‘wet feet’ it normally abhors. The cypress also prefers direct sunlight and yet here is engulfed by other vegetation. If anything, the cypress ought to be growing at the far end of the island, where Odysseus spends his days weeping and thinking of his ‘nostos’<sup>21</sup>. A goddess in love with a mortal is an evergreen trapped in the uncongenial world of deciduous nature.

The polarised senses of the homonyms represented by ‘λαρος’ (the ‘sweet-smelling’ versus the ‘bird of putrescence’) serve to transmit a literary omen to the reader when confronted by the word ‘εὐωδης’ which may interpreted negatively as we shall see. This brings us first of all to a generalisation about Homer based on the nexus ‘the scented cypress’, one that has been mooted in the introduction. Homeric adjectives are often found in company with the same nouns, to the extent that the term ‘Homeric Epithet’ has the unintended effect of suggesting triteness, at least to the reader’s subconscious. The phrase ‘in the hollow cave’, for example (e.g. Iliad 18.402; Od.2.20), seems trivial and does not engage our attention. The problem is that this desensitizes us to the epithets themselves and affects our reception of pairs of words that, whilst appearing banal, only occur once in Homer (Od.3.1: ‘περικαλλέα λίμνην’ = ‘the very beautiful mere’). This brings us back to Homer’s unique nexus in this passage ‘the much-scented cypress’<sup>22</sup>. The epithet ‘scented’ becomes, not decorative, but extremely ominous. In being applied to the cypress, it could be interpreted as ‘a heavy odour’ or ‘an intense [unpleasant] smell’. The prefix ‘εὐ’ can behave as a synonym of ‘πολυ-

<sup>19</sup> Paulus Festus s.v. cupressus.; Pliny NH 16.40 & 139

<sup>20</sup> Hermes still has some way to go to reach the cave once he lands on the island

<sup>21</sup> www.goodmenproject.com/featured-content/cormorant-control-reducing-avian-predation-of-salmonids-wcz/: ‘Roosts of cormorants compete for nesting areas with ... other birds, in some cases even destroying the nesting habitat of particular species by destroying the vegetation in the understorey of cypress forests’

<sup>22</sup> See also Hesychius *Lexicon* s.v. ‘elelistrophe’ (= ‘eustrophe’ si ‘polustrophe’ = ‘much-turning’).

‘(‘much’). The following words give a flavour of this usage: ‘eudakruta’ = ‘very lamentable’ (Aeschylus); ‘euskopelos’ = ‘with many rocks’; ‘euainetos’ = ‘much-praised’; ‘euthrulletos’ = ‘poluthrulletos’ = ‘much spoken of, notorious’ (where we note the perjorative sense of ‘eu’).

The abundance of leaves on the cypress tree may once have created an intense sweetness, but now they are covered in cormorant droppings they will be responsible for the tree’s malodorousness. As in nature, so in literature, fragranciness is programmed to metamorphose into its opposite. Even the evergreen cypress cannot resist the way the tide turns. The cave will become a particularly foul-smelling backwater soon after Odysseus leaves. Calypso meanwhile is burning a huge fire in the midst of a Greek spring. The sweet-smell of burnt resin cloaks Calypso’s world in the fragrance of evergreen self-delusion. Far from being in permanent leaf, Calypso’s evergreens are being destroyed in their droves in order to dispel the stench of the cypress. Ironically that stench comes from the leaves which should be the source of olfactory sweetness.

Allegory permeates the narrative and its reach is furthered by references to the divine. There is we suggest a creative etymological connection between the cypress tree and a name of Aphrodite’s Cypris, which comes to mean ‘romantic love’. Meanwhile the love of Cyparissos for his stag in *Metamorphoses* 10 is of the same ilk as that of Calypso. Both melt away, suffering a grief that cannot be staunched. It is from Pseudo-Hyginus meanwhile (243) that we learn of the suicide of the ‘immortal’ Calypso, through grief at her lost love<sup>23</sup>. Nothing prevents this being presaged in the (ultimate) poisoning of the cypress’s roots<sup>24</sup>. One could argue Calypso’s death is sealed the moment she hands Odysseus the axe. She shows him the corpse. Effectively she takes her own life. The disturbed cormorants flee from the falling trees towards the cave. For Calypso, reality hereafter is represented by her construct of Odysseus-with-Penelope that, like the cormorant family, inhabits and infects her world.

At 5.238 (‘ὄθι δένδρεα μακρὰ περύκει’) Homer takes the reader to this part of the island ‘where the trees *had* grown tall’ [but were no longer growing, we suggest]. At 5.241 the same words articulate Calypso’s indication to Odysseus of ‘where the tall trees were’ (‘ὄθι δένδρεα μακρὰ περύκει’). Meanwhile the same key verb is used at 5.63<sup>25</sup> where ‘περύκει τηλεθώσα’ may be translated (on the pattern of the later passage) both as ‘there was a wood in bloom [around Calypso’s cave]’ and ‘a wood that was currently in bloom had grown’. There is an omen here. The trees must be presumed to be no longer ‘growing’ now that they ‘had grown’.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, if they ‘were’, then they are already in the past. The trees by the sea are mere skeletal reminders of their former selves<sup>27</sup>. However the complete (‘πάντα’)

<sup>23</sup> We translate ‘ἔνθα δέ τ’ ὄρνιθες . . . εὐνάζοντο’ as ‘there the birds ‘used to roost’ or ‘were accustomed to roosting’

<sup>24</sup> In the shorter term Odysseus’ eradication of the island’s ‘dead wood’ is also an omen of the end of his ossified relationship with Calypso

<sup>25</sup> For owls and alders see <https://www.owlpages.com/owls/species.php?s=1890>: ‘Northern Pygmy Owls . . . for roosting they prefer quiet, shady alder thickets’. For falcons and poplars see *Animal Behaviour* 1999 Jan; 57(1):125-131. Bogliani G1, Sergio F, Tavecchia G. *Wood pigeons nesting in association with hobby falcons: advantages and choice rules*: ‘Many bird species nest in close association with other bolder and more aggressive birds which provide protection against nest predators. The wood pigeons, *Columba palumbus*, that nest in *poplar* plantations in Northern Italy, are found almost *exclusively clumped around hobby, Falco subbuteo, nests*. Wood pigeons settle in the area and build their nests *after the hobby has started nesting*’.

<sup>26</sup> Compare the frequent use of the Latin ‘steterat’ (‘it had [once] stood’) as a means to describe the ‘fall’ of Troy. Meanwhile ‘fuit’ means ‘is no longer alive’

<sup>27</sup> Calypso’s cave is inland for Hermes is said to arrive at the island and then to make his way until he reaches the cave (Od.5.56-57: ‘ἔνθ’ ἐκ πόντου βᾶς ἰοειδέος ἤπειρόνδε / ἦτιεν, ὄφρα μέγα σπέος ἴκετο’).

destruction of this forest by Odysseus will force the mating cormorants to relocate to other trees which will become their new homes<sup>28</sup>. Thus, as we have seen, Calypso's decision to assist Odysseus in his desire to live out a mortal life, leads directly to the compromising of her immortal world. Her evergreen trees will become 'everwhite' with bird lime.

Homer has taken pains to ensure that the cypress trees around Calypso's cave are unseasoned and therefore rendered unsuitable as ship-building material (Noah had made his ship from cypress wood). Calypso finds her conifers to be easily 'clef' but as distinct from Odysseus who carves conifers into a ship, she cremates her conifers to cloak the stench of the 'fragrant' cypress leaves, the same leaves which ironically were thought to cloak the smell of a cremated corpse. Ultimately Calypso's concern to restore the 'permanent' aroma of her evergreen cypresses by burning her cedar and juniper logs will be proved vain once the cormorants arrive for good. One 'ἄροζ' ('the cormorant') will wholly appropriate another 'λαροζ' ('the fragrance').

There is a further play on words in the text, and this time it is implied even more cryptically. The adjective 'high as heaven' is appended to the fir tree ('ἑλάτη τ' ἦν οὐρανομήκης': Od 5.239). This will direct our mind's-eye to the top of this tree where the cormorants will be guarding their nests. However the etymology of this word ('heaven-length') may be subverted by the only other candidate that could lay a morphological claim to the suffix. The word 'μήκη' means 'bleating'. Odd as it may sound, a 'bleat' is the most accurate description of the cormorants' most common call. Thus, at a subtextual level, the 'high-as-heaven' fir' lifts one's ears to the 'bleating in the sky' ('οὐρανο-μήκης'). When cormorants are nesting, the collective bleating uttered by the females from the lofty nest is almost constant. This brings us to the meaning of 'λακερυδζα' ('chattering') the meanings of which in Aratus will soon absorb our attention. Although words for 'bleating' do not occur in the Aratus passage relating to the crow and cormorant, nevertheless, as an unseen detailing of the quality of 'λακερυδζα' as it describes the cormorant ('κορώνη'), we cannot deny its appositeness. Cormorants bleat. In our discussions of Aratus we will be sent back to Odyssey 5 where we will be much concerned with the embarrassed tone of Nausicaa's handmaidens who order each other about from the sandbars typically inhabited by cormorants when nesting. We will argue that the Aratean Homer equates these girls with cormorants. As 'bleaters' the girls will sound somewhat truculent but also shame-faced. To encapsulate the girls' emotions we may quote from Eupolis (103) whose nexus 'βλητα τεκνα' means 'bleater children' but also, and principally, 'sheepish lads'. As well as engaging then with the insistent, bleating trills of the cormorant, Homer and Aratus will be concerned to feed this verbalisation forward into a more wide-ranging consideration of character. In essence we will judge the girls by the predicament they find themselves in and then by what the sound of a lamb's bleating might convey about them given the context. As we shall see 'sheepishness' (along with some querulousness) will be a major component of the girls' profile in Odyssey 5. These qualities are ascribed to the girls on the basis that they sound like a bleating cormorant.

