

Wrapped in Grief: Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome in Homer, the Homeric Hymns, and Aratus

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Abstract: *It is our perception that such 'modern' medical conditions as Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome existed in ancient times. We propose to examine the treatment of PTSS in Homer and Homer-inspired Literature. The heroes of the Iliad, including Achilles and Odysseus, will be seen to have suffered at least as much as the rank and file, amongst whom the crew of Odysseus' ship must be accounted the most afflicted. However, in discussing the symptoms of this condition peripheral aspects of the text will inevitably fight for our attention. These include possible emendations, narratological and factual misunderstandings, and etymological undercurrents. There is too much 'going on' in Homer for a critic to be rigidly monothematic.*

Keywords: *Achilles; rowing; crew; Post-Traumatic; Odysseus; emendations; smoke; Cyclops; Peuce; Leuce;*

Introduction

This extended article sets out to examine a particular feature of the behaviour of sailors in the works of Homer and his literary successors. In these authors, ships' crews betray a tendency to retreat into a world of physical, mental, and emotional disengagement in the face of psychological trauma. The scope of our investigation will be restricted to a number of episodes in Homer's *Odyssey*, the Homeric Hymn to Apollo. Whilst this phenomenon is of interest from a medico-clinical point of view, our attention will also focus upon the literary aspects of these episodes. In particular, we will be suggesting that Homer's epics carry a plethora of messages, themes, and narratives that can only be accessed by investigating the text's subtextuality.

1. The Homeric Hymn to Apollo 401-406; Homer *Odyssey* 10.53-54

We begin with a *recusatio*². In *Odyssey* 8, Odysseus is repeatedly overcome with emotion as he listens to Demodocus, the Phaeacian minstrel, relating the story of Odysseus' own disagreement with Achilles (8.82f). The hero uses his purple cloak to cover his head and face, thereby concealing his tears from the Phaeacian court. This episode illustrates the power of song over the constraining effects of social 'embarrassment' ('*aidos*'). A similar explanation may be advanced to excuse Penelope's reaction to Phemios' recital (*Odyssey* 1) and Telemachus' nostalgia for his father which however does not escape Menelaos (*Od.*4.109). These episodes, we make it clear, are not the focus of our investigation. Instead, our thesis will consider a particular syndrome suffered by individuals and crews at sea.

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² An apology for failing to treat a theme that one might be expected to treat.

Our first example comes from the Homeric Hymn to Apollo:

‘έν πόντῳ δ’ ἐπόρουσε δέμας δελφῖνι ἐοικῶς
 νηὶ θοῆ καὶ κεῖτο πέλωρ μέγα τε δεινόν τε:
 τῶν δ’ οὔτις κατὰ θυμὸν ἐπεφράσαθ’ ὥστε νοῆσαι
 [ἐκβάλλειν δ’ ἔθελον δελφῖν’ : ὁ δὲ νῆα μέλαιναν] [402a]
 πάντοσ’ ἀνασσείσασκε, τίνασσε δὲ νῆια δοῦρα.
 οἱ δ’ ἀκέων ἐνὶ νηὶ καθήατο δειμαίνοντες’ Homeric Hymn to Apollo 400-404

‘Out at sea, [Apollo] in the shape of a dolphin, sprang upon the swift ship, and lay there, a monster [or ‘portent’] both great and fearsome. None of them [i.e. the crew] took thought in their minds so as to understand [and they wanted to eject the dolphin; but] it began shaking [the black ship] to and fro, and made the ship’s planks quiver. But they sat inside the ship in fearful silence’.

Apollo, disguised as a dolphin, springs upon a Cretan ship. The fish-cum-god lies prone on the ship’s deck, as line 416 later confirms³. Commentators have been so dissatisfied with the flow of the argument in this passage that some have even posited a lacuna (402a). However a minor alteration will alleviate the awkwardness. If line 403 were inserted after 401, the dolphin could be thought to ‘begin to repeatedly shake the ship to and fro and make the ship’s planks quiver’. These actions of the monster would follow immediately upon its ‘lying on the deck’. The crew’s response to this frightening development is ‘not to ponder the matter in their minds so that they understand’ (402) but to ‘sit in the ship in fearful silence’ (404)⁴. These changes improve the natural flow of the narrative and adequately explain the reactions of the Cretan crew to events. Furthermore, to translate ‘ἐνὶ νηὶ’ as ‘on the ship’ adds nothing and indeed detracts from the fear of the men by putting them in the vicinity of the monster. They must be thought instead to have retired to the hold and to be sitting ‘inside the ship’. This explains why they do not alter the configuration of the tackle and sail⁵. As a crew they are out of commission.

The Homeric epithets attached to the ship in line 405 are far from merely decorative. The ‘hollowness’ and ‘blackness’ of the ship both objectively (‘κοίλην’) and subjectively (‘μέλαιναν’) characterise the bowels of the ship from a visual and indeed aural perspective. Eyes perceive only ‘blackness’ and sounds are ‘hollow’. Later, at Taenarum, the crew hope to be able to ‘ponder for themselves the great marvel’ and ‘to see with their own eyes’ whether the squirming dolphin will return to the sea from the ‘flat surface’ of the ‘hollow ship’ (414-416: ‘οἱ μὲν ἄρ’ ἐνθ’ ἔθελον νῆα σχεῖν ἢ δ’ ἀποβάντες / φράσσασθαι μέγα θαῦμα καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ιδέσθαι εἰ μενέει νηὸς γλαφυρῆς δαπέδοισι πέλωρον’). The ‘flat surface’ of the ship (‘δαπέδοισι’) suggests the evenness of an area of deck which, self-evidently, will be open to the sky. Meanwhile, if the men envisage having to disembark at Taenarum (‘ἀποβάντες’) in order to

³ ‘εἰ μενέει ... δαπέδοισι’

⁴ The arrival of a large fish on a ship’s deck will be surprising but not shocking. The crew are much more likely to be perturbed once the dolphin’s starts thrashing about and threatening the ship’s structural integrity, thus putting their own safety at risk. See the following blog at <http://thoughtcatalog.com/>: ‘About half way back some kind of game fish leaps out of the sea, through the cargo net and literally into the lap of the guy of the couple who wound up where I wanted to sit. Everyone is kind of amazed at first. Then the guy starts wrestling with whatever kind of fish it was. I couldn’t quite figure out what it was, it all happened kind of quick, it was about 3-4 feet long and seemed to be 40-50 lbs’.

⁵ Homeric Hymn to Apollo 405: ‘οὐδ’ οἱ γ’ ὄπλ’ ἔλυον κοίλην ἀνὰ νῆα μέλαιναν’.

view ‘with their own eyes’ what the beast does, then they cannot currently be located in the upper areas of the ship. To see ‘with one’s own eyes’ implies not to have seen hitherto. All this, along with the hint in the adjective ‘γλαφυρής’ (‘hollow’), supports the view that the crew are in the hold. At Taenarum they will have hoped to give the monster a wide berth by exiting the ship into the surf through, we suggest, a hatch in the stern⁶. Greek ships generally moored stern to shore making the stern the point of embarkation and disembarkation. Once ashore and no longer in the thrall of the object of their fear, the men will be able to take stock⁷.

The hopes of the Cretan crew however are dashed when the steering-oars refuse to obey the helmsman. The ship continues its journey with the crew in a state of stunned impassivity. This, we suggest, finds certain parallels in several passages in the *Odyssey* where Odysseus or his men cover their faces and enter a state of emotional paralysis in the hold⁸. At *Odyssey* 10.53-54 Odysseus himself ‘lies down in the ship having covered his head’⁹. A bag of winds, which Aeolus had entrusted to Odysseus, has been snatched from their dozing captain by the crew who open it believing it to contain treasure. The simultaneous release of winds of every direction causes the whole of Odysseus’ fleet to be driven from their - already visible - destination of Ithaca. Odysseus, lying prone next to the helmsman, is awakened by the rising of the winds. Helpless in the face of the gales, he is also exhausted, having spent nine days and nights with sheet in hand ‘micromanaging’ the sail on behalf of the helmsman. He retreats both within himself and within the ship not only to anaesthetise himself against the pain of toil fruitlessly expended but also to render himself blind to the events taking place outside. Once again ‘ἐνὶ νηϊ’ should be taken literally as referring to the substructures of the ship (‘in the hold’). Odysseus had contemplated suicide but instead enters a form of limbo in the hold where he is as silent as the Cretans in the Homeric Hymn (‘ἄκέων’: *Odyssey* 10.52; Homeric Hymn to Apollo 404). He is entering a state of psychological suspended animation, brought on by despair and acute sleep-deprivation.

2. A bag of wind

We should dwell on the fact that Odysseus covers his head. This sort of gesture seems to convey the hero’s ‘achos’ or ‘grief’ in the face of intolerable circumstances. A majority of such representations on Attic vases depict an Achilles who is enveloped by his himation. In these scenes he is understood to be either mourning his relinquishment of Briseis to Agamemnon, or receiving Odysseus’ embassy (*Iliad* 9), or accepting divine armour from Thetis. Indeed the name ‘Achilles’ may be thought to have a creative etymology in ‘grief’ (‘achos’) and ‘stone’ (‘laos’). ‘Stony’ grief is one which manifests itself in complete self-desensitisation and self-anaesthetisation. The example Homer uses in the *Iliad* to describe [Priam’s] grief is that of Niobe who closes in on herself, numbed by the loss of her twelve children. In the ‘stony’ mountains, we

⁶ Visible on Geometric vases are horizontal lines protruding at ninety degrees to the sterns of ships. See Morrison (1968) Plates 1d, 2d, 6a,b. We take these to be transverse planks attached to the hatch. Once the hatch is lowered onto the beach, these struts become joists which keep the hatch doors (now transformed into ramps) propped at a comfortable angle in the surf, allowing access to humans and permitting animals to be shunted on and off. The prows of these ships also have similar struts (Morrison 4b). These may or may not fulfil a similar function. See below on Taenarum as the ‘mouth of Hades’.

⁷ Clearly the helmsman will have taken his seat to try to steer the ship towards Taenarum (418). See the Homeric Hymn to Dionysos (VII) for the god’s protection of the helmsman in a very similar situation.

⁸ It should be borne in mind that the passages chosen for discussion from the *Odyssey* are all narrated by Odysseus to the Phaeacians. Thus the syndrome is seen exclusively through the hero’s eyes.

⁹ 10.53-54: ‘ἀλλ’ ... καλυψάμενος δ’ ἐνὶ νηϊ / κείμην.. ‘; ‘but having covered my head, I lay inside the ship’.

learn, ‘she, though a stone herself, gorges on the heartaches sent by the gods’ (Iliad 24.617). That Niobe, a stone, should ‘feel’ testifies to the enormity of her bereavement. In the myth Niobe’s children lie unburied because the local people have been rendered ‘stone’ themselves. The link between ‘stone’ and ‘human beings/people’ is made earlier in the same passage through their etymological propinquity. The latter mutate into the former by the agency of the gods who exploit the coincidence that ‘laos’ means not only ‘stone’ but also ‘people, soldier, individual’ (Iliad 24.617 & 611)¹⁰. Niobe and the people become petrified in a literal sense. The example of Niobe is important because in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* she becomes the prototype of the silent, stony, grief-stricken individual. In lines 911-913 (‘Πρώτιστα μὲν γὰρ ἓνα τιν’ ἄν καθῆσεν ἐγκαλύψας, / Ἀχιλλέα τιν’ ἢ Νιόβην, τὸ πρόσωπον οὐχὶ δεικνύς, / πρόσχημα τῆς τραγωδίας / γρύζοντας οὐδὲ τουτί’), Euripides berates Aeschylus for putting on stage an Achilles or a Niobe in order to lend his play a veneer of tragedy. Niobe is mute, muffled, seated, and visually unidentifiable.

This Euripidean presentation of Niobe inevitably looks back towards Homer’s own presentation of those who are ‘rapt in grief’. Across the generations there is a cultural continuum in the expression of extreme human mental anguish. Without, the individual displays, as it were, a menu of symptoms which speak volumes about the state of the inner self. The individual (‘laos’) becomes a stone (‘laos’), a featureless stone being the symbol of human unresponsiveness. In doing so the individual becomes not a metaphor for cruelty - as at Ovid *Ex Ponto* 4.12.31-32 - but rather of insensate, frozen animation.

This brings us to events on Aea in Book 10 of the *Odyssey*. Following the debacle in the land of the Laestrygonians, where the rest of the fleet is lost, Odysseus and his crew row frantically to safety¹¹. Soon we hear that they ‘sail onwards’, though by now we may wonder whether they have stopped rowing and raised the sail¹². Once out at sea, ancient ships routinely reverted to sail power as long as conditions were conducive. In any event, on arriving at Aea, the crew [‘we’]

*‘in silence are brought in/by the ship onto the promontory within a ship-sheltering harbour’*¹³.
 ‘ἔνθα δ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς νηὶ καταγαγόμεσθα σιωπῇ / ναύλοχον ἐς λιμένα ...’. Od 10.140-141

At *Odyssey* 3.178 the same verb ‘καταγόμεναι’ is used of ships ‘being brought to land’. In that passage the Passive suggests that this was achieved through the agency of the crews. Here in Book 10 however the crew is brought onto shore ‘in’ or ‘by the ship’ (‘νηὶ’). That is, the ship could be not only the receptacle ‘in which’ the men are to be located (‘νηὶ’ interpreted as a Locative) but also the vehicle ‘by which’ the men arrive on shore (‘νηὶ’ interpreted as an Instrumental Dative). Meanwhile, to be inside the ship is, we suggest, to be asleep in the hold. For the silence is deafening. The men had retreated to the hold as a response, we would suggest, to the damage caused to their collective psyche by horrors endured at the hands of the Cyclops and Laestrygonians. The crew are unconscious below deck, as the ship floats into harbour.

3. The Journey to Hades: *Odyssey* 10

¹⁰ ἔνθα λίθος περ ἐοῦσα θεῶν ἐκ κήδεα πέσσει ... λαοὺς δὲ λίθους ποίησε Κρονίων’

¹¹ Od.10.130: ‘οἱ δ’ ἄλλα πάντες ἀνέρριψαν’; ‘they all churned the sea with their rowing’.

¹² Od.10.133: ‘ἐνθεν δὲ προτέρω πλέομεν ...’; ‘from there we sailed on further ...’

¹³ Od.10.140-141.

This encourages us to reconsider Odysseus' journey to the Underworld as delineated by Circe at 10.508. With no apparent irony Circe tells Odysseus he will go across Oceanus in his ship. Although the hero later proceeds on foot along the southern bank of Oceanus, it is inconceivable that Oceanus could have been crossed by any form of transport other than ship. The wraith of Odysseus' mother Anticleia is of the same mind. At Od.11.155f she wonders how a living being, seeking Hades, could penetrate the murky dusk ('ὕπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα') and gargantuan river courses - of which Oceanus is the first - unless they had a sturdy ship. Here the role of Oceanus as the first feature of the wider Hadean landscape is made clear.

Another concern to be felt by a crew crossing Oceanus is that they will be venturing beyond the boundaries of the known world. Odysseus himself enters a state of profound despair when he is apprised by Circe of the voyage he must undertake. Debilitated by the shock, he first 'sits' on the bed before crying ('κλαῖον δ' ἐν λεχέεσσι καθήμενος,..': Od.10.497). Later, the crew, like Odysseus, on learning of their fate, first sit down 'on the spot' before giving vent to their despair ('ἐζόμενοι δὲ κατ' αὐθι γόων τίλλοντό τε χαίτας': 10.567). The muffled Achilles is routinely seated in Greek Vase Painting. Even when we learn that Odysseus' crew take their seats before setting sail from Circe's isle, we cannot be sure they have not retired to sit in the hold. Sitting is a major component of the anguished sailor's 'persona'.

Now this 'seated' motif may also articulate an etymological association between 'sitting' and 'grieving'. The word 'θρήνος' ('grief') has, practically speaking, a homonym in 'θρᾶνος' ('bench') since the latter could, in certain dialects, be written with an eta in place of the long alpha. There is also the word 'θρήνυς' which refers to the 'bench' or perhaps 'footstool' in the middle of which sits the helmsman and on the edges of which the passengers on the ikria rest their feet (Iliad 15.729). In meaning 'stool' and in also having the form 'θρᾶνυς', 'θρήνυς' is juxtaposed at Iliad 18.389-390 with 'θρονου' ('seat'). There is therefore a rich vein of morphological association between the words 'seat' and 'grief' which the painters and poets exploit.

The state of mourning into which Odysseus' crew falls may be partly attributable to the death of their colleague Elpenor. Yet the Middle Voice of 'τίλλοντό' also suggests they are 'tearing their hair for themselves'. The Active 'τίλλω' meanwhile regularly takes the Accusative of the person mourned. Circe is fully aware of the fragile mental state of the crew. Lest they forget, she secretly provides them with the required sacrificial animals before they set off for Hades at the end of Book 10. However, as we have seen, the journey itself provides for the men to 'sit' ('in the hold'?) throughout the day. Circe knows that once the ship has been configured for a wind-assisted crossing under the guidance of the helmsman, there will be nothing further for the crew to do. As in the case of Telemachos' young colleagues at the close of Odyssey 2, the crew will be redundant. The journey to the Underworld takes all day. Appropriately the crew reach Oceanus at sunset, or the 'murky dusk', below which Hades was thought to be located.

The points made in the preceding paragraph argue for the interpretation of 'νηι' at 10.508 as 'in the ship's hold' (Locative). The atmosphere on the journey to Hades is likely to be similar to that obtaining at Aeaea where silence betrays the crew's anaesthetised state below deck. In crossing Oceanus at the murky 'zophos' the men will be in the throes of a living death. This will be symbolised by their position in the 'subterranean' bowels of the ship and by their total envelopment in the 'himation' that acts as a substitute 'shroud'.

4. The Journey to the Danube Delta: Odyssey 9

The arrival of Odysseus' fleet in the land of the Cyclopes in Book 9 is equally as involuntary as the arrival on Aeaea. The obscurity of the night ('νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην') precludes any sighting of the heavy waves until the beaching is already a 'fait accompli'. The verbs for 'beaching' at Od.9.148 ('πρὶν νῆας ἐυσσέλμους ἐπικέλσαι') and Od.9.149 ('κελσάσησι δὲ νηυσὶ') may both be translated intransitively ('before the well-decked ships beached' 'the ships having beached'). This reinforces the helplessness of Odysseus when faced by the fast-flowing Danube. He does not actively beach the ship here himself. The fleet is borne by external forces onto a shifting island in like fashion to the arrival at Aeaea. To dispel Odysseus' understandable dread of a third such beaching and the ramifications it might have for Odysseus' status as ship's captain, Circe chooses her words carefully. She wishes to breathe self-confidence into the hero as he undertakes a crossing of supra-human significance. We feel therefore that rather than enjoin Odysseus to 'beach' the ship ('νῆα τε κέλσαι') Circe will wish to give him to feel that his beaching of the ship is a 'fait accompli' just as is his crossing of Oceanus. To this end Circe renders the verb 'beach' dependent on the preceding 'ἄλλ' ὀπότ' ἂν ...' clause. This requires that the verb should carry an aorist subjunctive termination, as in the case of 'περήσης. Thus our restoration of the line will be the following:

'νῆα τε κελσης αὐτοῦ ἐπ' Ὠκεανῶ βαθυδίνῃ'

Odyssey 10.511

'[and when] you have beached the ship by the deep-swirling Oceanus there [where ...]

The jerky rhythm imposed by the hiatus 'τ'αὐτοῦ ἐπ' Ὠκεανῶ ...' as it straddles the weak caesura, recreates the juddering arrival of the beached ship on the shingle. At the same time if line 511 were restored as line 509, one would have a satisfactory correspondence between 'αὐτοῦ' ('just there ...') and 'ἔνθ' ('...where'). Lines 509 and 510 would then become lines 510-511). The reconfigured and its text translation now reads as follows (Circe is addressing Odysseus):

,ἄλλ' ὀπότ' ἂν δὴ νηὶ δι' Ὠκεανοῖο περήσης, / νῆα τε κελσης αὐτοῦ ἐπ' Ὠκεανῶ βαθυδίνῃ / ἔνθ' ἄκτῃ τε λάχεια καὶ ἄλσεα Περσεφονείης / μακραί τ' αἴγειροι καὶ ἰτέαι ὠλεσίκαρποι ...

*'but when forsooth you have crossed over Oceanus in the ship and have beached the ship along the deep-swirling Oceanus just at that place where there is a 'shifting' ('λάχεια') foreland, and the groves of Persephone, along with tall poplars and willows that shed their fruit, [then go yourself to the broad home of Hades ...]'*¹⁴.

Circe here gives Odysseus specific instructions. He is to come to land on the 'shifting' shore of Peuce's north bank where the undergrowth is thickest¹⁵. Along with Zenodotus we interpret 'τε λάχεια' to be 'τ'ἐλάχεια' with 'ἐλάχεια' being cognate with the frequentative verb 'ἐλάχιζω' ('keeps wandering' or 'is unsettled'). This 'shifting shore' is a twin sister of the 'shifting' island that Odysseus and his men encountered when they first arrived in the Lower Danube. That island was narrow but long and stretched out 'across and beyond' the bay. The only other example of 'παρὲκ/παρὲξ' with the Genitive in Homer occurs at Iliad 10.349 where Odysseus and Diomedes play possum with the hapless Dolon. They lie amongst dead warriors

¹⁴ Note Aeolus' island too is unstable (10.3: 'πλωτῆ ἐνὶ νήσῳ').

¹⁵ Odysseus succeeds in beaching without further comment (Od 11.20).

‘along’ and ‘outside of’ the road (‘παρὲξ ὁδοῦ ἐν νεκύεσσι / κλινθήτην’: Il.10.349-350). Dolon takes them for fallen warriors. This suggests to us that the island in Book 9 stretches across the bay out to sea. That an island should close off a river mouth is a regular occurrence in Danubian waters as illustrated by the photograph on page 34 of ‘A Vision for the Danube Delta, Ukraine’ published under the auspices of the World Wildlife Fund. On a vastly inflated scale the same configuration of the landscape is evident in the relationship between Pylos and Sphacteria in the Greek Peloponnese.

On reaching the Danube’s ‘debouchure’, Odysseus’ fleet hurtles out to sea along the narrow but breakneck ancient Sfantu Gheorghe current. In such circumstances, it is hard to imagine his ships failing to make contact with such an obtrusive obstacle as this island. The rolling waves will be ‘tall’ or ‘rearing’ as the river comes up against the sea currents (‘κύματα μακρὰ κυλινδόμενα’: 9.147). Meanwhile the adjective applied to these same seas at Od.10.511, namely ‘deep-eddying’, is not merely a picturesque Homeric epithet. For the fleet we later learn has been tethered to the island by stern cables. This would not have been possible if the fleet had not rotated 180 degrees during the approach. It is the ‘deep’ Danubian whirlpools, generated by the clash of riverine against maritime, that leave the fleet beached with its prows facing out to sea.

We may supplement our knowledge of this island by factoring in the willow and poplar that grow on Peuce’s bank. These are the main species that colonise recently-formed Danubian islands. Moreover the island and shore are ‘wandering’ in the sense that they are the subject of lateral erosion and accretion. That is, the river islands over time can be said to ‘wander’ across the current as one side gains ground at the expense of the other. Meanwhile Strabo’s comment ‘γίνονται οὖν μεταξύ τῶν στομάτων νησίδες’ (‘to continue, there are islets that form between the mouths’) requires careful thought. Soranus at 1.119 understands the meaning of ‘μεταξὺ’ to be, practically speaking ‘within the two sides of’ (‘μεταξὺ θύρας’ = ‘in the opening of the door’). We would hold then that Strabo confirms the behaviour of islands that grow large enough to cut across the opening of bays.

The blog ‘thewhitehorsepress’ has a couple of useful comments to make about the Danube’s role in the community.: ‘Small or larger, roundish or longish, the islands of the Lower Danube – I refer specifically to this part of the Danube in the following – rise mysteriously from the smooth waters of the river ... the ‘nomadic character of the islands’, moving towards one bank or the other, making and unmaking after a huge flood and changing shape’. These observations reaffirm the chameleonic or unsettled nature of the river islands. One such island appeared in Rast, County Dolj, precisely when a port had been built at great expense. With the island blocking access to the harbour, Rast was abandoned. But river islands are a boon as well as a bane. In findig innumerable, undomesticated but docile goats, Odysseus may not realise that in Summer the locals have a habit of pasturing their goats in great numbers on these islands. The goats will be reared for their milk production. In not expecting to be hunted for their meat they provide the crews with a turkey-shoot.

At this point, a passage which intertextualises with Od. 10.140-141, throws light upon events unfolding off Circe’s island:

ἔστι δέ τις νῆσος ... Ἄστερίς, οὐ μεγάλη: λιμένες δ’ ἔνι ναύλοχοι αὐτῇ / ἀμφίδυμοι: τῇ τόν γε μένον λοχόωντες Ἄχαιοί.
Od 4.846-847

‘there is a certain island ... Asteris, not large; on it there are ship-sheltering harbours accessible to ships from both sides; there the Achaeans waited in ambush’.

This passage and line 10.140 have the word ‘ναύλοχοι’ in common. Whilst this means ‘ship-receiving’ or ‘providing a haven for ships’, its etymological force is much more thought-provoking. The verb ‘λοχωω’ means ‘lie in ambush’ and its appearance in the following line (Od. 4.847) excites the creative etymology of ‘ambushing’ which lies dormant in ‘ναύλοχοι’. ‘Ambushing’ is exactly what the suitors’ ships have been prepared for. The suitors’ stations are ‘ναύλοχοι’ in the sense of constituting a place from which ‘to ambush (-λοχοι’) ships’ (‘ναύ-’). If we now go further and apply etymological deconstruction to the harbours in Odyssey 10 (141f), we find ‘ναύλοχον’ suggestive of ‘where ships lie in bed’ (‘λοχος’ = ‘λεχος’ = ‘bed’). But, seen from a different perspective, the etymology could also suggest ‘lying in a ship-bed’. This is precisely how we would describe the Achaean crew as they drift into the harbour of Aeaia asleep in the hold. But, returning to the harbours at Od. 4.845f, if they are also ‘ἀμφίδυμοι’ that is, ‘accessible to ships from both sides’ (LJS), then they must consist of twin bays divided by a strip of land.

Now we think the ancient Asteris is the modern Assos. Its position is described by Homer as lying not only ‘between’ (Od.4.845) Ithaca and rocky Samos, but also ‘in the sea-strait’ (Od.15.29) that separates these two areas of Kephallenia. However the locations of modern Samos and Ithaca constitute major stumbling blocks in the propounding of this theory. One solution to this problem is to assume that ancient locations do not correspond to modern ones. That is, ancient Ithaca will not constitute the contemporary island of Ithaca (which is itself, we think, the ancient Doulichium). This leads us to speculate that modern Erissos may be ancient Ithaca. In the meantime, whilst the modern Sami lies to the south-east of ancient Ithaca [Erissos], the ancient manifestation of Samos could consist of the peninsula of Paliki. The ‘sea-strait’ would therefore constitute the oblong stretch of Ocean bounded on two of its sides by the northern coast of Paliki and the western edge of Erissos. Not only would Asteris lie in the midst of this strait, albeit over to one side (‘μέσση ἀλλ’), it would also lie between the land masses of Samos [Paliki] and Ithaca [Erissos] (‘μεσσηγὺς Ἰθάκης τε Σάμοιό’). The relevant passages for this joint terrestrial and maritime locating of Asteris are the following:

‘... μνηστήρων σ’ ἐπιτηδὲς ἀριστῆες λοχόωσιν /
ἐν πορθμῷ Ἰθάκης τε Σάμοιό τε παιπαλοέσσης’

... of fixed intent the noblest of the suitors lie in wait for you / in the strait between Ithaca and rocky Samos

Od.15.28-29

... ἔστι δὲ τις νῆσος μέσση ἀλλ’ πετρήεσσα, / μεσσηγὺς Ἰθάκης τε Σάμοιό τε παιπαλοέσσης, / Ἄστερις, οὐ μεγάλη: λιμένες δ’ ἐνὶ ναύλοχοι αὐτῇ / ἀμφίδυμοι: τῇ τόν γε μένον λοχῶντες Ἀχαιοί’

Od.4.845-848

... there is a certain rocky peninsula in the midst of the sea, half-way to Ithaca from stony Samos; of the name Asteris it is not large; there are harbours on it that shelter ships from both directions; there was where the Achaeans in ambush were waiting for him [Telemachus]

To identify the contemporary equivalent of the harbours at Asteris we need look no further than the isthmus that joins the peninsula of Assos to the mainland. Its hour-glass shape is the type of configuration we are seeking (Figure 3). This shape provides two harbours accessible from two different sides with a strip of land dividing them in the middle (‘ἀμφίδυμοι’). In support of this conformation, we note that Apollonius also uses the adjective ‘ἀμφίδυμοι’ of the isthmus at Cyzicus (Figure 2). The topography there is essentially the same as that obtaining at Assos.