<sup>28</sup> Od.5.244: 'ἔκοσι δ' ἔκβαλε πάντα'



### Homer's 'κορώνη' as cormorant (2):

Thus for the reader of the phrase 'κορώνη λακέρυζα' the lesson of 'εὐώδης κυπάρισσος' need not be spelt out further. We take such nexus lightly at our peril. We remain with Homer for our second encounter with the 'κορώνη'. In Odyssey 12, when Odysseus' ship is wrecked, we are informed that sailors float on the sea in the manner of 'κορώναι'<sup>29</sup>. If we extrapolate this analogy, we will find that it constitutes a more or less conclusive proof of the identity of this bird. For, the macabre truth is that the behaviour of a flock of cormorants on a river imitates the way in which shipwrecked sailors finally drown. Like the feeding cormorant (which ironically is diving to feed itself to stay alive), the sailor is silent. He no longer has the strength to raise his arms from the water in order to swim. The cormorant presents the same armless impression with its wings tight by its side. Like the cormorant the drowning sailor disappears and reappears repeatedly. It is noteworthy that the verb used by Homer to express sailors' floating in water ('ἔμφορέοντο') also bears the meaning of 'sipping food and drinking'. Allegorically this secondary meaning lies hidden beneath the surface of the text, evoking the activity of the similarly submerged cormorant. Underwater, the cormorant gluts itself on fish. By contrast, the sinking sailor is forced to sip more and more salt water each time he goes below the sea's surface for ever-longer periods. He ends by swallowing it in litres. If then we wish to appreciate the multilateral relevance of Homeric similes, it is clear we have to extrapolate them in detail. In addition, we must also be sensitive to the capacity of the text to articulate its metapoetic strategy through the behaviour of its words.

### Crow or Cormorant or both?

However, the identification of the Homeric 'κορώνη' as a cormorant still has an obstacle to surmount. The cormorant's claim to that title seems to be put in doubt by the fact that the bird is also declared 'long-tongued' (or 'tanuglossoi')<sup>30</sup>. In fact, the cormorant's tongue is rigid and very rudimentary, being somewhat reminiscent of a mushroom stalk and only 1.5 centimetres long. In the Faroe Islands and Greenland, this bird is called 'den tungeløse' ('the bird without a tongue')<sup>31</sup>. However, there is a solution to this discrepancy. The prefix 'tanu' means not only 'long' but also 'thin'. Thus 'tanuglossoi' also means 'with thin tongue', which describes the bird adequately. Yet there is a complication. In the previous line, Homer had described the bird using the adjective 'tanusipteroi'. Here the prefix 'tanu-' refers to the long length of its wings. Meanwhile, two lines later, the verb 'tetanusto' evokes the length and thinness of the grapevine that surrounds Calypso's cave. Thus the immediate context twice insists on the 'long' nuance contained within the prefix (or root) 'tanu-'. We cannot therefore ignore the fact that the word 'tanuglossoi' will attach a sense of extreme length to the cormorant's tongue. This length can only be intended to refer to the bird's 'talkativeness'. Although the cormorant is silent when it feeds on the water, when it roosts in trees, the male chatters and grunts somewhat like a pig. Meanwhile, amongst mating couples, the female is

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<sup>29</sup> Od.12.418-419: 'οἱ δὲ κορώνησιν ἴκελοι περὶ νῆα μέλαιναν / κύμασιν ἔμφορέοντο ...'

<sup>30</sup> See the abstract of Jackowiak H1, Andrzejewski W, Godynicki S: 'Light and scanning electron microscopic study of the tongue in the cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (Phalacrocoracidae, Aves)' in *Zoological Science* (2006) Feb;23(2):161-7.

<sup>31</sup> See <http://thyra2005.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/controversial-cormorant-is-very.html>

the more talkative one. She gargles or ‘creaks’ or ‘bleats’ as she moves her head from front to back. In sum, the cormorants around Calypso's cave, amid the echoing trees, will be chattering and deserve their ‘long-tongued’ epithet.

This brings us back by a winding route to the adjective ‘lakerudza’, which according to grammarian Hesychius, means ‘chattering’ (‘λαλος’). This character trait is normally ascribed to the crow. The Roman author Ovid, who himself is known to have translated Aratus, is unlikely to have emphasized the ‘loquacity’ of the ‘crow’ (‘garrula’, ‘loquax’)<sup>32</sup> at the expense of its ‘cawing’ tone if no linguistic or literary heritage existed to that effect<sup>33</sup>. Yet it may be that the crow is portrayed as ‘talkative’ as a result of deliberate contamination with Homer’s (original) homonymic, long-tongued ‘cormorant’. Certainly, in light of the Homeric context, the ‘chattering’ cormorant ‘kōrone lakerudza’ has at least the same right to the title ‘kōrone lakerudza’ as ‘the cawing crow’. In fact we now ask ourselves if the loquacious cormorant could be masked by the ‘cawing crow’ in Aratus. Phaenomena 949 is particularly relevant to this discussion

The phrase ‘παρ’ ἡϊόνι προυχούση’ (Aratus 949) means ‘near’ or ‘along’ or ‘before’<sup>34</sup> a projecting spit’ or ‘sandbar’. Unlike crows, cormorants frequent spits that stretch into the sea or across an estuary, some consisting of sand, others being made of more resistant materials (fragments of shells, pebbles). Moreover, these spits may be rocky, as in the case of Kolias in Herodotus (8.96), which Pausanias defines as a promontory (‘Akra kolias’:1.1.5). In any event, the cormorants court and mate on these tongues of land just as they will do among Calypso's trees<sup>35</sup>.

Of great interest, however, is that this nexus of words ‘ἡϊόνι προυχούση’ is found in no other context except Odyssey 6 when the hero, shipwrecked on the mythical island of Phaeacia, is awakened by the cry of Princess Nausicaa's handmaidens when the ball they are throwing falls in the river. Alarmed by a salt-encrusted and effectively naked Odysseus, the girls flee along the tongues of sand that stretch into the river<sup>36</sup>. Where torrent streams coalesce and then change direction they are likely to gouge an area where a ‘deep eddy’ or ‘whirlpool’ forms (Od.6.116). That a plurality of streams become one at this point in the Odyssey seems clear from the phrases ‘ποταμοῖο ῥοῆσιν’ (216) ‘ποταμοῖο ῥέεθρα’ (318) and ‘ῥόον περικαλλέ’ ἴκοντο’ (85). The last of these identifies the point where the whirlpool forms, where the streams consolidate into one, and where the maidens do their washing. The speed of the amalgamating waters will cause a whirlpool much as combining winds form a cyclone. But the circling waters will then lose forward momentum allowing alluvial debris to be deposited or rather thrown outwards. This will lead to the formation of short sandbars where the waters are not constantly churning, namely on the opposite side of the river to the whirlpool. This is where the maidens use the gaps between the sandbars as ‘tanks’ for washing clothes. Clearly there is now no current here at all which will lead to further

<sup>32</sup> Metamorphoses 2.535 (‘corve loquax’), 2.547-548 (‘cornix garrula’); Fasti 2.89-90 (‘loquax / cornix’)

<sup>33</sup> See Frazer (1929) ad Fasti 2.89.

<sup>34</sup> See ‘παρ’ + dative 1. & 3 LSJ p.1302

<sup>35</sup> See <http://dspace.nbu.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/14748/11-Dinkevich.pdf?sequence=1> ‘Main breeding sites of the Cormorant are located in limans and reed-beds of the eastern part of the Sea of Azov region and in the northern Black Sea region, where concentrations of mass fish species are known. Within this area only 2 types of the Cormorant settlements are discovered: 1) *ground type of breeding on sand-shell islands and spits* and 2) breeding on reed breaks in thickets of macrophytes. *The first kind of breeding is typical for the large and well-being colonies of the Cormorant*’.

<sup>36</sup> For a typical spit see Tahuna Torea, Auckland, New Zealand

accreting of the sandbars. Ultimately however, these sandbars offer no refuge to those in real danger but they afford the girls the opportunity to express their embarrassment by retreating each to their own 'moated' promontory, as it were.

Islanders in ancient times were no strangers to shipwrecked sailors. To the onlooker, a salt-encrusted man could mean only one thing, however sheltered one's upbringing. Ordered by Nausicaa to stop and bathe Odysseus, the girls stand still, before giving orders to each other ('ὡς ἔφαθ', αἱ δ' ἔσταν τε καὶ ἀλλήλησι κέλευσαν / κὰδ δ' ἄρ' Ὀδυσσῆ' εἶσαν ἐπὶ σκέπαε, ὡς ἐκέλευσεν': Od.6.211-212). Through 'ordering' they try to divest themselves of their individual responsibility and embarrassment. They attempt to foist the taking of the first step onto each other. However just as importantly, the tone or timbre of their voices will be somewhat disgruntled, even testy and insistent. They will also be somewhat *sotto voce* given the girls embarrassment. In a word, they will be bleating.

Nausicaa had already ordered them to stand still (6.199) adding trenchantly 'πόσε φεύγετε' ('where are you running off to?'). The river cannot be of any great size. No Greek island has anything but torrent beds which are dangerous in spate (as now) but not wide. Meanwhile Nausicaa has just finished a rather long exchange with Odysseus. The girls must have been running around in a collective, unfocused panic having nowhere to go but up and down the short sandbars. Having been ordered by Nausicaa to 'stand still' (6.119) it still is some time before they finally take heed, only then to put the onus on each other to bathe Odysseus. It is clear that out of self-consciousness, no one wants to take the initiative. Their sheepishness is tangible.

The reader of Aratus will summon up the sound of these Homeric 'sand bars' resonating at first not so much with the voices of the girls but with the gargling or chattering ('lakerudza') of the *females* that had been nesting on the spit<sup>37</sup>. This will be followed by the similar sounds produced by the cormorants as they become airborne having been spooked by the rampaging panic of the girls<sup>38</sup>. This reader hears not a cawing crow but a cormorant that is querulous with a grunting, even grumpy tone<sup>39</sup>.

Meanwhile the Homeric spits act as a stage where the girls literally find their 'cormorant's tongue, at first shamefacedly as they try to persuade each other to 'go first'. This rather tentative 'muttering' they direct towards each other seems likely to echo the gargling of the female cormorant as, lying on the same sort of sandbar as that of the girls, she throws her head back in the course of her courtship with the male. The gesture incidentally reminds one of the Greek way of articulating a negative response through bodily gesture. The head is thrown backwards. This evokes the refusal of each of the girls to 'go first'. Like a wave

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<sup>37</sup> It will be objected that we do not know the date of Odysseus' sojourn on Phaeacia. But he has recently left Calypso's island where the season is clearly spring. The custom of the maidens to wash their clothes on the sandbars will mean that the (often timorous) cormorants will not be spooked initially. It is the girls' panic (accompanied no doubt by their querulous cries) that will disturb the flock.