For taking a meal in ancient times meant ‘lying down’ usually on a bed. The nights spent aboard ship at Assos will evoke the suitors’ lifestyle in Odysseus’ palace. Firstly, given that the look-outs must be able to see the object of their interest, any arrival of Telemachus will be assumed to coincide with daylight. At the same time when the look-outs raise the alarm on Asteris, the suitors must be supposed to be awake and on land. Conversely, they are certainly not expecting to have to sail out to the attack during the night. Indeed they will be carousing aboard ship until dawn. In essence ‘νάυλοχοι’ has two applications here. The days will be spent ‘lying asleep by the ships’ whilst the nights will be passed ‘reclining in the ships [to carouse]’ both the former and latter being parodies of epic contexts such as Iliad 1.472-479.

In general the suitors play games during the daylight hours (Od.1.106-112; 4.624-626; 17.174-176) though they also eat and drink wine. In the evening they feast and listen to bardic songs. Their carousing begins early as evidenced by the boar that, early in the day, is sent to Ithaca from Eumaios’ farm (Od.14.26-28). At the same time it is virtually dark when Melanthius drives a fattened goat past the civic well. There is a constant procession of sacrificial animals arriving throughout the day (Od.14.93-95; 18.305f). The suitors at one point however are strongly associated with sleep. Late one the evening they are overcome with alcohol-induced sleep due less perhaps to Athene’s machinations as to a degustation arranged by Telemachus from the wine amphorae brought forth by Eurycleia (O d.2.393-398)

5. Techniques of Ancient Seamanship

The possibility that Odysseus’ ship was moored at Aeaea can only be entertained if the phrase ‘ἐπὶ ἀκτῆς’ were to mean something such as ‘off’ or ‘by’ [the shore]. And indeed the phrase ‘ἐπὶ χέρσου’ (‘off the barren piece of land’) at Odyssey 15.495 must be the referent of Athene’s ‘πρώτην ἀκτὴν’ (Od 15.36), namely the ‘first headland [in Ithaca]’. In obeying Athene’s advice, Telemachus seeks to make land at ‘πρώτην ἀκτὴν’ via Elis and the Sharp Isles (Od.15.299). Fortunately these islands have preserved their ancient name. The main one, Oxia, lies south of Porto Scrofa. Amongst the others may be Vromonas and Makri further to the north-west. A straight line drawn from the Pharos on the northern tip of Erissos through the Sharp Isles takes us to the northern tip of modern Ithaca. Telemachos must have set course for this point before doubling the headland. As ancient Ithaca came into his view from behind modern Ithaca’s considerable mountain chain the first thing to have attracted Telemachos’ attention against the azure seas will have been the promontory of Xeropunto. Consisting of a bleached finger of baked rocks, Xeropunto marks the western edge of Emblissi Bay. Its position and characteristics make it perfectly qualified to host the Telemachean narrative of Odyssey 15.

Now, it would have been folly for Telemachos to beach (or even ground) his ship with sails hoisted and filled with an offshore wind such as obtains till after dawn in the Mediterranean. Instead the young man obeys the omens instinct in ‘πρώτην ἀκτὴν’. The ‘terra firma’ of ‘ἐπὶ χέρσου’ fleshes out ‘πρώτην ἀκτὴν’ but only in its obvious sense of ‘the first headland’. For ‘πρώτην ἀκτὴν’ also means ‘the end of the foreland’ and it is precisely here that the ship comes to an initial halt. Last but not least is the importance Telemachus will have ascribed to the omen underlying the superficial text, for ‘πρώτην ἀκτὴν’ also means ‘the destined headland’. Athene had allotted Xeropunto its role in the divine ordering of the narrative.

At this point, in the preamble to mooring, the starboard rowers adjust their grip to push on their oars. That is, they adopt a gondolier’s mode of progress by thrusting the oar-blade into

the waters in front of them with the pommel of the oar held against their diaphragms. They then push the oar handle forward thereby propelling the ship gently sternwards. Simultaneously the port crew hold their oar blades submerged and perpendicular to the water level with the oars slanting upwards at ninety degrees to the gunwales such that, in holding water, they provide a fulcrum on which the ship may pivot. With only the port rowers actively rowing, the stern begins to arc to the right. As soon as the ship reaches 180 degrees in its rotation, the starboard crew adopt the same gondolier's stance as their colleagues to port. All the rowers are now pushing the ship slowly into land.

But how does the text articulate this berthing procedure in Emblissi Bay? Firstly, we think that the tautologous phrase 'τὴν δ' εἰς ὄρμον προέρεσαν ἔρεμοις' ('they rowed the ship forwards using the oars': Od.15.497) cannot stand. The inbuilt sense of 'rowing' in the verb 'προέρεσαν' hardly requires reinforcing with the word 'oars'. Secondly there is strong ancient support for the similar verb 'προέρυσσαν' ('they drew the ship 'onwards' or 'forwards' using the oars') as the correct reading here. On the one hand this reading might imply that 'oars' had not been used hitherto. This is the version of events we have supported above. Secondly 'the use of oars' implies that rowing is not the only use to which these oars are being put. As we have suggested above, the port oarsmen use their oars as a collective 'pivot' around which the starboard oarsmen draw the ship. The word 'ἔρεμοις' therefore ('using the oars') is an adroit way of indicating that oars may be employed in several different ways. The word covers the sense of 'all the oars available'. Now one such oar is the steering oar or oars. Given their length which extends below the ship's draught, these oars may be used as depth gauges for a ship that is about to moor. That is, as the ship rotates to line up along Emblissi's wall of stone to the left, the helmsman will hold both steering oars vertical in the water. They will be perpendicular to the ever-rising sands of the sea floor. As soon as the helmsman feels contact between the base of the oars and the sea floor he will indicate to the crew that the time to halt has arrived. All oar blades will switch from 'gondolier' mode to being held motionless and vertical in the water. The ship becomes stationary. It is still afloat but not by much¹⁶. The mooring drill now commences. The dropping of the huge and heavy anchors pins the prow to the sea floor immediately beneath. In charge of this manoeuvre will be the 'prorates' or 'prow look-out man'. Meanwhile, at the other end of the ship, the stern cables are carried onto the beach by the rowers closest to the starboard and port stern. Their oars, as we shall see, had been positioned over the gunwales.

A Black-Figure Hydria in the Louvre painted by the Kleimachos Painter¹⁷ may represent this manoeuvre which we take to be routine¹⁸. The painter captures the moment when the starboard crew have completed a gondolier's 'push' on their oars. As they do so the helmsman seems to make a gesture indicating he has felt contact between the bottom of his oars and the sea floor. The steering oars on Kleimachos' vase, it will be observed, are perpendicular to the waters beneath. The helmsman's gesture is immediately taken up in midships by the 'keleustes' or 'hortator' who has been keeping a slow, steady rhythm during the approach to land. The relaying to the prow oarsmen of the message to stop rowing is the job of the keleustes, for these oarsmen, being forward of the mast, are less likely to have seen the helmsman's gesture. The 'prorates' too is awaiting the helmsman's signal. On receipt of it, he thrusts his staff vertically

¹⁶ See Appendix A below.

¹⁷ Late Black-Figure subject matter is particularly Homeric.

¹⁸ Intriguingly, as Homer's *floruit* is brought ever closer, the scenes on Kleimachos' vases (575 – 525) become ever more Homeric. The main scene on this hydria shows an Iliadic battle for the arms of a fallen warrior. The ship scene is clearly Odyssean.

downwards into the seafloor to help keep the prow motionless until such time as the anchors have been deployed. Meanwhile, given the ease with which the sternmost starboard rower will have been able to disengage himself from his oar and leap over the side (there being no shield to obstruct his exit) it is most likely he and his counterpart to port who run ashore seeking a convenient tree or rock around which to secure the stern cables. The cables unravel behind them as they pay out the line. This special team is soon trailing the cables back to the ship and securing them to the ship's side. Their oars are exceptionally plied from over the gunwales which means the oars can be more easily handed to the rower to stern for stowing when other duties beckon. In any event, with the ship now tightly braced against the threat of winds and high water, it is time for Telemachos' crew to disembark and take breakfast.

Meanwhile, throughout the complex manoeuvres outlined above, silence and discretion will have been paramount. We know Telemachos had much to fear from the suitors who were already poised to ambush his ship further south. No doubt, even at first light, the ears of the suitors' spies will have been close to the ground across the length of Ithaca. Even so, the gondolier stroke was not entirely out of earshot, though, thanks to the keleustes, its rhythm could be made to keep time with the gentle breaking of the waves on the shore.

The Louvre vase seems to show a small ladder behind and below the helmsman. On it is a figure making a hand gesture towards the beach. Perhaps this is the leading 'archer' whose role will have been to fend off any unwelcome opposition to the landing. We know from Euripides (Iphigeneia in Tauris 1377f) that archers were charged with fending off attacks when a ship was departing. As Morrison (1968) says 'the archers were stationed in the stern' and may have had 'the task of protecting the helmsman'. The deployment of the archers certainly points to a scene of arrival or departure. Those who prefer to see a departure in progress here should however answer the following questions (a) why are the steering oars locked in position? (b) what instruction is the helmsman issuing? (b) why is the 'prorates' not focusing on what lies before him? (d) why is the archer or 'epibates' motioning towards what he sees on land?

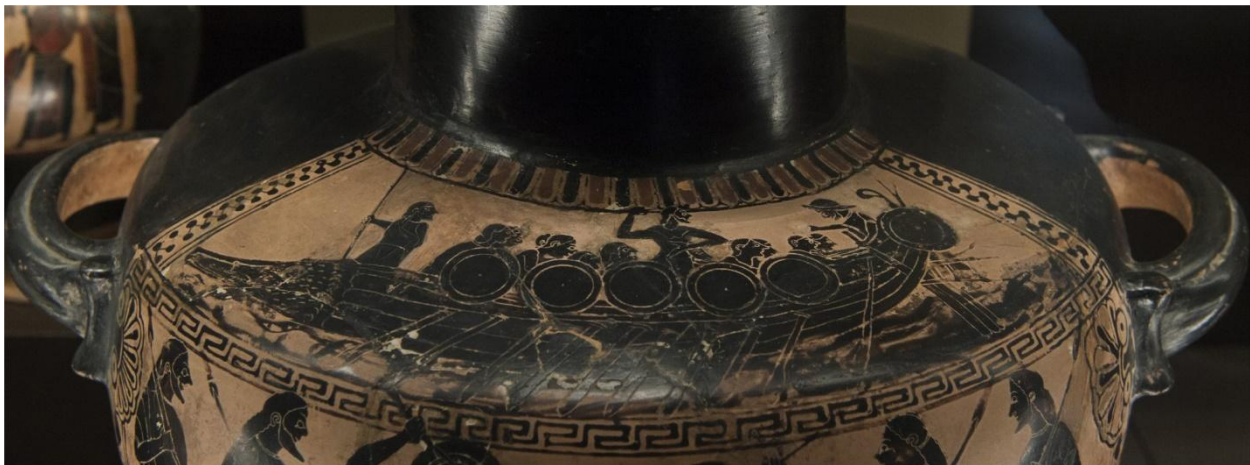


Fig. 4. Kleimachos Ship Vase

The nexus 'προέρεσαν ἐρετμοῖς' is also found at Iliad 1.435 where Odysseus' embassy ship is performing a highly formal approach to the beach at Chryses. Here Chryse, the priest of Apollo, awaits the return of his daughter. Again we believe that 'προέρεσαν' should be

emended to read ‘προέρυσσαν’ in order that an accurate appreciation of the arcing manoeuvre can be gained. The ship has come to a halt, prow first, in the harbour in advance of executing a stern-first hemispherical turn to the right. As the ship turns through the arc, it renders visible not only the stern, but also the two VIP-status passengers who had been seated on the stern ikria. These will be the priestess Chryseis and Odysseus, who now rise and turn towards the faces on the beach. The arrival of the ship becomes a moment of staged theatre.

6. Aeaea, Aeolus, the Danube

So much for the technical aspects of ancient seamanship. We return now to a consideration of technical aspects of the text. As we have seen, within Odysseus’ arrival at Aeaea, a case for the nexus ‘ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς’ to mean ‘off the headland’ is problematical. Firstly, we are told that the crew are brought into land within a ship-sheltering bay. It is the ship that dictates the action, ‘νῆι’ being ‘a true Instrumental Dative’¹⁹. Meanwhile, for a ship to come to a halt ‘off a headland’ implies that a mooring procedure is in progress or that the crew are ‘tying up’ as Odysseus does outside the Laestrygonian harbour. Meanwhile, the meaning of ‘ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς’ as ‘onto the headland’ is securely attested at Iliad 23.125 where logs for Patroclus’ pyre are tipped ‘onto the headland’ of Sigeum. The phrase ‘ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς’ must define an area of ‘terra firma’ against which the ship nestles when bringing the men into land. To restate the point, a harbour that ‘shelters ships’ will normally be one with promontories on both sides, and since ‘ἀκτῆ’ regularly means ‘headland’ it seems hard to argue that ‘ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς’ does not define the promontory ‘onto’ which the ship comes to rest. The implication of movement (‘onto the headland’) suggests, at very least, the grounding of Odysseus’ ship against the promontory. Yet ‘grounding’ a vessel on dry land (never mind mooring or halting ‘off a promontory’) requires careful coordination between helmsman and crew. Both grounding and mooring are highly technical procedures demanding good communication and fixed drills. Thus the ‘silence’ of the crew is alarming.

Now Telemachus and his crew are equally ‘silent’ on arrival at Emblissi, but that is because they had decided in advance to lower sails to allow the ship to come to a halt ‘off a barren promontory’. Their mooring is achieved, as we have seen, by the crews propelling the ship into a 180 degree turn. By contrast, Odysseus and his crew are, we suggest, hostages of the ship and by extension, of the sea and its conditions. Far from gauging the right depths for a mooring, far from dropping anchors or securing stern cables, the crew at Aeaea are as quiet and inactive as Odysseus had been when retreating to the hold after the debacle over Aeolus’ winds. Odysseus’ crew is either asleep or motionless in the hold, or both. Some god has brought it about that they should be brought into land against a promontory both ‘by their ship’ and ‘in their ship’. Since the appalling scenes in the harbour of the Laestrygonians, the men have entered a state of emotional and physical anaesthesia as they attempt to stave off the psychological effects of their colleagues’ demise.

Unless however we identify a bay and a headland into which a ‘divinely-driven’ current could bring a ship, we will be left with a merely notional topography of Aeaea. Meanwhile, to identify Homer’s description of Aeaea with an existing island is one of the epic’s Holy Grails. Firstly, the Homeric island has a protected bay which is somehow associated with a foreland (Od.10.140-141). Now nothing compels us to assume this foreland is one of the two one would

¹⁹ Merry and Liddell *Homer’s Odyssey* (1886) note ad loc 10.140.

normally find enclosing a ‘ship-sheltering bay’. For there is another way the appearance of this foreland may be formulated viz-a-viz the bay. The bay, that is, could be hollowed into the side of a single, much larger promontory, one large enough to accommodate a second bay on its other side. Usually we dispose of two headlands enclosing a single bay. Here we have two bays flanking a single headland. The only place we have found that matches this description is Insula Serpilor off the Romanian Black Sea coast. This island was known as Leuce to the ancients.

To argue further for this identification is clearly incumbent on us and pressing. Firstly, it is a straightforward matter to identify the god whose ‘guidance’ brings Odysseus to this geographical outpost. He must be the eponymous god of the River Danube or Ister. The west-east current of the river’s northern branch at Chilia is so strong that its force is felt 45 kilometres out into the Black Sea²⁰. Meanwhile the ancient Oceanus was effectively a fast-flowing torrent the force of which was channeled out to sea by the northern edge of the island of Peuce. Since time immemorial, ships which (amongst which we must now include Odysseus’), in passing along the seaboard of Dobrogea, will have been taken in tow by the Danubian river current and diverted towards Insula Serpilor (‘Leuce’).

7. Odysseus’ first visit to the Danube Delta

Meanwhile, the phrase ‘καί τις θεὸς ἡγεμόνευεν’ (‘some god or other was guiding us’) has already been encountered at Od.9.142 and here too we believe the god concerned to be Danubius. The episode involves an involuntary beaching of Odysseus’ fleet during a particularly murky night. Odysseus and his men see nothing due to the obscuring of the moon by clouds, and the thick vapour that enshrouds the ships. Paradoxically this throws light on the role of Danubius. There is one place in the ancient world where the Sun and Moon are permanently blotted out, and that is the city of the Cimmerians. This gloom-ridden city lay at the mouth of the Danube, according to Circe. Now it is more than a coincidence that Odysseus had been held in thrall by a vaporous gloom as his fleet made their involuntary beaching off the island of the Cyclops. For the force that drives the ships ashore must be a function of the permanently-in-spate river Danubius. The river’s violence also creates the vaporous cloud over the Cimmerians as it thunders south-eastwards into the cliffs of Peuce. Peuce meanwhile is also the home of the Cyclopes, for, as Ammianus Marcellinus reminds us, it is here that the Troglodytes or ‘cave dwellers’ live (22.43: ‘the island of Peuce juts forth, and around this dwell the Troglodytae, the Peuci, and other lesser tribes’). In Book 9, on disembarking, Odysseus follows the south bank of the Danube (the north bank of Peuce) westwards till he reaches the Cyclops cave. In Book 10 he beaches on a similar ‘shifting island’ (‘νήσος ... λάχεια’: 9.116; ‘ἄκτὴ τε λάχεια’: 10.509) before again passing the same way. This time he is en route to the entrance to Hades. He passes the benighted Cimmerian city and the cave of the blinded Polyphemus without further comment. He is walking along the north shore of Peuce.

8. The Aeolian Legs of Odysseus’ voyage

We are by now used to Odysseus returning to previous haunts. He had been to the Cimmerian city earlier in Book 10, as we shall now see. At 10.25 Odysseus takes leave of

²⁰ See on Edmund Spencer below.

Aeolus' island. The god of the winds gives him a 'west wind' as his only resource in reaching Ithaca. We believe that the 'floating' island of Aeolus is Berezan the steep cliffs of which even today present a reddish-bronze face to the world ('πλωτῆ ἐνὶ νήσῳ: πᾶσαν δέ τέ μιν πέρι τεῖχος /χάλκεον ἄρρηκτον, λισσῆ δ' ἀναδέδρομε πέτρῃ': Od.10.3-4). If we are right, a Zephyr would be amongst the least likely of all winds to extricate Odysseus from the Dneiper-Bug estuary in the Northern Euxine. Nor would it deposit him in the Ionian Islands. The only wind that could have blown Odysseus in the right direction is the NNE Boreas or Crivat which is still a feature of the Black Sea today. Yet, in the act of emending the text to accommodate the word 'Boreas' ('αὐτὰρ ἔμοι πνοιὴν Βορῆως προέηκεν ἀῆναι': Od.10.25), we are also forced to confront an intriguing possibility, namely that Homer was aware of an Adriatic Ister accessible from the Lower Danube. A North wind blowing from the NNE could propel a ship from the Bug Estuary south to Chilie Veche and on to Patlegeanca. From here the ship could have reached the watershed of the Black Sea Ister in the Gorski Gohat, the location of the sources of the Kupa river. The sources of the Adriatic Ister however, assuming that they originate in the upper waters of the Rjecina river, will debouch at Rijeka, ultimately colliding with the Po's equally deltaic waters further south in the middle of the Adriatic (Pomponius Mela *Chorographia* 2.57; 2.63). One view perhaps shared by the ancients, holds that the different watersheds of the Kupa and Rjecina rivers were both supplied from the same waters lying beneath the mountain of Rjaskin. This will have inspired a literary tradition that one could travel a distance of 22 kilometres by underground waterways from an Adriatic source (Rjecina) to a Black Sea source (Kupa) and vice versa. Certainly the Rjecina flows through a canyon for over half its length, originating from a spring that lies 385 metres above sea level, while the source of the Kupa lies at a height of 313 metres. One imagines these two sources creating a confluence below where an enclosed canyon may exist. Intriguingly, the alternative name of 'Rjecina' is 'Fiumara' ('torrent river-bed'), whilst the modern city of Rijeka further to the north-west, means 'river' in Croatian. This suggests that, in ancient times, the watershed was all too effective in shedding its waters. The abundance of cascading spring waters, fed by a high annual rainfall, may have inspired the names Rjecina and Rijeka. Meanwhile, Diodorus Siculus (4.56.8) notes that the sources of the Adriatic Hister (Rjecina) were only 40 stades from the sea (7.4 kilometres). There will have been little to stand in the way of the debouchment of this permanently-flowing torrent bed. But did it share an underground confluence with the Euxine Danube?

On the back of the Boreas wind Odysseus takes 9 days and nights to come within touching distance of Ithaca. On the tenth day all progress is lost when he is blown back to Aeolus' isle. He had earlier spent over nine days being blown back from Cape Malea (which he was trying to double) past Cythera and back, we think towards the Euxine.

9. The Malean leg of Odysseus' Journey

This Malean episode in Book 9 reveals Homer at his wildest and the Homeric scribes at their most fallible. For in failing to round Malea on the Eurus which had brought him this far, Odysseus is assumed to have been diverted to Egypt on a north-north-easterly. Indeed the next we hear of Odysseus he is dealing with a case of involuntary desertion on the part of two crewmen who have become addicted to the local Lotus fruit. Since the Lotus had its own Nilotic water lilies it was regarded as virtually a symbol of Egypt. Certainly the North-African-Egyptian credentials of the story have rarely been doubted until now. In our view, this misattribution has become the single greatest obstacle in the path of establishing the hero's itinerary and

chronology in the early part of his ‘wanderings’. For Odysseus could equally well be heading (as we think he was) for the Euxine having been blown back eastwards and ‘back past’ Cythera by the baleful winds. Furthermore, there seems likely to have been at least one other location in the known world where a fruit of the Lotus plant could seduce even hardened oarsmen. There is a town in the Lower Danube which is today called ‘Nufaru’ (‘The Lotus’) from the Romanian ‘nufar’. This emblematises the omnipresence of the Lotus plant in the Danube Delta. These plants produce a form of water-chestnut known as ‘ciulina de balta’ (lit. ‘pond chestnut’) which this writer has sampled from the waters north-west of Gura Portitei. The ‘ciulina’ is purported to taste of honey and peach²¹ when cooked in a particular way. It must be owned however that it is much less appetising when eaten straight from the water. So well-known is this fruit to Romanians that it was suggested as a stop-gap food source for the Delta’s inhabitants during the Second World War.

We are optimistic that Odysseus’ ship was blown from Cape Malea not to Egypt but to the Lower Hister where it was forced upstream by winds through Gura Portitei, a location where the Lotus is particularly prominent. From the sluggish waters (beloved of the water lily) of Sinoe, Halmyris and Razelm, Odysseus will have accessed the broad and silent Beibugeac Corridor, once effectively a spur of the fast-flowing Oceanus or Sfantu Gheorghe Branch which hurtled down to the cliffs around the city of the Cimmerians and, later, the Roman fort of Ad Stoma. Now the winds to blame for Odysseus’ inadvertent change of direction were, we think, not so much ‘baleful’ as ‘circling’ (‘ὄλοτροχος = ‘περιφερής’ [of a stone]; ‘ὄλοιτροχος’ = ‘rolling’, ‘circling’ ‘rounded’ [of stones rolled against besiegers])²². In sum, spiralling winds will have taken Odysseus back and away from Cape Malea, causing him to stray from his route past Kythera. Effectively Odysseus’ fleet is rerouted back towards the Black Sea in the direction whence it had arrived (‘με κῆμα ρόος τε περιγνάμπτοντα Μάλειαν /καὶ Βορέης ἀπέωσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ Κυθήρων’: Od 8.80-81). As we shall see this winds will spiral further before they have done with Odysseus’ fleet.

At this point we find emendations inevitable, and a resume of Odysseus’ journey to Polyphemos’ cave desirable. Firstly, given that the prevailing Eurus wind will have virtually reversed to create a south-westerly Notos, the word ‘Βορέης’ must now yield to ‘Νότος’ in the above lines. As we have seen, the reason ‘Βορέης’ has hitherto been the preferred reading is because the ship soon comes to rest in the land of the Lotus Eaters which is assumed erroneously but understandably to constitute Greater Egypt. The reaching of North Africa from Cape Malea has required the scribe to make sense of the passage by inventing a North wind. Meanwhile, Od. 9.80 will also require further emending such that the original we suggest was ‘καὶ Νότος ἐξάνεωσε ...’ (‘and the South-westerly forced me back and away ...’). For the Homeric compound prefix ‘ἐξάνα’ meaning ‘back and away from’ one may consult ‘ἐξαναδύς’ at Od. 5.438 (‘κύματος ἐξαναδύς, τὰ τ’ ἐρεύγεται ἠπειρόνδε’ = ‘making his way back out from [the surf line]). Meanwhile the verb ‘ἐξάνακρουω’ (‘I back water away from ...’) also becomes popular in later Greek literature. Blown by a south-westerly, Odysseus’ fleet goes on to negotiate Euboea, the Dardanelles, and the Propontis before making a beeline across the Euxine as far as Gura Portitei, Sarinasuf, and Murighiol on the Danube Delta. As we have observed, it is from there, at the end of the Beibugeac Corridor, that the fleet falls prey to the rushing waters and swirling

²¹ Od.9.94: ‘τῶν δ’ ὅς τις λωτοῖο φάγοι μελιηδέα καρπὸν’. The line evokes the ‘honey-sweetness’ of the Lotus water-chestnut.

²² See Herodotus Histories 8.52.

winds of the Oceanus branch which takes the fleet south-east to the sandbanks beyond the Cyclops' cave. Here, as we have seen, the fog-bound fleet beaches more by luck than judgement.

Thus if Homer does know of an Adriatic Ister he does not seem to take Odysseus that way home. Meanwhile the above reconstruction of Odysseus' route back from Malea can be defended further. For in lines 9.82-83 ('ένθεν δ' έννημαρ φερόμην όλοοῖς άνέμοισιν /πόντον έπ' ίχθυόεντα') the phrase 'πόντον έπ' ίχθυόεντα' could express the dual meaning 'in the direction of/over the fish-filled Black Sea' ('Pontos'). The two nuances of 'έπι' and the alternative meaning of 'πόντον' ('Euxine') combine to define Odysseus' route towards his (involuntary) destination²³. Meanwhile a journey that lasts into a tenth day could be one that is just over nine, or just short of ten, days long. Now, we have measured the route and found the distance from Cape Malea to Gura Portitei to be 1,465 kilometers. But is this the Ister to which the geographers refer? Strabo and Artemidorus claim the Cape Malea-Ister route covers 1203.93km. Polybius inflates this figure to 10,000 stades. Ten thousand stades constitutes 1852 kilometres. Our suspicion is that Polybius was coyly referring to the infamous last branch of the Hister which, as we have seen, was thought to debouch from the peninsula of Istria on the Adriatic Riviera. Certainly it is not difficult to arrive at a length of around 1852 km for the journey from Cape Malea to this maverick 'Ister' that we suggest debouched from Rijeka.

10. Journey Times

To get a firm grip on the subject we should consult an aspect of Odysseus' journey from Circe's island to Oceanus. Our view is that the hero departs from Insula Serpilor, or the ancient island of 'Leuce'. The journey to Oceanus, from early dawn to late dusk, takes all the hours of midsummer daylight [15.66] but none of darkness²⁴. ('αὐτίκα δὲ χρυσόθρονος ἤλυθεν Ἥως ... ὤτρυνον ἐταίρους ... τῆς δὲ πανημερίας τέταθ' ἰστία ποντοπορούσης'... δύσετό τ' ἠέλιος σκιάωντό τε πᾶσαι ἀγυαί': Od.10. 541 & 546; 11.11-12). Odysseus' ship beaches on a forested, alluvial bank of the River Oceanus which constitutes the edge of the triangular island of Peuce. Thus the journey Leuce-Peuce takes the length of Midsummer's day.

It is important to view the geography of the Danube Delta from many different perspectives. The geographer, Claudius Ptolemy uses coordinates to plot the salient features of the delta's topography. The features to which the coordinates relate, have been collated into a sketch map by Panin (1983)²⁵. At the point where the main arm of the Danube (Bratul Sfantu Gheorghe 38) once continued to meander, there is open sea to the north. For, by Classical times erosion of the north bank had effectively constrained the Hister to flow within its two banks only as far as the city of the Cimmerians. Beyond there, despite being battered by Oceanus, the southern bank remained intact, protruding proudly into the Black Sea and taking on the appearance of a promontory 'wing'. This is precisely the wing indicated by Ptolemy's coordinates. It sported sand banks along its south-east coast, and was home to the Cyclops whose cave lay south of the roaring debouchment of the Sfantu Gheorghe ('Oceanus') branch. As we have seen, this fast-flowing stream collided with its south bank at the point where the northern 'terra firma' disappeared and where in Roman times there stood a long-lost outpost of the Roman

²³ See Aeschylus Persae 878, Herodotus Histories 7.147, Aristophanes Wasps 700.

²⁴ For 'midsummer' see below.

²⁵https://biblioteca-digitala.ro/reviste/dacia/dl.asp?filename=27_dacia_revue-archeologie-historie-ancienne_SN_XXVII_1983_191.pdf.

limes. This was the appropriately named Ad Stoma, which lay on an island at the end of the Ister's last meander. It looked across at the mythological site of the haze-engulfed Cimmerians.