<sup>38</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNDIIfSc0kc> for the cormorant grunting on take-off. The average flock size [of Great Cormorants] recorded within 3 km of the coast [of eastern Jutland and Læsø, Denmark] was 26 individuals, with a maximum of 890; whereas average flock size at a distance of more than 3 km from the coast was only 3 individuals, with a maximum flock size of 220'. See 'http://seabird.wikispaces.com/Great+Cormorant' A small cormorant flock is likely to be spooked more easily.

<sup>39</sup> Aratus' 'tongue' of land also evokes the abbreviated nature of the cormorant's truncated tongue. In this context, it should be borne in mind throughout this analysis that the word for 'tongue' in Greek also means 'tongue of land' (Appian *Punic Wars* 121: 'μεταξὺ τῆς λίμνης οὐσα καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης γλώσσα ἐκαλεῖτο')

surging back from a sandbar, the sound of the girls' voices tracks backwards to define more precisely the timbre of Aratus' word 'lakerudza'<sup>40</sup>. As the Homeric episode develops the increasing 'chattiness' of the girls brings the 'loquacity of 'lakerudza' into sharper focus. At 6.223 ('εἶπον δ' ἄρα κόρη') the girls, now more voluble, tell Nausicaa all about Odysseus' bathing (Odysseus has to tell them to retire).

Returning to the sandbars, the girls' 'bleating', in the light of their literary status as displacers (and representatives) of cormorants on a sandbar, takes on the character of a mating cry. For, while Aratus has recruited Homer to help him develop his picture of chattering (and courting) cormorants, he is not just plundering Homer to cascade nuances of mating cries over his text. He is also bringing Homer's own hidden literary nooks and crannies into the open (Od.6.26-28). The presence of breeding cormorants in the wings of the Homeric story leads to the reflection that girls in a group with a single man will tend to be more garrulous, perhaps as an unconscious reaction to assumed competition amongst women for the only available male. After all, to attract a male is the motivation behind the bleating of the female cormorant. Thus Aratus empowers Homer to recruit his help in bringing to the surface the psychological undercurrents of the plot. Like cormorants, Nausicaa's handmaidens, in their own way, are paying court. Indeed in another sense the young girls could be thought to be actively encouraging Odysseus' attentions. For, allegorically the girls have now routed their rivals (by spooking the cormorants) and have seized the courting arena for their suit of Odysseus. This is how Aratus supplements Homer.

The sand bars as 'tongues' of land (Appian) is a prime metapoetic guarantee that it is the 'talkative' nuance of 'lakerudza' that is our concern. Meanwhile the brevity of these sandbars focuses our attention on the timbre produced by a 1.5 centimetre lingual stump. A form of gargling or grunting is the only verbal expression physically possible among cormorants.

It is incumbent now to analyze the rest of Aratus' sentence in detail. First of all, 'κυματοσ ἔρχομένου' is an example of the so-called 'genitive absolute'. It means 'when the wave is approaching' and suggests that this spit mentioned by Aratus' does not extend into a river but towards the sea. Meanwhile the verb 'ὑπέτυψε' means 'thrust down'. In Aristophanes' Birds, the word is used in connection with another web-footed bird, the goose, which forcefully thrusts its legs like shovels into the ground to extract the mortar for building the walls of Cloud-Cuckoo Land<sup>41</sup>. Based on this behaviour of Aristophanes' geese, it is possible to translate Phaenomena line 950 in the following way: "by [*or* near] a projecting headland, when the wave approaches, the kōrone has dug down with its feet into the ground'. The word 'παρα' here means 'by' or 'near' (Hesychius defines it as '□γγυς'). Now we already know that the bird is on land, given that it has pushed its feet down into the ground. Thus, since it is 'near' or 'before' the headland, it is most likely standing on a herald rock that caps the end of a promontory. The word 'ἤϊον' is a synonym of 'ἄκτη' ('promontory') though it also means 'beach' 'sand' and 'river bank' according to Hesychius<sup>42</sup>.

At this point we consult Theophrastus whose work 'De Signis' ('About [Weather] Signs') is considered to be the immediate source for this part of Aratus's text<sup>43</sup>. Now, in the

<sup>40</sup> The word derives from 'λασκω' which can even mean 'scream' (of birds).

<sup>41</sup> Birds 1144-146: 'τοῦτ' ὄγαθ' ἐξηγήρητο καὶ σοφώτατα: / οἱ χῆνες ὑποτύπτοντες ὡσπερ ταῖς ἄμαις / ἐς τὰς λεκάνας ἐνέβαλλον αὐτοῖς τοῖν ποδοῖν'

<sup>42</sup> Lexicon s.v 'ἤϊον' and 'ἤιονες'.

<sup>43</sup> That assumption is based inter alia on the fact that Theophrastus mentions 'kōrone' in a list of weather signs which include frogs, swallows, tree frogs, and oxen. In Aratus the order is the following: swallows, frogs, tree-frogs, kōrone, oxen.

Theophrastean passage<sup>44</sup>, we are informed that it will rain if the 'kōrone' with its head raised stands on a rock over which the wave cascades'. Only a crow with a death wish will brave the elements like this. However, shags and cormorants commonly land on such rocks which must be the same as the herald rocks mentioned above. The Australian saying 'wet as a shag on a rock' suggests that the shag or cormorant, far from drying itself on such a rock, is exposing itself to inundation by the waves. Aratus will be fully aware that Theophrastus is describing not a crow, but a cormorant. And if Aratus, in treating 'kōrone' as a sign of rain, is following Theophrastus' catalogue, then we must conclude that Aratus 'kōrone' is (in this context) a cormorant.

Homer alludes to herald rocks many times in contexts in which it is consistently overwhelmed by waves. At Iliad 2.396-397, in addressing his soldiers, Agamemnon is characterized as just such a rock which gets no peace from the wind-borne waves that encroach from this side and that ('προβλήτι σκοπέλω: τὸν δ' οὐ ποτε κύματα λείπει / παντοίων ἀνέμων, ὅτ' ἄν ἔνθ' ἢ ἔνθα γένωνται'). Meanwhile, in returning from Troy, part of Menelaus's fleet is wrecked off the promontory of Phaestus where a small rock resists the high wave.<sup>45</sup>

The passages of Aratus and Theophrastus together highlight a very idiosyncratic aspect of cormorant behaviour. Cormorants are able to face into an oncoming wave whilst effortlessly absorbing the shock. They deliberately expose themselves to such waves from herald rocks. The implicit explanation for their stability at such moments, as articulated by Aratus' subtext, is that the cormorant thrusts down its feet so hard that the webbing becomes a suction-pad locking the bird hard onto the rock. This is the meaning behind the didactic Aratus' 'χέρσῳ ὑπέτυψε κορώνη'. Meanwhile stylistic aspects of Phaenomena line 950 reinforce our argument. The aorist tense of the verb reflects the anticipation of the wave by the bird. A momentary action just ahead of the wave breaking maintains the cormorant's balance. And the musical effect of the syllables of the word 'προυχούση' (pronounced 'proochoosay') evokes the three phases of the wave's disintegration over the rock: the arrival, the impact, the (hissing) dissemination. One discrepancy remains. The adjective appended to the bird, 'lakerudza' ('talkative') is as we shall see, still apposite, and not just because, metapoetically speaking, it would have some force as an indication of the increasingly 'wordy' nature of the 'kōrone' ('the many-meaning cormorant'). We will later find the cormorant voicing its excitement as the wave overwhelms it. It will resemble the mistle thrush singing wholeheartedly from the top of the tree in the middle of the storm. However, for the time being, there is another, more appealing meaning of 'lakerudza' that would fit well with this discourse. The word 'lakerudza' has already shifted from 'cawing' to 'chatty'. Nothing prevents it from modulating further. According to Hesychius, another nuance of the word 'lakerudza' is

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<sup>44</sup> Theophrastus *De Signis* 16 (see also Sider & Brunschoen (2007) p. 68, 69): 'κορώνη ἐπὶ πέτρας κορυσομένη ἦν κύμα κατακλύζει'. Note that the participle κορυσομένη could also mean 'marshals itself' or even 'arms itself' 'equips itself'. Theophrastus is probably referring to a 'shag', which is the same species of bird as the cormorant but of a different type. The shag is the subject of the Australian saying quoted above. Meanwhile the subject of Homer's 'korone' must be a cormorant since the shag does not nest in trees. We do not think the ancients distinguished between shags and cormorants. See W. Godfrey Arnott (2007) p. 112 s.v. Korax (2): 'in the ancient world this Cormorant [*Phalacrokorax Carbo*] would not have been distinguished from the visually very similar European Shag [*Phalacrokorax Aristotelis*] which nests only in caves and on cliff edges'.

<sup>45</sup> Odyssey 3.295.

‘φλυαρος’ (‘foolish’/‘babbling’) which Hesychius further defines as ‘φαιλος’ (‘flimsy in judgement’) and ‘εὐθηής’ (‘simple’/‘guileless’). The chattering bird has talked its way into committing a foolhardy act. Empty saucepans make the most noise one might say. This description of the hare-brained bird fits perfectly with the image of the cormorant on the rock. On the one hand, it appears harum-scarum and bold. On the other hand, its actions serve no purpose.

It is of interest that the characterisation of this gesture as imbecilic does not derive from only a single textual source. The lines of Aratus on the crow / cormorant constitute a very wide chiasmus (949-952), the two ends of which consist of ‘lakerudza’ and ‘pachea krodzousa’ (‘cawing’ and ‘creaking in a ragged voice’ respectively). Given the chameleonic nature of ‘lakerudza’, it is logical to expect that its synonym ‘pachea krodzousa’ should also ring its lexical changes. And it does not disappoint, because ‘pachea’ also means ‘like a fool’. Thus if ‘lakerudza’ means ‘foolish’, then the phrase ‘pachea krodzousa’ will echo that meaning and indeed expand it in reference to the cormorant as well as the crow. This will be on the grounds that the cormorant is ‘babbling like a fool’ (‘pachea krodzousa’) as the wave approaches the rock.

The foolishness of the cormorant may be exacerbated by another characteristic it betrays during its time on the herald rock. Hesychius also defines ‘λακέρυζα’ as ‘κρακτρια’ (‘bawling’). Assuming we wish the ends of the chiasmus to be synonyms, this has the advantage of requiring ‘pachea’ to mean ‘amply’ (Longinus) with ‘krodzousa’ meaning ‘cawing [loudly]’. Meanwhile Pliny makes a striking contribution to this debate at 18.363. Land birds, he says, especially the ‘cornix’, ‘emit ‘shouts’ (‘clangores’) towards the sea as they drench themselves’. As we shall see, Cicero strives to contaminate ‘cornix’ the crow with ‘cornix’ the cormorant, and it may be that Pliny is here paying Cicero a compliment. Pliny’s description of the cornix seems to correlate closely with the picture we have of the cormorant (or shag) facing the sea on a rock (and perhaps ‘shouting’). Here in Pliny’s text we read ‘perfundentes se’ in order to synchronise the stance of the cormorants on the herald rocks with their bawling at the oncoming wave<sup>46</sup>. Bawling may also be in Theophrastus’ mind for in freeing the throat, the ‘raising of the head’, can be a precursor to ‘bawling’. ‘Bawling’ also fits the profile of ‘foolishly’. Meanwhile ‘παχέα’ can mean ‘amply’ or ‘coarsely’ or ‘stupidly’.

Another indication that this polysemantic reading of ‘lakerudza’ is not misguided comes from Virgil who alludes to this passage in the *Georgics*<sup>47</sup>. In line 1.387, the line that immediately precedes mention of the crow, the behaviour of sea birds is described as ‘incassum’ (‘pointless’). These birds exult in the pleasure of the act of washing, there being no intrinsic reason for this pleasure. However, the ‘nunc ... nunc’ construction suggests that the two activities mentioned constitute the ‘exultant’ phases involved in washing. That is, line 1.387 epitomises the two ‘nunc’ clauses. Opposing one’s head to the breakers is as reckless as ‘speeding into the waves’ (‘nunc currere in undas’). The former is an action that evokes the

<sup>46</sup> For this episode see also Avienus 1704: ‘caput altis inserit undis’; and possibly Lucan *De Bello Civile* 5.555: ‘... caput spargens undis ...’. where however the crow’s sortie along the waterline may be in the author’s mind. See below. When Pliny includes the ‘cornix’ amongst ‘terrestres aves’ (18.363), he should be alluding to the crow. Nevertheless he may also be engaging in a polemic over whether the cormorant should not be considered a land bird rather than Homer’s ‘marine bird’.

<sup>47</sup> *Georgics* 1.385-389: ‘certatim largos umeris infundere rores: / nunc caput obiectare fretis, nunc currere in undas / et studio incassum videas gestire lavandi. / Tum cornix plena pluviam vocat improba voce / et sola in sicca secum spatiat harena’.

vignette of Theophrastus ('with head raised')<sup>48</sup>. Not surprisingly, as aspects of the generally functional activity of 'washing', both activities are summarised by Virgil as 'pointless' which feeds into the 'foolish' nuance of 'lakerudza'. Virgil's words 'caput obiectare fretis' however also means 'to expose one's life to the [danger] of the seas'. Such a translation would perfectly express the opinion of the commonsensical man in the street, whilst at the same time evoking the nuance of 'lakerudza' as 'foolish'. The cormorant described by Theophrastus and Aratus, in standing upright on the rock with its head oriented towards the wave, is ostentatiously asking for trouble. We note that the word for 'sea' ('fretis') not only suggests a sea that in the etymological sense 'boils' ('fretum' > 'ferveo') but also articulates the meanings 'with confidence in oneself' and 'self-reliant' through the homonymic adjective 'fretus -a-um'. Thus, the etymological and homonymic aspects of 'fretis' combine to create an antithesis between the 'boiling' sea and the 'flat calm' of the cormorant's inner self-belief.

Lastly the 'shouting' nuance of 'lakerudza' is present and yet overlaid in Virgil in line 389. The voice of the 'cornix' is 'sonorous' and 'clear' as well as 'loud' ('plena pluviam vocat improba voce'). This we suggest is another example of an author harking back to, and on this occasion, correcting Cicero whose 'cornix' is, as we shall see, quite the opposite, namely 'fusca' ('hoarse')<sup>49</sup>. At the same time 'vox plena' could also insinuate a comment about the sheer length of the bird's verbal outburst. Here we have crossed paths once again with 'lakerudza' as 'talkative'. Meanwhile the vituperative nature of Virgil's bird ('improba') is an extra quality which we also find in Apollonius Rhodius whose crow (also described as 'lakerudza': Argonautica 3.929) reviles Mopsus the seer with lines such as 'ἔρροις, ὃ κακόμαντι, κακοφραδές' (Argonautica 3.936). Perhaps not surprisingly Hesychius confirms that there is one last nuance of 'lakerudza' that has not so far been discussed, namely 'λοιδορός' ('railing, abusive'). Whilst Virgil's lines naturally suggest the clear-voiced, vituperative bird is the one who walks the shore alone (1.389), even here we cannot distinguish the crow from the cormorant, since the latter will pace the waterline, though rarely<sup>50</sup>.

We end this section on a note that brings Cicero's cormorant into focus. In his version the bird inclines its head to receive a wave on its shoulders ('demersit caput et fluctum cervice recepit': IV.9). In photographic stills it is possible to detect the bird leaning forward slightly on the herald rock at the moment of the wave's impact and Cicero may be deliberately insinuating a first-hand observation that contradicts the 'raising of the head' in Theophrastus. Furthermore, nothing prevents Aratus from being understood to be saying that the madcap cormorant on the rock by the jutting promontory 'dipped' as the wave arrived ('ἢ που καὶ λακέρυζα παρ' ἠϊόνι προυχούση / κυματος ἔρχομένου χέρσῳι ὑπέτυψε κορώνη'). Thus even Aratus allows for a version in which the cormorant takes evasive action. Virgil too may be insinuating that his crow is an Aratean cormorant that avoids the full force of the waves. We can translate Virgil's 'certatim largos umeris infundere rores / ... videas' as 'you could see them vying with each other to engineer huge streams of water pouring *onto their shoulders*'. The competitive element strongly suggests the particular behaviour is testing the cormorants' nerve. This will only be tested on a herald rock under siege from the waves.

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<sup>48</sup> It would seem impossible for us to hear the cormorant as it delivers its words. It could be 'babbling' or 'bawling'.

<sup>49</sup> The same meaning could however be read into Aratus' 'pachea krodzousa' ('croaking thickly').

<sup>50</sup> See below

However, the figure of the crow can also usurp the same ground as that occupied by the cormorant. Thus these same words of Aratus' ('ἡ που ... κορώνη') also mean 'and the cawing crow along the jutting strand dipped as the wave arrived on land'. This is a version which may be supported by Cicero's words which also avail of this meaning ('it [the crow] lowered its head and received the wave on its neck'). Here we have identified a well-documented aspect of the crow's behaviour. Film evidence shows crows at the water's edge dipping their heads into the oncoming ripple as if to wash themselves. The water strikes the crow on the back of the neck as it lowers its head ('demersit caput').

At this point we take the opportunity to demonstrate that Aratus text holds divergent positions at the same time, specifically in relation to 'παρ' ἡϊόνι προυχούση' (Aratus 949). In the version of Aratus that privileges the crow at its ablutions, the 'shore projects'. We are not in the presence of a small cove where the beach is 'withdrawn' within the promontories but a strand that lies hard against the sea and stretches for some distance. The Greeks would call this an 'αίγιαλος' ('long beach') as opposed to an 'ακτη' ('cove') which, understood as a 'shore', can only be described as a 'recessed shore'. At the same time the phrase 'παρ' ἡϊόνι προυχούση' could mean 'beside the jutting promontory'. Such a position (given it is not on the herald rock which is properly 'before the promontory') will be on the beach of a cove sandwiched it is by its promontories. Thus the text continues to have its cake whilst eating it. It defines its sphere of influence to be one type of beach whilst at the same time allowing for the other type.

In discussing this passage of Aratus' another clarification is in order. The word 'κύμα' is defined as a 'wave' but it has cognates which seem to apply to the movement of the tide (Strabo 1.3.8: 'κυματοσις'). Meanwhile a Hesiod fragment (217) contains a word that can be securely defined as 'tide' ('έν πλησμησιν διυπετεος ποταμοιο'; 'in the flood-tide of the rain-swollen river'). At the same time the passage clearly echoes Iliad 21.268 and 326 where the word Hesiod replaces with 'πλησμησιν' is on both occasions 'κῦμα' ('μέγα κῦμα [διυπετέος ποταμοῖο] and 'ἄρα κῦμα [διυπετέος ποταμοῖο]'). This makes a strong case for suggesting 'κῦμα' itself means 'tide' as well as 'wave'. We note also that the root of 'πλησμη', namely 'πιμπλημι' ('impregnate') is a synonym of the root verb of 'κῦμα', namely 'κυω' ('impregnate'). We therefore think 'κῦμα' can be used of the 'tide' or of one of its 'waves'.

Several other literary sources reflect the confusion created by authors speaking of two bird sat once. Geoponica (1.3.7) mentions that the 'κορώνη' wets its head on the beach ('έπ' αίγιαλοῦ τήν κεφαλήν διαβρέχουσα'). The crow does this along the waterline while the cormorant does it in more spectacular fashion and from a height. On a separate issue, the same author observes that the 'κορώνη' swims fully submerged. This latter comment may be inspired by Aratus line 952 where the 'κορώνη' (cormorant) appears to dive into the water completely<sup>51</sup>. The first quote above from the Geoponica may also derive inspiration from

<sup>51</sup> We discuss this line in our forthcoming book *Disiecta Membra* (2018; Melrose Publications). In brief we believe the line could read (with the letters redivided) as 'ἡ καὶ μάλ' αἰ σὰ κολυμβᾷ'. By ignoring the demands of metre we translate these words as 'or, even sheep/goats [= 'μηλα' Doricised as 'μαλα'] always dive safely [into water]'. Here Aratus ever concerned to impart more learning observes that sheep can (and do) swim. At the same time the word 'mala' is planted as an echo of the Latin word 'mala' which particularly in Ovid's *Tomis* comes to mean 'poetic solecisms' infelicities' (such as metrical mistakes). Thus we translate 'or even our 'metrical mistakes always dive safely [out of sight]. Aratus' 'errors' have always hidden themselves in the depths of the line, where, like sea creatures, they remain undetected on the seafloor. Until now.