Meanwhile, lest we think that the Cimmerian haze is a chimera, there are copious ancient sources that testify to the vaporisation of the Danube's waters at that point. To name but two, there is Dionysius Perigetes (300: 'where the Danube belches all its foam, whirling around Peuce'); and Lucan (De Bello Civili 3.201-202: 'one head of the many-branching Ister washes Peuce sprinkled by the sea'). These passages add further atmosphere to the misty environment conjured up by Odysseus at 9.142-148. Once his fleet has been carried *nolens volens* through the vapour surrounding the mouth of the Danube, his fleet will become becalmed on the island opposite the cave of the Cyclops.

Now, thanks to Pliny we know that a journey from Leuce (Circe's island in our estimation) to Peuce (the Cyclops' island) occupies 50 Roman miles or 74.088km by sea. We have little doubt that Pliny's points of repair were (a) the bay to the north-east of Leuce where Odysseus' ship had previously come to a noiseless halt, and (b) the city of the Cimmerians where Odysseus was destined to begin his visit to Hades (along the Sfantu Gheorghe Danube branch). The distance between these points as the crow flies is 74.088 km.

As we have seen, the same route becomes the subject of a voyage to Hades undertaken by Odysseus at Circe's behest. Under canvas Odysseus' ship covers the same distance within the hours of daylight. Now, in an earlier book we argued that the Trojan War ended on June 6th 1198 BCE. Odysseus therefore makes his crossing to Peuce when the days are 15.6666 hours long. By dividing 74.088 by 15.666 we find the km per hour speed of Odysseus' vessel to be 4.73. Thus his ship in being blown non-stop from Malea to the Ister will cover the distance of 1203.93 km (Artemidorus, Strabo) in 254.12 hours (or 10.605 days). Thus when Odysseus claims to have reached the Land of the Lotus Eaters on the tenth day after failing to round Cape Malea we should believe him (assuming we also believe Artemidorus & Strabo). It is worth mentioning here that, in using our own measurements, and in obliging our ship to hug the coast, we find the distance from Cape Malea to Plopu in the Beibugeac Corridor should be rather in the region of 1508.48 km. And if we divide this by the average number of km covered in an hour, namely 4.73, we obtain a figure of 318.1 hours for the journey. By dividing this by 24 we arrive at the number of days spent travelling, namely 13.2. This is a disappointing result as it does not correlate with the 9-10 day journey of Odysseus to the Cyclops' isle. Yet when a ship is in thrall to the winds it may well take a more direct bearing than normal. In any event an ancient ship did not necessarily adhere rigidly to the coastline when crossing a large bay.

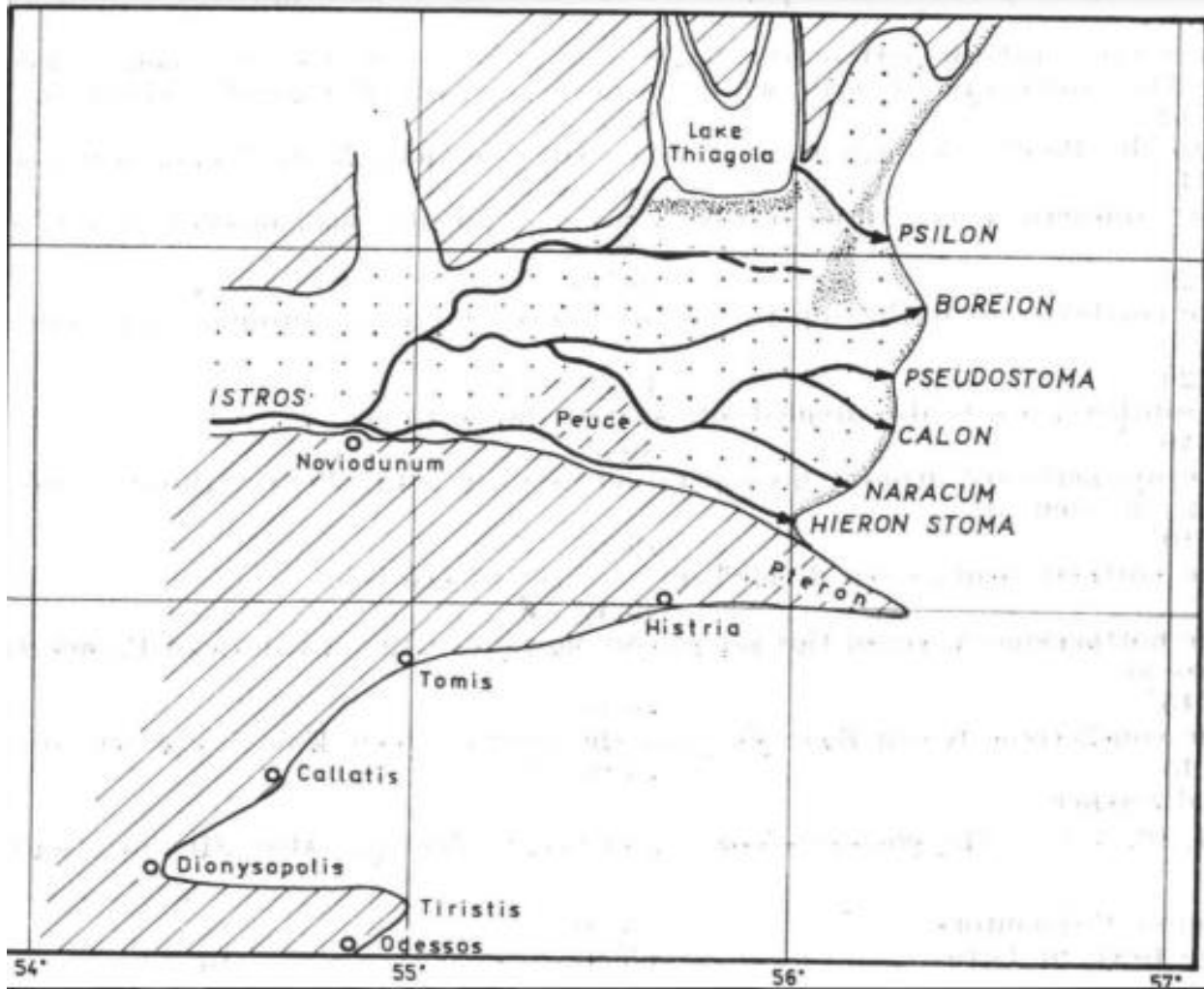


Fig. 5. The Danube coastline with Peuce's 'wing' or **'pteron'** 'jutting out' (Ammianus 22.43). Sketch drawn by Nicolae Panin (1983) based on Claudius Ptolemaeus coordinates and a medieval map

With this in mind a more direct route from Malea to Istanbul and on to Gura Portitei as the crow flies before ending at Sarinasuf consumes 1202.08 km. This corresponds very closely to Artemidorus' figures for the Malea-Ister leg. In any event we may assume Homer was basing his journey times and distances on the sources used by Pliny, Strabo and Artemidorus. Artemidorus may well have thought his Ister finished at Sarinasuf since that is where the Beibugeac arm ends.

Meanwhile the two voyages undertaken later, one with Aeolus' help one without, present more difficulties. The location of a floating island such as Berezan, Aeolus' home, will naturally be hard to pin down. However when sleep overtakes Odysseus on the first journey, the hero may be thought to be 'making a foot' as he deploys the sheet. That is he is likely to be sailing 'close reach' against the NNE Boreas which we have argued should be read instead of the Zephyr at 10.25. This tallies with a course from Pylos to the north-west similar to that undertaken by Telemachus who approaches the north-west tip of modern-day Ithaca by way of the 'Sharp Isles'

(Od.15.299). That both Odysseus and Telemachos followed the same route in returning to Ithaca from Elis and the ‘Sharp Isles’ will be argued further below. We think Odysseus was thwarted in achieving his ‘nostos’ just as the Ithacan mountains gave way to a view across to Emblissi Bay and the ‘dry headland’ of Xeropunto.

Now the 9-10 day non-stop journey under canvas that awaits Odysseus as he leaves Aeolus’ island has a very different profile viz-a-viz the earlier journey (detailed above) that began when the winds changed at Cape Malea. Our calculation of the times and, especially, distances involved in the first Aeolian voyage are as follows: (a) Berezan (Aeolus’ island) to Patlegeanca on the Lower Danube – 316 km; (b) Patlegeanca to Gura Portitei via Murighiol and Sarinasuf – 95 km; (c) Gura Portitei to Cape Malea - 1465 km; (e) Cape Malea to the northern extremity of today’s island of Ithaca – 452 km. The total distance comes to 2328 km. At a speed of 4.73 km/hr (see above) Odysseus will take over 20.507 days to accomplish his mission. His route has avoided the worst excesses of the Danubian current by using the less precipitous reaches of the river. But he also takes double the time estimated by Homer. Before we tackle this pressing problem we should defend our reconstruction of the route taken by Odysseus on leaving Aeolus’ palace. We begin at the end with Odysseus on the cusp of reaching his destination at Emblissi.

As Odysseus approaches Ithaca, his observation of beacons being lit on the island conveys the sense that night is giving way to day. Meanwhile the words ‘τῆ δεκάτῃ’ at Od.10.29 could be thought to allude to the feminine ‘Night’ rather than the neuter ‘Day’. That is Odysseus arrives at dawn just as Telemachus had done when mooring at Emblissi. Odysseus sees the ripe-for-harvesting fawn-coloured cornfields that in June will be the first visible features as night retreats. This recalls the epic ‘topos’ of the darkening of paths at sunset. It also recalls and is informed by Iliad 19.375 where a fire in a lonely steading is seen by those on board ship who however are spirited away from their ‘friends’ by a storm. One is inclined to see intertextuality at work here with the Iliad text prefiguring the blasts of winds unleashed from Aeolus’ bag. The mention of ‘friends’ clearly indicates that, like Odysseus, the ship is attempting to land on home soil.

However there remains the problem of the 20-day duration of the voyage. One suggestion is that the text has been corrupted with scribes allowing themselves to be distracted by line 10.80. One could therefore reconstruct the lines as follows:

ἔννεακαίδεκα ὁμῶς πλέομεν νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμῶν / εἰκοστῇ δ’ ἤδη ἀνεφαίνετο πατρίς ἄρουρα’

‘Nevertheless we sailed for 19 nights and days; on the twentieth, the cornlands of the fatherland were already appearing’
Od.10.28-29²⁶

A REINTRODUCTION: The Beginning of Odysseus’ Nostos:

Following the Cyclops and Aeolus episodes, Odysseus’ crews experience further horrors, this time at the hands of the Laestrygonians. Odysseus’ crew is the only one to escape the massacre in the Laestrygonian harbour, where Odysseus’ eleven other ships and crews fall victim to cannibals. The surviving crew retreats to their ship’s hold in a state of shock and psychic withdrawal. As their vessel heads south along the Danube Delta, it comes under the influence of

²⁶ See Iliad 24.496 and 765 for references to ‘19’ and ‘twentieth’.

the river's residual, offshore current which is strong enough to ground the vessel on the large promontory which we believe to be the north-eastern headland of Insula Serpilor, the ancient Leuce. To explain further how we reached this point, we must return to the beginning of Odysseus' post-iliadic voyage as recounted to the Phaeacians.

11. Odysseus Leaves Troy

Odysseus first claims to have left Troy on a south-easterly wind taking him towards the Thracian seaboard. Here he eventually loses a battle on the plain in front of Ismarus, the Ciconian city. We can identify this location because, according to Hesychius, Ismarus was later renamed Maroneias and the ruins of this settlement are still visible today (Hesychius Lexicografia s.v. Ἴσμαρος: πολις Θρήκης ἢ νῦν Μαρωνείας').

Now, we can sail in a straight line from Troy to Maroneias, without making land on either the Thracian Chersonnese, or Imbros, or Samothraki. That is, assuming Odysseus' Eurus wind is consistent and unrelenting, Odysseus will have reached Ismaros without undue effort from the rowers. The wind will have come from an acute 30 degree angle. The actual angle formed between the inbound (towards Ismarus) and outbound (away from Ismaros) legs of the journey is 45 degrees. This is because Odysseus' fleet, on finding itself worsted in battle against the Cicones, and on being ordered by their captain to set a course due south, only succeeds in making continuous leeway. In averring this, we rely principally on the curious repetition of the word 'πρωτέρω' at Od.9.62 and 64. On the one hand, it means 'further' as it does at Od.5.617 where it articulates the shipwrecked Odysseus' decision to explore further the possibilities of making landfall along the coast of Scheria. On the other hand, it also seems to suggest 'going straight forwards' as when Odysseus' embassy approaches Achilles in his tent in Book 9. Even more striking is Charis' request to Thetis at Iliad 18.387 to follow her 'directly' or 'straight behind her' ('ἀλλ' ἔπειο πρωτέρω ...'). Meanwhile Hesychius chooses our line Od. 15.62 to illustrate the meaning of 'πρωτέρω' as the equivalent of 'τοῦμπροσθε' (Isocrates 4.10; Herodotus 4.61). This means 'forwards [of/from]'. Our contention is that, following the battle, Odysseus leads his fleet, still under sail, directly ahead ['forwards'], that is, due south, using the same Eurus wind as before. However with the wind at only 30 degrees to the prows, the fleet is close to being 'in irons'. To sail 'close reach' with the wind from port obliged ancient helmsmen to reef the port side of the sail on a yardarm that was pointing 45 degrees aft of the mast. This meant that the starboard half of the sail will have been braced 45 degrees forward of the mast. Rather than being reefed, it was attached at its lower corner to the forward gunwales (or held by an experienced crewman) by means of a sheet, or short rope²⁷. Thus a triangular expanse of canvas was improvised or engineered, one that, in this instance, faced 90 degrees into the wind coming from port. Of its own this configuration would tend to force the starboard bows to lurch to starboard. However, once the sail had shed this wind, the ship would come under the influence of the port steering oar at the stern with its leading edge flush against the ship's side. This will have created a 135 degree angle or nook²⁸ into which the wind-forced waters will have been funnelled, causing the ship's bows to veer back to port until such time as the triangular sail filled again with the Eurus wind. This will have forced the ship's bows to swing back to starboard. To maximise the effect of this oscillating movement, the steering-oar will have been eased away

²⁷ See Ps-Aristotle *Mechanika* 7. 851b6ff; Virgil Aeneid 5.828-832.

²⁸ Composed of the side of the ship with the steering oar at 45 degrees aft.

from the ship's sides when the starboard foot was receiving the wind. Thus a dynamic will have been set in motion as a result of which the ship will have been able to make forward progress. We believe that the serpentine movement of ancient ships outlined above is expressed in the adjective 'ἐπικάρσiai' ('at an angle': Od.9. 70). Meanwhile, at Theriaca 266-270, Nicander's comparison of the Cerastes snake to a merchant vessel (the akatos) also illuminates this tacking manoeuvre.