Aratus 950 (‘κυματος ἔρχομένου χέρσῳι ὑπέτυψε κορώνη’). Here the author makes ‘χέρσῳι’ dependent on the ‘crow’ not on ‘κυματος ἔρχομένου’.

Geoponica’s definition of the [projecting] ‘beach’ as the bird’s sphere of activity ensures that our thoughts are turned towards the crow and away from cormorant. Meanwhile, whilst Pliny the Elder uses the term ‘corvus aquaticus’ of the cormorant at NH 11.130, in Book 18 chapter 360 the reading ‘maxime cornix’ should not be considered inapplicable to the cormorant which, as we have seen, ‘is engaged in work at sea’ (Od.5.67). In Pliny’s case, we have discussed this ‘land-bird’ shouting at the sea as a possible reference to Cicero’s composite ‘cornix’. For Cicero’s lines, examined in detail, below will make us averse to discounting ‘cornix’ as a name for the cormorant. There we will find Cicero contaminating the behaviours of crow and cormorant under the single heading of ‘cornix’.

Returning to Aratus 949-950, with ‘κορώνη’ now meaning ‘crow’, a further narrative now emerges, this one, once again, well documented on film. Our translation is not the received one, Instead it evokes a particular phase in the Hooded Crow’s day (‘along the projecting shore, the crow strutted chattering on dry land as the wave departed’). Here we assume the genitive absolute means ‘while the wave was retreating’. On such occasions the Hooded Crow is very active. Each departure of a wave brought by the retreating tide deposits a fresh cache of small food items which the bird can pick through safe in the knowledge that the next wave, as well as bringing its own fresh cache, will fall slightly short of the previous one thereby not inconveniencing the bird (nor robbing it of its titbits). Meanwhile the phrase On such occasions the crow ‘struts’ (‘ὑπέτυψε’) to and fro without getting its feet wet (‘χέρσῳι’) and chattering to itself with very much with the same intonation as that of the cormorant when courting on the promontory. Remarkably then, the mostly divergent behaviour exhibited by the two creatures is expressed through the same words.

It is worth examining the full gamut of the bird’s behaviour here. The crow will be combing the edge of the surf along the ‘αἰγιαλος’. It will spend most of the time feeding on the scraps left by the ebbing tide, only stopping occasionally to bathe in the manner described above. Meanwhile, safe in the knowledge that the waves are receding and will neither (a) overwhelm it as it douses itself nor (b) reabsorb the titbits it casts ashore, the crow scuttles up and down the shoreline just as Cicero and Aratus suggest<sup>52</sup>. When the tide turns the crow will take the opportunity to roost. The word ‘προυχούση’ shows some versatility here. For as well as indicating a (generically) projecting shore, it also suggests that, with the tide receding, the shore is actively ‘protruding further and further’ out to sea. The word ‘προυχούση’ is after all a present participle which means it will articulate an ongoing activity (that of the apparent lengthening of a beach as the tide recedes).

Now in Aratus, the alterative meaning of ‘ὑπέτυψε’ (‘dipped’) serves to gloss ‘ἐβάψατο’ in the following line (‘or it dipped itself even in the river up to just past the shoulders, from the head’). Film evidence also shows crows washing in rivers and ponds. Typically they will thrust their heads into the water whilst standing in the shallows. There is little difference between this mode of washing and the slightly more passive manner we have seen them adopt when awaiting their dip in the ripples of the sea (‘ὑπέτυψε’). At this point we note an intermetrical word ‘ριπα’ ensconced between the words ‘μεχρι’ and ‘παρα’. If we

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<sup>52</sup> Aratus 953: πολλή στρέφεται παρ’ ὕδωρ παχέα κρώζουσα; Cicero 4.1.7: ‘Fuscaque non numquam cursans per litora cornix

transliterate this into Latin we find the word ‘ripa’ which can be translated either as the sea-coast or as the bank of a river. In this meaning it (a) glosses the word ‘ἦλον’ (which therefore metapoetically ‘protrudes’ further in the sense of its meaning being echoed further down the passage) and (b) neatly epitomises the terrain occupied by the crow in washing its head in river and sea and (c) encapsulates the riverside location of the cormorants as they patrol the current regularly diving up to their necks to catch prey close to the surface (951-952).

If this were not enough, Aratus is also simultaneously, we suggest, trying to convey another quite different aspect of the crow’s presentation. The verb ‘ἐβάψατο’ also means ‘it was dyed’. Now the colouring of the Hooded Crow is very specific. Its trunk is grey ‘right up to and just over the shoulders outside of the head’. In these words Aratus seems to have accurately summarised the colour divisions on the bird’s plumage (‘μέχρι παρ’ ἄκρους / ὤμους ἐκ κεφαλῆς’). However one can hardly be ‘dyed in the river’. One could perhaps be ‘dyed like sand’ however which may have the effect of colouring one grey with a tinge of pink. It is remarkable how close the colour of the Hooded Crow is to grey sand. One word for sand in Homer is ‘κονίη’ which also means ‘dust’ but is also the substance that rises from the Greek beach at Iliad 2.151-152, when pandemonium breaks out following Agamemnon’s apparent declaration that the Trojan siege is over (‘ποδῶν δ’ ὑπένερθε κονίη / ἴστατ’ ἄειρομένη’). However, the most convincing context for ‘grey sand’ is Iliad 21.271 where κονίη refers to the sandy river bed of the Scamander. The sand of rivers is particularly grey. We therefore think that the word ‘ποταμοῖο’ should be reconfigured as ‘ποτ’ αμοῖο’. Effectively this will mean the equivalent of ‘προς αμοῖο’ which brings us very close to ‘προς αμοῖο’ ([dyed] like [river] sand’). Given the derivation of ‘ἄμαθος’ from ‘ἄμμος’ (‘sandy’ > ‘sand’), and ‘ψαμινος’ from ‘ψαμμος’ (‘sandy’ > ‘sand’) we think that an alternative spelling of ‘ἄμμος’ as ‘ἄμος’ is quite likely (though it has not survived). There is also the circumstance that a homonym of ἄμμος (‘our’) can be spelt ‘ἄμος’. On balance we think it reasonable to propose the following subversive reading of the text: ‘and the crow was ‘dyed’ like sand right up to a point over the shoulders, outside of the head’. Aratus plunders the secret verbal resources of the word for one of the crow’s favourite habitats, the river, in order to construct an aition that explains its colouring.

Meanwhile it is incumbent to assume that Aratus lines 951-952 could also make sense if we returned to the meaning of ‘κορώνη’ as ‘cormorant’. A role for the cormorant in this scenario is ready to hand. When a school of cormorants advances along a river feeding (‘ποταμοῖο’), the individual birds will typically dip their head as far as the neck in order to catch a fish that is swimming close to the surface (‘ἐβάψατο μέχρι παρ’ ἄκρους / ὤμους ἐκ κεφαλῆς ...’; ‘it dipped from the head down as far as just above the neck’).

The talkativeness of the cormorant is further exemplified in another highly subversive aspect of the text. The words ‘παρ’ ἠϊόνι προυχούση’ can be treated in the reverse of the method applied to ‘ποταμοῖο’. That is, ‘παρ’ ἠϊόνι’ can be fused to produce ‘παρηϊόνι’. This now constitutes the word ‘jaw’ in the dative. The adjective ‘προυχούση’ easily adapts to the new discourse by reformulating itself as ‘protruding’. One of the striking anatomical details about the cormorant is the fact that its lower beak (‘jaw’) is very long in proportion to its upper beak. At the same time, leaving anatomy to one side, the phrase ‘with its jaw projecting’ could also describe the foolish cormorant braving the waves on the herald rock. In this context we suggest that ‘the line may be translated ‘the cormorant, foolishly, with its jaw

thrust forwards [meets the oncoming wave]’. Here again we are in Theophrastan territory with the cormorant’s head boldly raised<sup>53</sup>.

As we have seen, the binary nature of Aratus’ discourse allows the crow’s behaviour to be expressed through the same text as that employed of the cormorant. We would therefore expect the crow to behave in some manner that involves the projection of its jaws. The crow’s jaw in itself does not protrude but the bird does thrust forward its beak in an aggressive manner when cawing or even when ‘bleating’ or ‘gargling’ along the water’s edge. Thus one may translate the line as follows: ‘the chattering crow with its bill thrust forwards strutted on the shore as the wave/tide retreated’.

Lastly the phrase ‘ἤϊόνι προυχούση’ can be construed as a reference to a phenomenon that derives from a quite different sphere of activity, namely the beaching procedure used by ancient ships as they come to land. This interpretation takes wing from the fact that Aratus himself ascribes an unprecedented meaning to the word ‘κορώνη’ at line 345 (‘ἀλλ’ ὄπιθεν φέρεται τετραμμένη, οἶα καὶ αὐταὶ / νῆες, ὅτ’ ἤδη ναῦται ἐπιστρέψωσι κορώνην / ὄρμον ἔσερχόμενοι.’: ‘but [the Argo] turned round rushes backwards just as even real ships do when on a sudden the sailors wrench round the *stern* as they are entering the harbour’). Here Aratus has been explaining that the constellation Argo is represented in the sky as beaching, a procedure which in the Greek world was carried out with the ship’s stern facing the beach. It is quite possible to translate lines 949-950 so as to supplement the picture given in the earlier passage viz: ‘the heavily creaking stern struck down into the ground next to the projecting promontory (i.e. on the beach of a cove) or along the projecting beach (‘on an ‘αἰγιαλος’) as the wave came in’. The sense of ‘χέρσω ὑπέτυψε’ (‘struck down into the dry land’) is suggestive of a pebbly beach which is scored heavily by the speed and momentum of the ship. It very closely echoes the verb in the original passage at 347 (‘παλιρροθίη δὲ καθάπτεται ἠπείροιο’; ‘rushing backwards it bites into the dry land’). Moreover the helmsman clearly times the ship’s arrival on the beach to coincide with the arrival of a wave which will add momentum and sweep the ship up onto the shore. Lastly the heavily creaking stern will be under much strain and stress as it ploughs over the waves as they begin to form, no doubt rising and falling with peaks and troughs. We derive the meaning ‘heavily creaking’ as applied to the stern from our contention that the chiasmic structure of this entire passage is in part intended to throw together the first word ‘λακέρυζα’ (949) with the last nexus ‘παχέα κρώζουσα’ (953). The underlying message is that the latter glosses the former. We will see later how a passage in Babirius confirms the meaning of ‘creaking’ as a nuance of ‘κρώζουσα’. Meanwhile Hesychius defines compounds of ‘παχέα’ in terms of the word ‘ἄδρος’ meaning ‘thickly’ in the sense of ‘bulkily’. On the other hand, a case can be made in favour of the more dramatic adverbs ‘violently’ ‘strongly’.

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<sup>53</sup> Theophrastus also mentions that the cormorant ‘plunges’ into water using the same verb (‘κολυμβῶσα’) as that used by Aratus in line 952 (‘κολυμβῆν’). This is further evidence of Aratus’ debt to Theophrastus.

Cicero:

‘Fuscaque non numquam cursans per litora cornix / caput demersit fluctum cervice recepit’  
 ‘The hoarse crow, constantly traversing the beach, plunged his head downwards and received a wave over his neck’,<sup>54</sup>

The time has come to examine Cicero’s passage on the ‘cornix’ in more detail. On the face of it, Cicero is translating Aratus’ words ‘ἢ πολλὰ στρέφεται παρ’ ὕδωρ’ (‘or constantly the hoarse crow goes hurriedly up and down along the waterline’). The verb ‘στρέφεται’ and the participle ‘cursans’ both mean ‘going to and fro’ whilst ‘παρ’ ὕδωρ’ is translated by ‘per litora’. The adverbial *πολλὰ* can be considered hyperbolically translated by Cicero if we invert his words ‘non numquam’ as ‘numquam non’ (‘always’). Here the crow is incessantly, and at some speed, scouring the beach as we have described earlier<sup>55</sup>. The competition for tide-borne titbits is likely to be intense and ‘time and tide wait for no man’. Yet the received order of ‘non numquam’ should properly be translated as ‘occasionally’ which would make the cormorant a more appropriate subject of the sentence. The cormorant rarely pace along the shore but this does happen (‘[the cormorant] ... walks rarely for more than a few paces’)<sup>56</sup>.

Thus we have grounds for arguing that Cicero too is anxious to exploit the ancient contamination of cormorant and crow through the word ‘κορώνη’. We return now to ‘fusca’ the adjective which seems to translate the ubiquitous *λακέρυζα* but which more closely relates to ‘παχέα κρώζουσα’ given the close, chiasmic equation between the elements of ‘*πολλὰ στρέφεται παρ’ ὕδωρ*’ and ‘*non numquam per litora cursans*’. The ‘thick croaking’ of Aratus’, ‘παχέα κρώζουσα’ can only be evoked by Cicero’s ‘fusca’. For Cicero himself elsewhere uses the word ‘fusca’ in comparing a rough voice with one that is melodious and clear (‘vocis genera permulta, canorum fuscum’)<sup>57</sup>. Suetonius describes the voice of the emperor (and singer) Nero as a ‘fusca’.<sup>58</sup> More subversively, by the sound of the short syllables of (‘fusCAQUE’), Cicero seems to confirm onomatopoeically that he has the hoarse cawing of the crow in mind. The letters ‘qu’ are equivalent to the letter ‘c’ in Latin, such that the word ‘CACE’ can be extracted from the phrase ‘fuscaque’. The sound of this word evokes the crow’s asperity of tone. In Turkish and Azeri, the onomatopoeic term for the crow is ‘karga’. In Swedish, the crow is ‘Kraka’. Thus ‘fuscaque’, through its meaning and sound, expresses a very characteristic feature of the crow’s voice, namely its asperity. The picture becomes even clearer if we consider two other alternative meanings of the adjective ‘fusca’, namely ‘grey’ and ‘black’, the colors that represent the Hooded Crow. In the poem *Dirae*, the epithet ‘fusca’ describes the appearance of ash (‘... fuscum cinerem canis exhauriat undis’: 60). Meanwhile Aristophanes tells us that the crows in Athens are ‘grey’ (‘πολιαί τε κορώναι’)<sup>59</sup>. However, ‘fusca’ also means ‘black’. In a passage of an unknown tragedian the hair of the

<sup>54</sup> Cicero *Prognostica* 4.8-9

<sup>55</sup> See [http://littleternconservation.blogspot.co.uk/2012\\_06\\_01\\_archive.html](http://littleternconservation.blogspot.co.uk/2012_06_01_archive.html) ‘The Hooded Crows became a constant nuisance over the next two days, repeatedly making sorties onto the beach to sift through the tideline ... No matter how much we scared them off they just kept coming back’.

<sup>56</sup> Witherby H.F et al. (1943-1944) *The Handbook of British Birds* vol.4 p.3.

<sup>57</sup> *De Natura Deorum* 2.94

<sup>58</sup> Suetonius *Life of Nero* 20.1

<sup>59</sup> *Birds* 967

goddess Night must be thought to be black for obvious reasons ('fuscis ... crinibus')<sup>60</sup>. Thus in a single word, Cicero has evoked both the colors and the sound of the Hooded Crow. Meanwhile, the fact that 'fusca' also means 'black' takes us back to the extracted word 'CACE'. We notice that 'cace' if translated into Greek produces the word 'κακη' which means *inter alia* 'black'. In the Odyssey at 13.435, Athena, in order that Odysseus be unrecognisable when he returns to Ithaca, dresses him in clothes that are filthy and stained with soot. The adjective given to this smoke is 'κακος'. It is impossible not to conclude that in this context 'κακος' means 'black'<sup>61</sup>.

We are encouraged to go deeper into the realignment of the text. The letters remaining from 'fuscaque' after '-caque' is removed are 'fus'. Transliterated into Greek, these letters produce the word 'φους' which is a variant of the word 'ὄσφος' meaning 'the lumbar area of the body'. In other words 'fuscaque' when read with Greek eyes ('φους κακη') produces the meaning of 'sooty black lower back' a phrase that perfectly describes the matt black colour of the lower back of the Hooded Crow. The crow's head is of a more lustrous tone of black. Of course this black colour is actually derived from the Hooded Crow's wings which, when at rest, lend their colour to the bird's lumbar area.

Thus Cicero has managed to describe the plumage of the Hooded Crow in detail and, *ipso facto*, seems to have confirmed the identity of the Aratean bird that behaves in a similar way (953). At the same time, by painting for us the lumbar area of the crow, Cicero complements the subtextual description of Aratus' crow as 'dyed like sand' from the head down ('ποτ' αμοῖο ἐβάψατο'). This dove-tailing of aspects of the crows' plumage serves to convince one that such subtextual readings are intended. The two authors are in league with one another, each supplementing the other's efforts. Meanwhile, a useful summary of the crow's feeding habits is given by Aristotle, who informs that Hooded Crows are omnivorous and live not only in cities but also on the coastal margins, feeding off the titbits cast ashore by the waves<sup>62</sup>. This confirms our findings that the crows comb the beaches to and fro foraging on the ebbing tide as we see contemporary crows do. We note how the crow, changes direction repeatedly as another wave throws further temptation in its path. This habit is perfectly evoked by our authors through 'πολλά στρέφεται παρ' ὕδωρ' and 'non numquam per litora cursans'.

But nothing is quite as it seems. The sound of a crow feeding along the seashore is not generally that of a caw. In fact, it produces a gargle, or creaking, or clicking sound very similar to that of the female cormorant when mating in trees or on sandy-spits or on promontories. Thus 'fusca' as meaning 'hoarse' no longer applies in this context. Indeed although the colour tones of black and grey continue to identify the cornix as a 'crow' the word 'fusca' can also be persuaded to produce a meaning that evokes the cormorant.

In his speech Pro Sestio (19), Cicero uses the word 'fusca' when describing the clothing of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus as darker than the purple worn by the people of Rome. It seems then that the colour of these clothes must be approaching a deep tan. Meanwhile the nuance of 'bronze' is an important part of the lexical profile of the word 'fusca'. Tibullus

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<sup>60</sup> Uncertain Fragments of Roman Tragedians p.132. See also Seneca *Quaestiones Naturales* 2.40.3 ('fulmen ... quod aut urit aut fuscet').

<sup>61</sup> Hesychius also mentions a bird called 'κακα'

<sup>62</sup> *Historia Animalium* 593b12-14

characterizes Asiatic populations, their skin darkened by exposure to the sun, by the same epithet. Ovid also uses the cognate verb when advising his readers to take physical exercise in the Campus Martius in order to get a tan<sup>63</sup>. Our insistence on this point is deliberate. For the cormorant, although considered black in color, is tinged with bronze and even shades of purple. So the word 'fusca' has the capacity to evoke the colours of both a crow (black, grey) and a cormorant (black, bronze)<sup>64</sup>.