Yet, as we have mentioned, there is another nuance of 'ἐπικάρσiai' that is in Homer's mind. The word also, we suggest, alludes to another well-known aspect of the motion of ships, which it is now time to discuss. As Odysseus' ship grapples with the difficulties of sailing 'close reach', it will feel the effect of the wind and waves impacting continuously along the length of its (in this case) port side. This relentless bombardment will have the effect of forcing the ship ever sideways and away from its set course. This phenomenon is known as 'making leeway'. We suggest that Odysseus was familiar with the concept and had factored it into his route-planning. If his fleet were to have made, say, 15 degrees of leeway westwards from Ismaros, it will have avoided Samothraki's west coast and reached the extensive, sandy bay of Gomati on Lemnos. Here there is a small island called Varvara which we suggest was the location of the Temple of Apollo on Chryse. This is where we think Odysseus moored his embassy ship prior to restoring Apollo's priestess Chryseis to her father Chryse (Iliad 1.435). There are several occasions in the Odyssey when Odysseus revisits the scene of an earlier adventure or misadventure. This is one more of them.

However Odysseus' fleet comes perilously close to foundering, as it approaches Lemnos. A cyclonic storm sent by the 'cloud-gathering' Zeus overtakes the fleet which 'had at that time been making leeway'. But, as we have seen and as it is worth repeating, the words 'αἱ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἐφέροντ' ἐπικάρσiai' could also mean 'the ships were at that time being borne at angles (viz- viz the overall route: Od. 9.70). That is, the ship's prow was constantly striving to maintain a 'straight-ahead' profile by tacking from side to side. Now the words 'at angles' to describe the ships' progress are also contextualised by the contents of lines 62 and 64. First of all line 62 intimates that the ships had been sailing (under canvas) and were now sailing on further (still under canvas). This guarantees that Odysseus has adopted the same mode of sailing (wind-assisted by the Eurus) as that which he had employed before the defeat at Ismaros. However the angularity of the ships' progress is also informed by the 'προτέρω' of line 64. As we have seen, 'προτέρω' has adopted the meaning of 'straight ahead'. Whilst Odysseus does not allow the ships to set out 'heading straight' until the dead have been honoured, this nevertheless implies that the ships do head out straight eventually. We may conclude then by noting that (a) the ships continue under canvas from Ismaros (b) their nominal direction is straight ahead (due south) (c) in fact they move from side to side even though their overall bearing is straight ahead (d) they depart at an angle from their intended course (they make leeway). The description of the ships as 'turning both ways' ('ἀμφιέλισσαι': Od.9.64) now becomes a cryptic clue indicating the behaviour of the ships which will snake one way then another (as described above) even as they endeavour to keep a straight nominal course.

Now, Zeus the cloud-gatherer only twice rouses winds against the seas travelled by Odysseus (Od.9.67 & 12.313). On both occasions (a) the winds are from the north, (b) it is night, and (c) Odysseus, we think, is approaching Lemnos. Night falls from the sky, the sky being synonymous with Zeus. We know from Pseudo-Aristotle (Problemata) that Boreas descends from on high driving clouds that are picked up by the Apeliotes and brought across the Aegean

,to Attica and the islands' (of which Lemnos will be one)'. The descent of Boreas is also a major component of the Herodotean storm that afflicts the Persian ships at 7.188-189. Whilst it is the Apeliotes that blows strongly ,from a clear and windless sky', it is Boreas that ,falls on the moored Persian ships' (,τοῖσι βαρβάροισι ὀρμέουσι Βορέης ἐπέπεσε'). This Borean phenomenon must be the dreaded ,ἐκνεφίας', literally ,that which bursts out of the cloud'. Its direction can only be downwards. In modern parlance it is a microburst in which the cloud-bearing wind, here the Caecias or Apeliotes, is rent by a sudden downdraught here in the shape of a descending Boreas. The centrifugal skirts of the descending Boreas will scatter all in its path. This is followed by a wind shear of 180 degrees which we would blame for the tearing of the sails in Od. 9.67f. The wind will have entered the taut ,foot' made in the sails from the wrong side at speed.

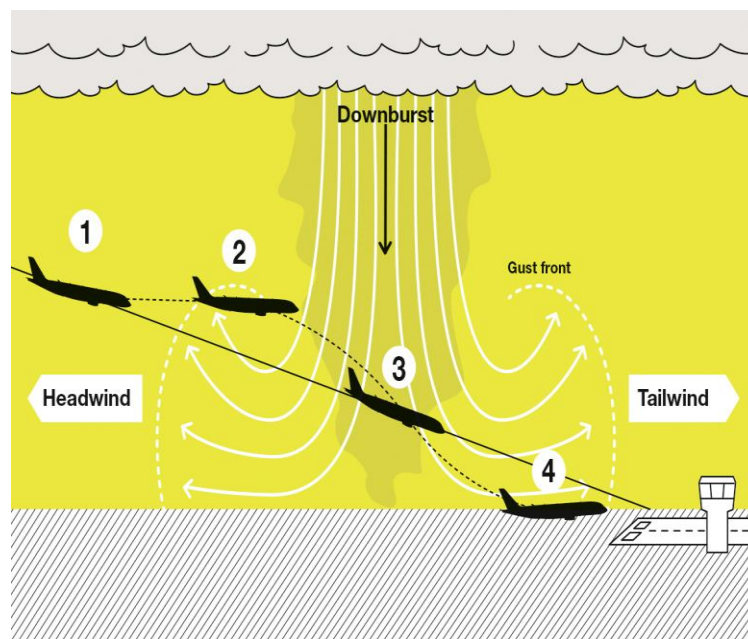


Fig. 6. A Microburst

Odysseus' ships will have been using the leeway they had made since leaving Ismaros to slip past Lemnos' Gomati Bay en route for Euboea. The straightening effect however of a north wind upon the fleet as it tacked against the Eurys will have been considerable. The new trajectory will have set the fleet on a collision course with Lemnos' north-easterly reefs. A bout of desperate rowing is required to beach the ships on Gomati's sands.

Meanwhile the same weather conditions are conjured up by Od.12.312-315 (ἤμος δὲ τρίχα νυκτὸς ἔην, μετὰ δ' ἄστρα βεβήκει / ὄρσεν ἐπὶ ζαῖν ἄνεμον νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς / λαίλαπι θεσπεσίη, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε / γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον: ὀρώρει δ' οὐρανόθεν νύξ'). Here we think Odysseus' ship, having survived Aeolian winds, the Cyclops, the Laestrygonians, the Sirens, the Planctae and Scylla and Charybdis, is about to track 'along past' Northern Lemnos from the East and in darkness. The Hellespont and the adventures in the Euxine are now behind the crew. The concern of Odysseus' comrades here must be of a Boreas striking the ship and hurling it against the reefs to port. The word ἄνεμον' at 12.314 should therefore be replaced by

‘Βορέων’. Meanwhile, a southerly Notos in forcing the ship into open waters to the north will present no danger. Thus ‘Νότου’ should give way to ‘Βορέως’ at 12.289.

The tearing of the fleet’s sails in three or four places is an arresting detail in the description of the approach of Odysseus’ fleet to Lemnos. The canvas in question must be the triangular sail configuration, or ‘foot’ which is suddenly beset by a 180 degree change of wind direction. The sail tears because, tautened as it is by the sheet, it is now ravaged by a fierce wind striking the sail square on from the rear. The crew lower the mast towards the stern but we do not think they dismantle the sail. Such is the urgency of the situation that a very unusual tactic is adopted.

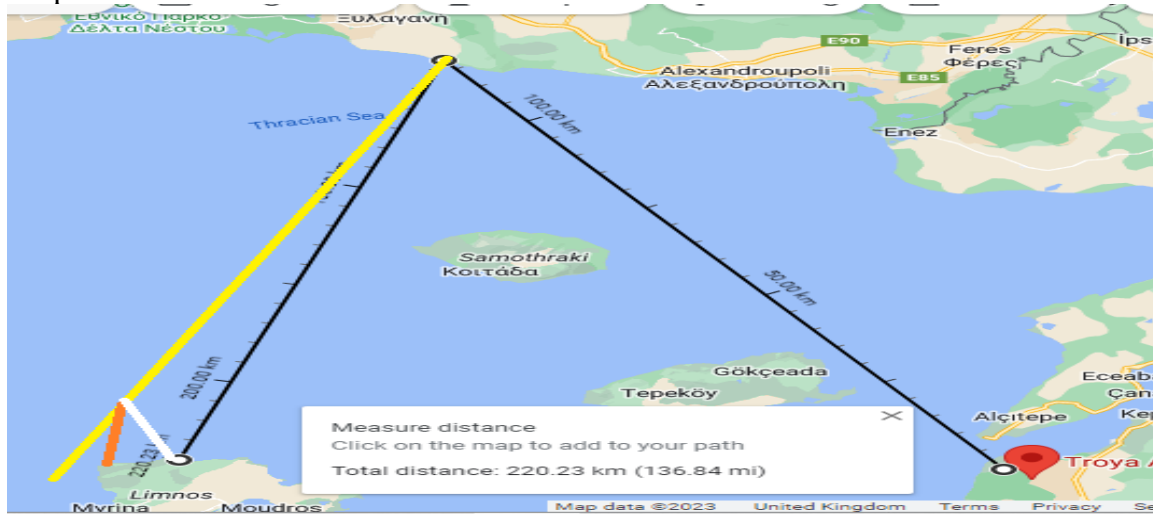


Fig. 7. Troy, Ismaros, Limnos

Yellow Line = Ideal Route; Red Line = Route redirected by Boreas; White Line = Actual route

The sails remain in place on the mast as it is lowered. The crew dispense with the usual drill involving the halyards and the stowing of the sail. Clearly the braces have to be untied so that the yard-arm can rest flat across the gunwales. The sheet holding the ‘foot’ in place must also be loosened. Within minutes of the tearing of the sails the same sails lie jumbled across the stern decks. To port, the yardarm is still encased by the sail. To starboard the ripped sail obstructs any attempt to access the rowing benches. Meanwhile, the mast lies abaft along the spine of the ship. To our minds the text adequately articulates such a scenario.

Firstly, the line ‘τὰ μὲν ἐς νῆας κάθεμεν, δείσαντες ὄλεθρον’ (Od.9.72) provides an explanation - namely the fear of imminent destruction - as to why the sails were not stowed according to procedure. Meanwhile in translating ‘τὰ μὲν ἐς νῆας κάθεμεν’ as ‘we set the sails onto the ships’, we highlight the sense of ‘sitting or propping onto’ which is not the same as ‘inserting into’. This brings us to Od. 9.73 (‘αὐτὰς δ’ ἐσσυμένως προερέσσαμεν ἠπειρόνδε; ‘we rowed the ships hastily from the bows’). Firstly, in other contexts such as Od.5.56, ‘ἠπειρόνδε’ refers, at the very least to an approach made to ‘the main bulk’ of an island. There may be a sense however that in Book 9 that Odysseus’ original intention (as discussed above) had been to moor off the ‘subsidiary island’ of Varvara, thereby showing renewed deference towards Chryse and Apollo. Instead the meteorological circumstances oblige the crew to row full pelt in order to beach the ships prow first on the sands of Gomati Bay. Thus there is a full-scale beaching on the ‘main island’. We earlier emended ‘προερέσσαμεν’ to read ‘προερυσσαμεν’ in relation to

Telemachus' arrival at Emblissi. Here however the sense of 'rowing' which is instinct in 'προερέσσαμεν' is required. However we suggest that the prefix 'προ-' in this context refers to (a) the prow-first attitude of the ship approaching land and (b) 'at the front' or 'forwards [of the mast]' in reference to the forwards position of the rowers in the ship. Effectively the rowing benches to aft are out of commission due to the sails that lie across them. The only alternative is to populate every seat forwards with oarsmen and reconfigure the vessel as a racing hull. Indeed commercial variants of the penteconter were regularly propelled by rowers at the prow end, the stern being reserved for comestibles or items to be traded. Above deck there might be amphoras, skins of wine; in the hold below there would be sheep and goats. Passengers could stretch their legs on the stern decking. Noemon's ship (Odyssey 1,2 ,4) was of this configuration as was the suitors' ship (Od.4) and the one owned by Odysseus' fictitious capturers from Thesprotia (Od.14).

12. Etymologies:

Thus Odysseus' fleet resembles a group of pirate ships, as it beaches at Gomati on Lemnos. The comparison is not idle given the amount of booty the various ships' companies had amassed from the sack of Ismaros (Od.9.40: 'ἐκ πόλιος δ' ἀλόχους καὶ κτήματα πολλὰ λαβόντες'). Meanwhile our interest in the 3 or 4 tears suffered by each of the sails is not yet at an end. Four tears may produce five pieces of finely-spun linen. Across the entire fleet that would add up to 60 pieces of woven fabric. The words for woven stuffs in Greek are many: λινον, ύφασμα, ὀθονιον to name but three. And Homer spends three lines describing the processes involved in weaving and spinning (Od.5.105-107).

This leads us to consider lines 9.70ff from an etymological perspective. In Plato's Cratylus there are contexts in which the word 'δυναμῖς' is used to mean 'the power of a word', namely 'a word's etymology'. This appears most clearly at 405e where we hear of those who characterise Apollo according to his 'destructive' etymology. Here Plato refrains from mentioning the word 'ἀπολλυμι' ('apollumi' = I destroy) to avoid encouraging a negative omen and to disguise the fact that 'APOLLUMI' is much closer morphologically to 'APOLLO' than the other etymologies proposed. The commensurateness between the multi-aspected name of the god and his polyvalent 'power' ('τὸ δὲ γ' ἐστίν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, κάλλιστα κείμενον πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ') harbours a pun on 'δύναμιν'. That is, Apollo's military, purifying, and accompanying powers can all be identified in the different etymological 'powers' associated with his name (406a: 'πασῶν ἐφαπτόμενον κεῖται τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεων, ἀπλοῦ, ἀεὶ βάλλοντος, ἀπολούοντος, ὀμοπολοῦντος').

Our purpose here is to convince the reader that not only 'δυναμῖς' but also its synonyms such as 'ἴς' (in Latin 'vis') may always bear the meaning 'etymology'. Thus the lines Od.9.70-71 ('ἰστία δὲ σφιν / τριχθὰ τε καὶ τετραχθὰ διέσχισεν ἴς ἀνέμοιο') could theoretically mean 'the etymology of [the word] ANEMOS has torn the woven stuffs in three or four places'. The etymology of 'άνεμος' can be as maverick as the roots identified by Plato for Apollo's name. However we will adhere to the rule of thumb that the consonants and vowels follow the prescribed order. The only licence we will take will be with the length of the epsilon which we will extend to form an eta. Some scholars are sceptical about the ancients' capacity to appreciate paranomasia between vowels of different lengths. The same scholars would deny that etymological relationships could be constructed between vowels of differing lengths. However there is a glaring example of just such a jingle quoted by the author of Rhetorica ad Herrenium

(4. 21) and Quintilian (9.3.69-71), namely ‘hinc avium dulcedo ducit ad avium’ (‘hence does the sweetness of birdsong lead to pathless places’). It would be absurd to claim that an ancient reader would not have been alive to a play on words (‘āvium’ and ‘āvium’) to which two ancient grammarians have given their blessing.

We can therefore deconstruct the word ‘άνεμος’ as ‘α’ (intensive prefix) and ‘νημα[τα]’ (‘pieces of cloth’). That is, ‘a lot of pieces of woven material’ are produced by applying the etymology or ‘power’ of the wind to the sails. Not only then does the force of the actual wind shred fine-spun sails into pieces of cloth, the application of the etymological forces contained in the word ‘wind’ produces the same effect (‘anemos’ = ‘a/nema[ta]’ = ‘a lot of pieces of woven material’). Note also that the lexical items ‘α’ and ‘νημα[τα]’ are products of the tearing apart of the ‘texture’ of the text. Clearly, the tearing process ‘empowers’ the active word.

13. Life on Aeaea:

After landing on Aeaea, Circe’s island, the crew spend the next two days on the shore ‘eating their hearts out with grief’. They gorge themselves on sorrow rather than on the food and drink that is regularly associated with Homeric crews coming into land. On the third day Odysseus goes on a lone expedition and is fortunate to come across and despatch a stag which he manages to carry back to the beach²⁹. On his return he flings the stag ‘in front of the ship’³⁰. This innocuous observation confirms the ship had come into land prow first. For the stag must be deposited in front of the prow on the beach. If the ship had come in stern first (as would be the normal Greek practice) Odysseus would have thrown the stag ‘behind the ship’ on the shore. The ship, rather than being moored or beached stern to shore, appears to have grounded with its prow ‘on the shore’. At Aeaea this landing is fortuitous. By contrast, the prow-first landing at Gomati Bay (Od.9.73: ‘αὐτὰς δ’ ἐσσυμένως προερέσσαμεν ἤπειρόνδε’) is deliberate. In that context the prefix ‘προ-’ on ‘προερέσσαμεν’ conveys not just ‘[rowing] from the front of the ship’ but also ‘[rowing] prow first’. At Aeaea meanwhile, there is no rowing of any description being practised.

Under normal circumstances no Greek ship will be beached prow first by the crew at their oars. Such an approach to land will risk damaging the precious ram. However a grounding of the ship prow first under sail might be acceptable *in extremis* and is paralleled in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo where the Cretan ship is blown onto land under sail with the crew merely passive onlookers (‘ἴξον δ’ ἐς Κρίσην εὐδείλων, ἀμπελόεσσαν, / ἐς λιμέν’: ἦ δ’ ἀμάθοισιν ἐχρίμψατο ποντοπόρος νηῦς’: 438-439). The crew in the Homeric Hymn cannot escape the relentless tailwind sent by the god. They are hostages to the conditions and this may suggest a way forward in our analysis of the Aeaeian landing. Weather conditions are not mentioned at Aeaea, by contrast

²⁹ Odysseus’ ‘loneliness’ (‘μοῦνον ἕντα’) also conveys his ‘isolation from the rest of the crew’. The same expression at 12.297 means ‘a minority of one’.

³⁰ Od.10.172: ‘κάδ’ δ’ ἔβαλεν προπάροιθε νεός’. Note the allusion to 9.539 where the Cyclops hurls a stone in front of Odysseus’ ship (‘κάδ’ δ’ ἔβαλε προπάροιθε νεός κυανοπρόροιο’; ‘and he threw [the peak of a mountain] in front of the dark-prowed ship’). In that passage Odysseus had been glorying in his victory over the Cyclops. This had goaded the Cyclops into trying to sink his ship. Thus in Book 9 what lands ‘before the ship’ almost destroys it. Odysseus’ arrogance is revealed as a retrograde step, for the ship hurtles backwards under the wash thrown up by the stone. He alienates his crew who call him ‘reckless’. (‘σκέτλιε...’: 9.494). By contrast, in Book 10, what lands before the ship will be revealed as a means by which the crew are restored to life and the crew’s ‘nostos’ is put back on track. The allusion articulates Odysseus’ progress from the ego-expressing Iliadic hero to the ego-repressing Odyssean leader. For deer populating islands on Chesapeake Bay, for the deer’s penchant for brackish water, for the deer’s ability to swim see thebassbarn.com and archerytalk.com.

with the fleet's collective landing after encountering a storm on the approach to Lemnos in Book 9. Once on Lemnos, the crews suffer the same agonies on shore as they do at Aeaea making the two episodes comparable. Of much interest is the fact that at Aeaea the crew endures two days and two nights of suffering whereas in the earlier Lemnos episode the crews endure two nights and two days. This alerts us to the fact that the ship arrives at Aeaea around dawn. Odysseus' crews had recently rowed six nights in a row when travelling from Aeolus' island. But repeated shifts at the oar by night will have been wearing on the crew's spirit ('τείρετο δ' ἀνδρῶν θυμὸς ὑπ' εἰρεσίης ἀλεγεινῆς / ἡμετέρη ματίη, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι φαίνεται πομπή. / ἐξῆμαρ μὲν ὁμῶς πλέομεν νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμαρ': Od.10.78-80). Indeed it is not often remarked that the piteous scenes in the Laestrygonian harbour follow on from a week in which the crews had plied the oar day and night. It is little wonder that Odysseus' crew fall asleep on the approach to Aeaea. They are physically and psychically spent. When their ship grounds prow-to-shore at Aeaea, the reader is obliged to assume 'something must have happened' to render the crew incapable of engineering any other type of landing.

In sum, our preferred explanation for the silence of the crew on the approach to Aeaea is that at some stage out at sea the men had retreated to the hold, wrapped their heads in their cloaks, and left the ship to its own devices. In doing so, they will have succumbed to the same syndrome that had affected Odysseus after the failed approach to Ithaca. Between the return to Aeolus' isle and the distressing events amongst the Laestrygonians, the crew's fragile spirit, we suggest, had been broken by a week at the oar without pause for sleep. As in Odysseus' case, sleep-deprivation will have been a major factor in the syndrome taking hold.

14. The Syndrome at Aeaea: the trigger:

Yet even if this cavalier explanation is correct, there also must have been a trigger 'event' such as we saw in the Homeric Hymn and in the episode when Aeolus' winds escape from Odysseus' grasp. Most 'events' at sea are predictable and even a sudden and violent storm does not on its own lead to a catastrophic loss of morale (Od.9.74-75). To determine what sent the men to the hold on the approach to Aeaea, will mean retracing our steps into the earlier parts of Book 10. On arrival at the land of the Laestrygonians, Odysseus had moored his ship to a rock outside the harbour and sent two 'comrades' and a herald to reconnoitre the area³¹. One 'comrade' is eaten by Antiphates, the Laestrygonian king (10.114-117). The other two crew members (of which one will be the herald) are said to 'flee back to the ships'. However, as Odysseus' crewmen they will be fleeing back specifically to Odysseus' ship by the same lofty woodland path by which they had set out. The other crews, still busy mooring inside the harbour, will not have seen or heard Odysseus' three-strong advance party. Unaware of the danger, these crews will still be attending to their tasks when they are suddenly overwhelmed by a volley of rocks from the cliffs. From their vantage point Odysseus' three crewmen will have witnessed the carnage. The last thing they will do will be to 'flee to the beleaguered ships'. They flee instead to Odysseus' ship. This means that the word 'ship' in the nexus 'νῆας ἰκέσθην' in line 10.117 ('τὼ

³¹ One is tempted to suggest that these men were the same three who had been sent to reconnoitre the Land of the Lotus-Eaters (9.90 = 10.102). When they are seduced by the addictive qualities of the lotus plant, Odysseus has to haul them back to the ship and tie them in the hold. In the land of the Laestrygonians they are sent out on another mission either as further punishment or to rehabilitate them. On this occasion the herald will be particularly keen to properly perform his function as a reporter, as we shall see.

δὲ δού' αἰξάντε φυγῆ ἐπὶ νῆας ἰκέσθην') must be emended to the singular 'νῆα'³². Conscious of the mayhem in the harbour, Odysseus cuts his rope and runs but not before the crewman and herald have boarded the ship.

We should remember that Odysseus is relaying this story to the Phaeacians who will be concerned to know how Odysseus knows what he knows. They will assume (correctly) that the herald will be the one from whom Odysseus has obtained the fine details of 'what had happened'. For instance, the herald will be the one who must have conveyed to Odysseus the name of the spring of Artacia which will have been mentioned by the Laestrygonian king's daughter in the course of a conversation with the men (10.109-110). Odysseus only cuts and runs when he is conscious of the slaughter of his men in the shallows of the harbour (10.125-126). He is not reacting to the (detailed) report of the herald, who has only just clambered back on board having had to run to the end of the headland that guards the bay. The position of Odysseus' ship moored to a headland rock must have militated against Odysseus seeing much of the harbour which after all had only a narrow entrance³³. Clearly Odysseus realises he is one man short when the herald returns accompanied by a single comrade. This and the herald's urgent pleas to set sail will have convinced Odysseus to cut and run.

At some point after the initial adrenalin-fuelled sprint to escape the clutches of the Laestrygonians, the crew will have stopped rowing. This is surely the moment when the herald will have been asked the question 'What happened back there?' As a herald he will have described loudly and publicly how his comrade had been devoured by the cannibalistic tyrant Antiphates. We know that the whole crew later shed big tears as they remember 'the deeds of Antiphates' and the violence of the 'man-eating Cyclops'³⁴. In this (almost all) the crew are recalling vivid stories recounted by third parties. They do not summon to mind events they had witnessed first-hand in the Laestrygonian harbour or the Cyclops' cave. This shows the power of the spoken word and that the herald had told his tale perhaps too well. In any case, using the story narrated by the herald as a template, Odysseus' men will have time on the journey to Aea to picture to themselves the other crews being eaten one by one. The sounds of men dying and ships being crushed in the Laestrygonian harbour had no doubt reached the ears of Odysseus and his crew. However the harpooning of the crews by the 'Giant' Laestrygonians is more likely to be a detail appended by the herald. Meanwhile the smoke rising from the Laestrygonian homes will have been seen by Odysseus and his crew, and this ominous backdrop to the herald's words along with the sounds emanating from the harbour (10. 99) will have brought back to mind the

³² In the Homeric epics there is not uncommonly a hiatus involving 'νῆα' in the fifth and sixth feet (Iliad 23.3; Od.9.194).

³³ The Laestrygonian harbour with its narrow entrance and bluffs perhaps also evokes the topography of today's Limanski. In Limanski's favour is its etymology ('harbour') and its narrow entrance. Odesa has woods and cliffs meanwhile. There are also suggestive 'jeux de mots' in our emended line the second of which could point to Odesa as the location: (a) the words 'πενθ[ε] ὄρωσ' could also be an injunction to 'lament the sacrificial animals'. This reads as a grim literary omen of what is to come. It is as though the crews have to atone for their sins off Ithaca by being sacrificed in the bay of the Laestrygonians. Furthermore the singular imperative 'πενθ[ε]' seems to be directed at Odysseus himself. As with Elpenor's passing it behoves the leader to ensure proper regard is paid to the funerary rites demanded by the dead who otherwise may be stranded on the wrong side of the Styx (b) 'τῆ ἑκτῆ': despite meaning 'at the 6th [hour]', the nexus also means 'on the outside ['ship']' 'or 'at the ['ship'] on the outside'. Like (a) above this seems to prefigure disaster to come. The salient feature of the Laestrygonian debacle is the leader's decision to remain 'outside' the harbour. His ship ('the one on the outside') uniquely survives.

³⁴ 10.199-201.

smoke and sounds that had been observed and recorded from the island opposite the Cyclops' cave. Certainly ancient smoke will have been associated with cooking and eating³⁵.

15. Scylla:

Six of Odysseus' crew are still sated with first-hand images of cannibalistic horror derived from the Cyclops' cave. These men's mental strength is undermined by the further graphic images relayed by the herald. Meanwhile, assuming the tale of the Cyclops' cave has been doing the rounds³⁶ the rest of the crew have now heard their second account of cannibalism from the herald. Given the clinical exhaustion of the crew, one will not be surprised if this is the moment they head for the hold. This view is paradoxically supported by events in Book 12 where the sight of 6 men being eaten does not trigger a 'flight to the hold'. Instead the trauma only later causes the men - now safely ashore - to cry themselves to sleep. This proves that it is not the event per se that causes psychological disturbance but rather the recall of an event at a later date. In other words a mass dereliction of duty on board ship is only likely to occur outside of the moments when the peril has to be confronted.

If Odysseus' men had succumbed to psychological trauma in descending to the hold on the journey to Aeaëa, the Scylla episode in Book 12 will confirm that one of the reasons must be the triggering of a fear of being eaten alive. In that episode Odysseus decides not to alert his men to the dangers presented by the cannibalistic sea-monster Scylla, lest 'from fear they cease rowing and wrap themselves up inside [the ship]'³⁷. The verb 'πυκάζοιεν [σφέας]' means to 'wrap [themselves] up in clothing' not - as regularly translated - 'to huddle', and is elsewhere applied to the covering of Odysseus' head by an oxhide helmet (Iliad 10.271) and to the covering of the hero's shoulders with rags (22.488). Odysseus had himself wrapped himself in his cloak and descended to the hold when the storm had driven him back from Ithaca, though there his behaviour had been triggered not by fear but by despair and exhaustion. Odysseus' concern as the ship approaches Scylla and Charybdis is that the crew should not retreat into a state of fear-induced inertia. By covering their eyes in the dimness of the hold they will have been consigning the ship to its fate. Odysseus will have been anxious to avoid this scenario.