Furthermore, although the word 'cornix' ('crow') does not commonly mean 'cormorant' (unlike the polysemantic Greek word 'kōrone'), there is a link between 'cornix' and 'cormorant', and it is a link Cicero would like to strengthen. Aristotle refers to the cormorant using the word 'korax'. But in Greek, 'korax' is also the term for a 'crow. Meanwhile in Latin, the terms for 'raven' and 'crow' ('corvus' and 'cornix') are often confused by Roman authors, indicating that the corvids are a rather flexible category of bird when it comes to their terms. Lastly, Hesychius, the Greek grammarian, also identifies 'korax' ('cormorant') with 'kōrone'. Cicero now takes this confusion a stage further. In using 'fusca' with its nuance of 'bronze', Cicero gives it to be understood that 'cornix fusca' can be interpreted as a 'brown cormorant'<sup>65</sup>. On the other hand, if 'fusca' means 'black, then the 'fusca cornix' could also refer to the 'all-black crow' (familiar today to dwellers in such countries as England). This bird could have been known to Cicero, for Pliny later notes the presence of a black crow in Rome (NH 10.60). And last but not least, the 'fusca cornix' could also evoke the raven, given the confusion between the crow and the all-black raven mentioned above. In view of these connections and because the crow and the cormorant are already interconnected in Greek with the word 'kōrone', an attempt at full-scale contamination seems to have been in Cicero's sights. Through the different shades of colour articulated by 'fusca' Cicero tries to reflect and encourage the tendency of the words for crow, raven, and cormorant, to converge and become further intertwined with each other. In fact, the verbal relationship between 'cormorant' and the other two birds (the crow and the raven) is the glue that links the crow to the raven as this diagram demonstrates:

[Latin] CORVUS (RAVEN) =	CORNIX (CROW) CORVUS aquaticus [Pliny 11.30] <sup>66</sup> [CORMORANT]
[Greek] KORAX (RAVEN) =	[KORAX] CORMORANT [KÒRONE] = KÒRONE [CROW]

As we have seen the cormorant too paces along the shore occasionally ('non numquam'). However its receipt of a wave on its neck cannot be understood literally as it can in the case of the crow at its ablutions. The way ahead here passes through the meanings of the word 'fluctus'. The noun bears an unusual meaning attributed to it by Lucretius, namely a 'sinuous motion of the body'. Lucretius was an exact contemporary of Cicero's. This shade of

<sup>63</sup> Ovid *Artes Amatoriae* 1.513: *fuscentur corpora Campo?*

<sup>64</sup> See also Ovid *Artes Amatoriae* 2.657 ('matt black'); Martial 2.40.6 ('very deep red'); Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2.658 ('light grey')

<sup>65</sup> See BWP 1 p.200 [on cormorants]: 'bronze-brown wing coverts' and tail 'glossed bronze'; Nelson, J.B (2005) *Cormorants and their Relatives* p.443: the sheen of the tail is purple but the wings of the bird are more 'bronze'. The best photograph of the colours of the cormorant is to be found at <http://seabird.wikispaces.com/Great+Cormorant>. The colour shade of 'purple-bronze' would seem to capture the cormorant's colours most succinctly.

<sup>66</sup> According to Pliny, the Alps were the habitat of the 'corvus aquaticus' (NH 10.133). The bird's baldness is also noted (11.130). Pliny here implies knowledge of the etymology of the Greek word for 'cormorant' namely *phalacrocorax* ('bald-raven'). This description may allude to the white plumage that appears around the male's head during the mating season.

meaning describes a woman making her body undulate repeatedly during love-making as though her frame were boneless. This nuance now finds a new home in Cicero's description of the 'cornix'. If Cicero's crow receives not an ocean wave but a sinuous body motion on his neck, then the bird's neck will be transformed into the serpentine, sinuous shape of the cormorant's neck. Thus Cicero exploits and develops Lucretius' recent enrichment of the Latin language in order to maintain the binary motion of the narrative which switches from crow to cormorant almost like the motion of a side-stepping water-snake. The crow loses its noticeably stiff neck and receives a highly flexible cormorant's neck. At the same time, the word 'fluctus' also metamorphoses. Not only does this 'wave' cease to be merely concave, it adds a double curve to its profile. Meanwhile, through this extension of meaning, the validity of the new nuance proposed by Lucretius ('a sinuous body movement') is reinforced. At the subtext level, a literary campaign is being conducted by Cicero in support the innovation of his colleague Lucretius<sup>67</sup>. And the way the different shades of meaning within a single word oscillate through Cicero's text is now symbolized by the image of 'a serpentine wave', this being a (fresh) nuance that also participates in the same oscillation.

However, the word 'kōrone' remains at the core of the textual matrix. In principle, 'kōrone' (as also in the case of 'κοράξ') can mean any curved object from the sinuous string-holders on the ends of a bow to the curved stern of a ship, and on to the aphlaston attached to the ship's stern, and including a garland or crown. Sophron the comic poet uses the word 'kōrone' when he speaks of garlanded people ('ten kōronen anaduomenous': fragments 163). According to Greek vase paintings, the garland presented to the winning athletes in the ancient games was oval but open at the end. It was placed around the neck of the recipient. Its convexity evokes a wave on the point of breaking.

As we shall see, Cicero is keenly aware of the similarities between a falling 'wave' and a 'neck garland', and is anxious to associate them in a cryptic but permanent fashion. If we reconfigure the line in question by ascribing the meaning of 'garland' to 'fluctus', the sentence is suddenly able to articulate the reception of a crown to the neck. We translate as follows: the crow (or 'kōrone') lowered its head ('demersit caput') and received a crown over his neck ('et fluctum cervice recepit'). It is as though the crow (which is also 'kōrone' in Greek) is a victor at the Olympic Games (Pliny 15.19). Whilst receiving garlands is also part of the routine of a symposium ('drinking party': 'Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 15.19) in general the formal and ceremonial gesture of bending to receive the wreath conveys the impression (as it still does today) of an athlete rather than a symposiast. Certainly we know from Tibullus ('et capite et collo mollia sarta gerat'; 'let him [the Genius Natalis] sport soft garlands both on his head and neck': 1.7.52) and from Cicero himself (In Verrem 5.27) that garlands were worn not only on the head but also on the neck. The Greek ceramic record supports this argument. In fact, there is a special term for a neck crown, namely 'hypothumis'.

In sum, Cicero is attempting to exploit and enrich the semantic fertility of the words 'kōrone' and 'fluctus'. His procedure was most likely the following: he translates lines 949-950 of Aratus, without referring either to Theophrastus or to what we presume to be Pliny's sources (18.363). Cicero is more interested in his own semantic agenda. He creates a new context for a recently-coined, alternative interpretation of the word 'fluctus' ('sinuous form of

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<sup>67</sup> It is possible that Cicero's use of 'fluctus' to mean 'a sinuous body shape [of the neck]' inspired Lucretius' application of the word to a female body. We cannot be sure who was writing first.

the body') which is found in Lucretius. Cicero hopes that using this nuance to evoke the cormorant's sinuous throat will encourage not only a more general acceptance of the word 'fluctus', as meaning 'sinuous body form' but also the acceptance of the word 'cornix' as a term for the cormorant. Meanwhile, Cicero presents the physical contours of the neck garland and wave as being the same (an oval open at one end). In principle, on Cicero's logic, the wave and neck garland have the right to be considered synonyms both of which will fall under the general 'kōrone' category. Cicero argues his opinion through a reorganization of the line which, once 'fluctus' is considered a 'garland', produces a narrative that comes straight from the medal ceremony of the modern Olympic games. In fact, it is difficult to set a limit to this versatility. When the winner leans to receive the garland, their neck is arched. Meanwhile when the horse arches its neck it is described as 'kōrones' in Greek. Moreover, the word 'kōrone' also refers to a 'metaphorical garland' in the sense that it articulates the culmination of an art festival. Cicero can be read as granting himself a garland as a sign that his 'kōrone' festival is crowned with success. The garland marks Cicero's triumph in the ancient 'poetic games'.

According to Cicero, the use of words in various ways is a mark of the perfect orator ('continenter unum verbum non in eadem sententia ponitur': Orator 39.135). But the poets had even more licence. At DLL 9.5, Varro Cicero's contemporary, notes that the individual poet 'has the power to cross the lines that separate one field of activity from another, with impunity'. Referring to grammar, Varro considers that the poet has the right to interpret the rules on word 'declination' ('evolution') with more freedom than the orator (DLL 9.115). In fact Varro admits that it is the duty of poets to accustom people's ears to new forms of words, forms that the world of officialdom rejects. Varro summarizes his perspective when he says that 'our way of expressing is in continuous flux' (DLL 9.17). These views show that ancient poetry was licensed to introduce double meanings and new forms to prevent the language from ossifying in the mouths of politicians. Cicero's reconfiguration of the word 'fluctus' shows that the author took seriously his responsibilities as a poet viz-a-viz the Latin Language.

In sum, the cormorant seems to have infiltrated line IV.8 of Cicero's couplet. This anticipates the crow metamorphosing into a cormorant in IV.9. It is time to see if Aratus had himself contaminated the crow with the cormorant in his last line on the subject. As we have seen, in his passage, Aratus adopts a chiasmic structure in which the first and last descriptive terms ('λακέρυζα' and 'παχέα κρώζουσα') refer to a bird's voice<sup>68</sup>. The chiasmus confirms that the two words are closely related, an aspect of the line that the superficial meanings of 'croaking' and 'croaking hoarsely' confirm. However, we have noted the clear fingerprint left by Nausicaa's handmaidens on the first member of the chiasm, 'λακέρυζα', which now articulates the meaning 'chattering' (Hesychius). In light of this, the participle 'κρώζουσα' and the adverb 'παχέα' should be examined more in detail to see if they can be persuaded to express the notion of loquacity. In fact, as we have seen, the crow produces a repetitive clicking sound when it walks frantically up and down the beach. It does not croak or caw, except in moments when it is not engaged in the search for tide-borne scraps. On the other

<sup>68</sup> The chiasmus: ἦ που καὶ λακέρυζα παρ' ἡϊόνι προουόση / χείματος ἐρχομένου χέρσῳι ὑπέτυψε κορώνη, ἦ που καὶ ποταμοῖο ἐβάνατο μέγρι παρ' ἄκρουσ / ὤμουσ ἐκ κεφαλῆσ, ἦ καὶ μάλα πᾶσα χολυμβᾶι, ἦ πολλὰ στρέφεται παρ' ὕδωρ παχέα κρώζουσα.



hand, the female cormorant produces a very similar creaking sound when mating on promontories and sand-spits.

The analysis of the line starts with the verb 'κρώζω' which means more than simply 'croak' or 'caw'. In a story of Babirius a carter asks the cart why he keeps 'creaking'. The verb used in the Greek text is 'κρώζω'. Meanwhile the adverb 'παχέα' is used by Longinus to suggest the '[lengthy] extent' of a periphrasis. In the same vein, the adverb expresses a life lived 'sumptuously'. Thus the phrase 'παχέα κρώζουσα' may mean 'creaking greatly', a conception that on the one hand evokes the 'babbling' nuance of 'λακέρυζα' but also suggests the character of the voice, which is composed of a string of sounds or clicks, quite different from a caw. Moreover 'παχέα' has other nuances. In 'De Audibilibus', Aristotle says that voices that are 'παχέαι' are those produced by a man, when his breath comes out 'abundantly and all at once'. Aristotle compares such a voice to the sound produced by an 'aulos teleios' (a kind of bass clarinet) when all the holes are closed. The same author says that if the man concerned speaks after vomiting or when his neck hurts, the same sound is produced. This description is very accessible but difficult to translate. In fact, the word 'bronchophonic' would express the timbre of the voice more accurately than terms such as 'thick' or 'guttural'. Nevertheless, 'guttural' encapsulates the stamp of the cormorant's voice when the female declares herself ready for mating. Its sound is composed of a series of notes, constituting a guttural creaking'. And the sound of the crow when it forages along the strand can be described in the same terms. The impression one has is that the crow is expressing pleasure.

On the basis of the chiasmus linking lines 949 to 953, it can be argued that the phrase 'παχέα κρώζουσα' complements 'λακέρυζα' not only in the sense that it evokes the 'abundance' of sounds or words produced by the cormorant and Nausicaa's handmaidens ('παχέα' = 'abundantly and all at once') but also clarifies the timbre and the nature of the voices of crow and cormorant<sup>69</sup>. Yet even if this phrase suggests as much the presence of the cormorant as the crow in line 953, nevertheless, the rest of the line ('or it often walks along the water') seems to evoke the scavenging crow and only the crow. The cormorant rarely walks on the beach and as far as we know we do not produce sounds there. On the other hand, the crow produces the sound derived above from 'παχέα κρώζουσα' precisely when it forages along the strand.

We now take an unprecedented step<sup>70</sup>. The basic meaning of the verb 'στρέφεται' ('strephtetai') is 'rotate' or 'twist'. Until now, we have understood the verb in the Middle Voice ('walks up and down'). But if we take the word literally and interpret the Middle as a Passive, then, in isolation, the phrase 'ἢ πολλὰ στρέφεται' would mean 'ἢ πολλὰ is turned around'.<sup>71</sup> In other words, the phrase becomes an explanatory annotation or gloss, not entered by a scribe in the margin of the text, but existing within the text as part of the author's metapoetical discourse. If we treat 'ἢ πολλὰ στρέφεται' as a set of instructions and proceed to reverse the letters of 'ἢ πολλὰ' we uncover the nexus 'ἀλλ' ὅπη'. Such a phrase is highly in the manner of

<sup>69</sup> Thus we may suppose 'παχέα κρώζουσα' serves to gloss the speech of the girls in Odyssey 5. Their 'ordering' of each other will be simultaneous and wordy as well as sounding grumpy

<sup>70</sup> The reversal of words (palindromes) is we suggest a highly important and very widespread aspect of Aratus' art. Cicero recognises this by intimating that 'non numquam' should be reversed in order. This partial palindrome signals to the reader the more sophisticated wordplay of Aratus on the same adverbial clause ('ἢ πολλὰ', - 'ἀλλ' ὅπη')

<sup>71</sup> We read πολλὰ instead of πολλή

Aratus. The author uses the conjunction ‘ἀλλά’ often, and in all cases without exception, the word suffers elision, as here. Out of the 29 instances contained in the author’s *Phaenomena*, 20 initiate their respective line. Furthermore, the participial word ‘στρέφομενα’ is considered to mean ‘words that are mutually contradictory at the same time’ (Dionysos of Halicarnassus *Ars Rhetorica* 8.15). The least we can say therefore is that the verb ‘strephtetai’ has the potential to produce dual and polarised meanings.

The phrase ‘ἀλλ’ ὅπη’ means (a) ‘but in what direction?’ or (b) ‘but in what way?’ or (c) ‘but from where’ (Iliad 22.321; Herodotus 5.87.2). In fact, the variant ‘ὅπα’ is found in Aeschylus (*Agamemnon* 1532), where it is dependent on a cognate of the same verb as in Aratus 953 (‘ἀμηχανῶ ... ὅπα τρόπωμαι’; ‘I am trapped, I am completely unsure where to go’). In essence, Aratus’s text puts questions relating to the birds’ behaviour (‘where, or in what direction, or how does it twist’). These questions are designed to cast doubt on our handling of the verb in the regular process of construing. The questions also destabilise our confidence in the senses in which the subject (‘κορώνη’) governs the verb. In other words, we are no longer sure that the ‘κορώνη’ is ‘walking up and down’ (‘in what direction does it move?’), nor are we sure the scene is the ‘along the water’s edge’ (‘where?’), nor are we certain how the bird ‘turns’ (‘how?’). We have used the verb ‘στρέφεται’ already in an alternative sense of ‘it is turned around’ in order that the sentence could ask us the relevant questions. This reassures us that we have not turned into a critical cul-de-sac. To explore the further possibilities of ‘στρέφεται’ we need to start with the meaning of the verb (‘cum’= ‘how’). If the text treats of not only the crow but also the cormorant (as we have argued above), then the meaning ‘walk up and down’ becomes unhelpful to the cormorant because this bird only takes a few steps on land. On the other hand, there is a close bond between the cormorant female and the verb ‘twist’ (‘στρέφεται’). The female twists her head in several ways and in several directions. When ready to mate, she rotates her head back and forth by 180 degrees vertically. In a different phase of the mating ritual, the female rotates her head and right-left, also 180 degrees, in a vertical plane at 90 degrees to the ‘front-to-back’ rotation. This constitutes our answer to (a) above. The two movements of the head in two vertical planes constitute the ‘directions’ in which the female cormorant is ‘turning’. However the female will only produce the bronchial gargle which is perfectly expressed by the phrase ‘παχέα κρώζουσα’ (‘creaking gutturally’) when she is nodding backwards and forwards<sup>72</sup>. During the side-to-side phase she is silent. Thus ‘Aratus’ questions are intended to challenge the reader’s powers of observation and research. It is not enough to answer his questions in isolation from the rest of the sentence. The questions, themselves metapoetically arrived at, are a means of eliciting the reader’s understanding of the metapoetics of the work. Returning to the passage itself, clearly the received text must also correspond to our findings based on the reversed text. The repeated front-to-back-motion of the female’s neck and head

<sup>72</sup> See *The Condor* May 1942 vol 44 Nr 3 p.99 ‘In the second part of [the cormorant’s] display analogous to the advertising of penicillutus, Carbo [the Great Cormorant] throws the head backward but the bill instead of pointing upward is directed toward the tail. Then the head is brought slowly forward and back to the same position repeatedly; at this time the bird utters gurgling sounds (‘idas Gurgeln’) (Kortlandt, 1940: 423). In the third part (‘dritte Phase’) the head and neck are stretched forward and silently swung from side to side’ ... ‘the female has a particular utterance employed only in the breeding season’ ... ‘One of these notes was undoubtedly that which Lewis (1929:61) calls ‘the ‘cane-tube’ croaking or rattling’ because ‘it sounds like a rather rapid series of clicks, made in a hollow cylinder of cane or bamboo. It forms part of the male’s courtship address, but is also used in other ways during the nesting season.’ P. 103 ‘In P. carbo there is an important sex difference in voice’ <http://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/condor/v044n03/p0085-p0104.pdf>

is expressed by the adverbial ‘πολλὰ’. Meanwhile the answer to (b) above has already been provided in the sense that the ‘turning’ is engineered by the female’s head<sup>73</sup>. One would have expected the turning to be done by the creature as a whole. There remains only the third question (c), namely ‘where’. Although the action seems to take place ‘next to water’ or ‘across water’ (‘παρ’ ὕδωρ’), the definition of ‘water’ is problematical. Aratus has discussed the habitats and favourite haunts of the bird on the river in previous lines. That is, ‘water’ can mean either ‘river’ or ‘sea’. In any case, a female twisting in the way described above may be near a Homeric sandbar with Nausicaa’s handmaidens or on a rocky promontory. In any case, ‘παρ’ ὕδωρ’ (‘along the water’) evokes a longer stretch of territory where a flock of cormorants may conduct their mating rituals, scattered along the shore.

Nevertheless, the word ‘παρ[α]’ also means ‘like’ or ‘as a parody of’, and this gives us the vital clue. The backwards and forwards motion of the female’s head is meant to somehow imitate the motion of ‘water’ (‘παρ’ ὕδωρ’ = ‘like water’). In fact in the actions and sounds of the female cormorant we are being treated here to a representation of the way waves break on the shore. First of all there is the repetitive arrival of wave after wave represented by the regularity of the female’s ‘performance’. Meanwhile, the first phase of the movement, during which the cormorant’s head rises to the vertical, is slow to unfold. As the head reaches its acme, the movement suddenly accelerates. In the same way a wave gathers itself slowly only to topple quickly once the effect of gravity is brought to bear on its culmination. The cormorant’s head falls from the vertical at speed and flops backwards onto its soft back, exactly as a wave falls onto an absorbent, sandy beach. Meanwhile, the bird’s gargle is synchronised with the impact of its head on the back. The fall of the head is accompanied by a final phase of gargling which continues for a few more seconds after impact, reflecting the sound of the dispersing waters. To use an image from music, the sounds of the wave and of the cormorant fade away ‘perdendosi’ or ‘al niente’. Simultaneously the gray feathers around the female head mimic the foaming surf produced by the wave as it falls on the beach. In other words, the behaviour of the female closely parallels the fall of a regiment of waves. Thus a line that at first seemed to have nothing to say about the cormorant, and which seemed to relate exclusively to the crow, has metamorphosed into an extremely cryptic but accurate commentary on the behaviour of the cormorant<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The question ‘how’ relates to the verb (‘in what way does it turn?’)

<sup>74</sup> The successors of Aratus accentuate both the loquacity of the crow (Pliny *NH* 10.30 ‘est inauspicata garrulitatis’; Ovid *Met.* 2.547-548 ‘garrula ... cornix’; *Fasti* 2.89 ‘loquax ... cornix’) and its shamelessness (Virgil *Georgice* 1.388 ‘cornix ... improba’; Avienus *Aratea* 1704 ‘improba ... cornix’), and its croaking (Lucretius *DRN* 6.751-752 ‘raucae cornices’; Avienus *Aratea* 1705 ‘guttare ... rauco’). According to Hesychius, the adjective ‘λακέρυζα’ cobbles all these nuances. For the vituperative crow of Apollonius Rhodius, see above (‘κορώνη λακέρυζα’).

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