Odysseus' decision to withhold from the crew information about Scylla for fear the crew would retreat to the hold can be read as the fruit of the experience gained on the journey between the land of the Laestrygonians and Aeaëa (12.223f). By the time he encounters Scylla, Odysseus has learned that the one thing his men will not be able to stomach is being forced to replay in their minds the images of colleagues being devoured in both the Cyclops' cave and in the land of the Laestrygonians. That Scylla's own stock-in-trade was eating men alive is clearly relevant. However, although the horror that the crew will be made to endure at Scylla's hands lies at the root of their pre-existing psychological frailty, their instinct for self-preservation (the instinct to

³⁵ Note that the crews scramble out of their ships on the first night and take the path of least resistance by sleeping next to the surf line (Od.9.150-151). Whilst this may be considered merely a Homeric topos (sailors regularly sleep by the ship's stern cables) nevertheless the next mention of the crews' 'surf line' sleeping arrangements at 169 may not be otiose. This second reference may articulate the crews' deliberate attempt to use the sound of the 'long rollers' to deaden the unsettling cacophony of men, goats, and sheep emanating from the Cyclops' island opposite. Apropos of long rollers, we presume these are wave formations produced by the collision between the Danube waters at Sfantu Gheorghie and the seas beyond.

³⁶ 10.35 & 37: 'οἱ δ' ἑταροὶ ἐπέεσσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον ... ὃδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον'

³⁷ 12.223-225: 'Σκύλλην δ' οὐκέτ' ἐμυθεόμην, ἄπρηκτον ἀνίην, / μὴ πῶς μοι δείσαντες ἀπολήξειαν ἑταῖροι / εἰρεσίης, ἐντὸς δὲ πυκάζοιεν σφέας αὐτούς.'

‘fight’) will ensure the survival of the ship so long as they are at their oars³⁸. Odysseus knows that the reverse instinct (the instinct towards ‘flight’) overtakes the men when something (such as a herald’s speech) causes them to contemplate their worst experiences when they have the leisure to do so. This is what he wishes to avoid as he approaches Scylla. Trauma can be survived through courage but post-traumatic stress may disable a crew just when the trauma has to be faced. In sum, for the ship, the tale of Scylla will prove more dangerous than Scylla herself.

16. The Planctae:

In Book 12, during the encounter with the Planctae, Odysseus reveals his acquired knowledge of all the links in the psychological chain that will lead to the Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome taking hold. Not all these links will be present on every occasion. That is, some are either alternatives to each other or not strictly necessary. However the Planctae episode uniquely combines the following: (1) a sudden shocking event (2) a visual trigger of the memory of previous trauma (3) an aural trigger of the memory of previous trauma (avoided in this case by not mentioning Scylla) (4) exhaustion (5) leaderlessness and/or self-helplessness, the latter being a state of mind we have touched upon in earlier discussions but which is now revealed as an essential ingredient in the ‘flight to the hold’. What is also particularly interesting about the episode is that the syndrome threatens to overwhelm the crew in a context where a retreat to the hold could prove fatal. Hitherto the syndrome has been stimulated in contexts where the danger is either past or not immediately pressing.

A detailed analysis of the episode will, it is hoped, delineate the syndrome exactly and reveal how Odysseus combats its deleterious effects from a position of knowledge and understanding.

Before approaching Scylla and Charybdis, Odysseus had seen smoke and a big wave, followed by a booming sound³⁹. He later comes down through the ship showing that he had been at the stern when these phenomena occur (12.206). The crew however will have been facing him during this time. They will therefore only hear the sound which we suggest is what shocks and startles them (‘τῶν δ’ ἄρα δεισάντων’: 12.203)⁴⁰.

Next the men’s oars ‘fly from their hands’. This must be the result of the wave which, coming from the bows, snatches the oars from their startled grip. Circe had warned that the Planctae’s great waves dashed ships against rocks and swept broken spars away *en masse*. Odysseus’ ship now comes to a standstill because the crew are no longer rowing (but also because the first wave has passed). It is a critical moment characterised by ‘ἀμηχανη’ (‘being at a loss’: 9. 295). Yet the crew’s instinct towards ‘fight’ should have prompted them to seize the oars and resume rowing. Indeed later after Odysseus’ rallying speech the crew do resume their grip on the oars which are in any case held in place by the oar-loops and thole-pins⁴¹.

³⁸ Later, as we have seen, the crew are overcome by grief at the memory of their comrades being eaten. They fall asleep even as they cry. However they have eaten well and are safe: 12.309-311: ‘μνησάμενοι δὴ ἔπειτα φίλους ἐκλαιον ἐταίρους, / οὐς ἔφαγε Σκύλλη γλαφυρῆς ἐκ νηὸς ἐλοῦσα: / κλαιόντεσσι δὲ τοῖσιν ἐπήλυθε νήδυμος ὕπνος’.

³⁹ 12.201-205: ‘αὐτίκ’ ἔπειτα / καπνὸν καὶ μέγα κύμα ἴδον καὶ δοῦπον ἄκουσα / τῶν δ’ ἄρα δεισάντων ἐκ χειρῶν ἔπτατ’ ἐρετμά./ βόμβησαν δ’ ἄρα πάντα κατὰ ῥόον: ἔσχετο δ’ αὐτοῦ / νηῦς, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτ’ ἐρετμὰ προήκεα χερσὶν ἔπειγον’.

⁴⁰ Note the aorist tense of the participle. The access of alarm precedes the loss of grip on the oars.

⁴¹ The oars ‘all clattered downstream’. That is, the booming noise had startled the crew into interrupting their stroke. They are holding the oars in the water with the blades to the side. Before they know it the unseen wave coming from forward of the prow forces the blades up out of the water (‘they flew’), simultaneously knocking the handles downwards and sideways. The wave

We suggest that the crew, having lost their oars, had all looked behind them to find out the source of the noise and wave. What greets them is the sight of smoke deriving from the blasts of fire that the Planctae produce. And emerging from the smoke is the next wave. In seeing smoke, the crew's thoughts will suddenly turn to the cannibalism of the Cyclops and the Laestrygonians. Over the course of books 9 & 10 'smoke' had developed into a short-hand trigger of the fear of being eaten alive. Now, in Book 12, it is likely to engender a flight to the hold. This is because after the first wave the men now know that rowing against the succeeding waves will be labour in vain. It is the waves that engender the feeling of helplessness on this occasion.

Penultimately, the men have been at their oars for a long stretch on a very hot day (12.172, 175-176, 180). They are exhausted. Odysseus knows that this combination of factors constitutes a recipe for disaster. It is now his leadership that stands between fight and flight.

Finally there is the crew's self-helplessness into which feeds Odysseus' self-resourcefulness

17. No Smoke without Fire:

It is important to trace the history of this association between smoke and terror in the minds of the crew in order to illustrate how such associations can become clinical. The ship had arrived near the land of the Cyclops in the midst of an impenetrable fog. This is ominous of the smoke that will dog the encounter with the Cyclops. The crew receive their first sign of the Cyclops at 9.166 when they 'look across towards the nearby land of the Cyclops and see smoke'. This suggests they do not see the land itself. We know that heavy rollers affected the area where they were beached. This will affect their ability to look directly across the water even at land that is at no great distance. They notice smoke because that is the one phenomenon that rises above the rollers. Later when Odysseus is crossing to the land of the Cyclops he must be assumed to be using the plume(s) of smoke to orient the ship towards the area inhabited by the Cyclopes. Later Odysseus creates his own smoke in the Cyclops' cave when performing a sacrifice. Following this, the Cyclops brings back a mighty weight of dried wood 'to serve him at supper time'. This must mean that the Cyclops roasted his meat. This in turn will mean that he cooks the flesh of Odysseus' men ('he cut the bodies limb by limb and prepared his supper'). The survivors (we must suppose) peer through the smoke and 'wail' on beholding their colleagues being consumed. Above all they feel 'helpless' (9.295).

Later Odysseus comes up with a plan that involves the production of abundant smoke. A length of Polyphemus' greenwood staff is sharpened and tempered in the fire. It is placed beneath dung from which further fumes will emanate⁴². The stake is later reheated to the point of catching fire before being thrust into the Cyclops' eye. The hissing it produces is likened to that of iron being tempered at a blacksmith's. There will be no hissing without an effluent of smoke-like steam. Later, amongst the Laestrygonians, not only Odysseus upon his point of outlook but also the men on the ship, see smoke arising (10.98). This determines Odysseus to seek out 'those

travels past yanking the oars from the rowers' grip. The wave is assisted by the torsion in the oar-loops which serve to pull the oar towards the stern. The blades will clatter against the side of the boat (and each other) as they point 'downstream' of the wave. The effect is similar to a rower catching a crab though the process is quite different. The torsion in the leather oar-loops will continue to act on the blades keeping them uniformly horizontal and pointing to the stern. The blades will be difficult to recover even by a crew with nothing else on their minds.

⁴² Dung will give off smoke much like peat.

who eat bread upon the earth' (that is 'men who use smoke-producing bread-ovens')⁴³. Later, as we have seen, as the men in the harbour are hauled off on spits, the background smoke will conjure up an image of barbecued human souflaki. It is reasonable to suppose, in other words, that smoke has become synonymous with 'monstrous cannibalism' in the minds of Odysseus' crew. Not only that, but smoke is also associated with the helplessness which characterised the 6 men's original experience of cannibalism in the Cyclops' cave and which will have formed part of the tale that they relate to the rest. Having lost their oars, the men are rendered helpless by the sight of the second wave. The smoke triggers their terror. They are already half-way to the hold.

18. Odysseus' Speech at 12.208-221; Homer and Virgil:

However, Odysseus now has the advantage of having been told by Circe the procedure for survival, namely that the ship be propelled swiftly past Scylla under oars. Circe had twice insisted on this as the means to guarantee that no more than 6 men be plucked from their benches and devoured during what has to be the first and only passage of Scylla's cliff (12.108-109; 124)⁴⁴ Odysseus knows then that the development of the syndrome must be short-circuited immediately as the crew are required on deck.

This is why Odysseus tells the men to strike the deep surf 'while sitting on their benches' (12.214-215). Since there is no sense in which the men could strike the surf whilst not sitting at their benches, there must be a particular reason for the addition of these apparently otiose words. In fact Odysseus' immediate and overriding concern is to ensure the men use the benches to sit upon or to tie Lotus-Eaters down - not to duck beneath - on their way to the hold. To ensure their compliance however, he next persuades them that their efforts at the oar will drive them away from the smoke. This is why the helmsman is publicly directed to keep the ship 'well away from the smoke'. Odysseus' words to the helmsman must be spoken in a raised voice. Their real message is one of reassurance for the crew who will be rowing away from their worst phobia. Odysseus' third concern is to ensure the crew are not made to feel helpless by having their oars spirited from their grip again. Thus his second command to the helmsman is to avoid the 'wave'. Lastly he requires that the crew show trust in his own resourcefulness or 'metis'. They must believe he has a plan to escape their current predicament. This is why he reminds the men of the Cyclops' cave, for that was where 'helplessness' was transformed into 'resourcefulness' through leadership.

Odysseus' words are carefully chosen to produce the desired effect. Not only do his instructions lead to the men being removed from the phenomena that stimulate the syndrome, he also avoids reigniting the syndrome through a description of cannibalism (at the hands of Scylla)⁴⁵. That was the mistake he had made in letting the herald tell his story en route to Aea.

⁴³ This is an omen of smoke that is directed at the reader.

⁴⁴ We suggest that the 6 sailors eaten by Scylla are the same 6 that survived the ordeal in the Cyclops cave. The 12 men chosen to accompany Odysseus to the Cyclops' cave are described as 'the best'. Of the 8 still alive in the cave on the last night, four are chosen by lot to assist Odysseus in blinding the Cyclops. These are the ones Odysseus would have chosen himself for their 'daring' (9.331-335). None of these four are eaten by the Cyclops that night (otherwise we would have been told). The 6 men eaten by Scylla are the 'best in strength and might' (12.245-246), which suggests they comprise the six survivors from the cave.

⁴⁵ Note that sailors at sea suffering from sleep-deprivation have reported hallucinations involving being eaten. See <http://www.worldrunch.com>: 'French sailor Michel Desjoyaux, who won the race [the Vendée Globe] twice, recalls that fellow French skipper Roland Jourdain once thought his compass was the bloody head of a monkey who was trying to eat him'.

It is not Scylla's cannibalism per se that Odysseus avoids. It is his mention of that cannibalism to the crew at the wrong time.

This calls into question the meaning of the famous line Od.12.212:

‘καί που τῶνδε μνήσεσθαι ὄϊω’ (*,and I think perhaps we will remember these things’*)

made the more famous (and consequently the more unquestioned) by Virgil's recasting of it in the Aeneid:

‘Forsitan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit’ (*,perhaps we will take pleasure one day in recalling these things’*)

A typical assumption is that Odysseus is here looking forward to a time when his men in their old age sentimentally reflect on their ordeal amongst the Cyclopes (‘& I suppose no doubt we will remember these things’). Virgil's line is even more saccharin (‘perhaps even these experiences it will one day give us pleasure to recall’). However Homer's words make a great deal more tactical sense in Odysseus' mouth if the verb ‘μνήσεσθαι’ is emended to the aorist infinitive ‘μνήσασθαι’. The line now translates as follows: ‘and I suppose mention has no doubt been made of these things’⁴⁶. This perfectly encapsulates the coy modesty of Odysseus who affects to be unsure (‘ὄϊω’) of what he knows must be the case (‘που’), namely that an account of the events in the Cyclopes' cave will have been demanded of the six survivors by all the rest of the crew. The story will have been retold myriad times. Syntactically, the pronoun ‘these things’ should strictly refer to the three qualities Odysseus had shown in the cave, namely courage, planning, and intelligence. However Odysseus knows very well that any ‘mention’ that has been made will relate to the plot not to his character traits. His own qualities will have emerged as a by-product of that overarching story. It is sufficient for Odysseus' purposes if, to the men, the pronoun ‘τῶνδε’ means ‘events in the Cyclopes' cave’⁴⁷.

In sum, of the remaining ship's complement of 46, only 6 crew members will have first-hand knowledge of events in the Cyclopes' cave. Odysseus however signals his knowledge that the story has been ‘going the rounds’ and can now treat the whole crew as if they are all beneficiaries of his cunning at that time. Of course, as we have seen and as Odysseus is all too well aware, telling a gruesome tale at the wrong time can plunge the men into a psychological

⁴⁶ The form of the verb ‘μνήσασθαι’ is interpreted here as an impersonal construction. However the alternative reading, namely with ‘you [the 6 survivors of the cave]’ as the understood subject of ‘μνήσασθαι’ is also acceptable.

⁴⁷ Virgil's own line can be read as the reworking of a deliberately-adopted variant reading (μνήσεσθαι). Compare Aeneid 3.97 where Virgil must be alluding to a variant pro-Roman reading of Iliad 20.307-308 (J.D.Reed Virgil's Gaze: Nation and Poetry in the Aeneid p.7 note 14). However, he can also be read as commenting on the (as we would hold) original meaning (‘μνήσασθαι’). The verb ‘iuvabitur’ for instance could also mean ‘it shall avail [us]’. Virgil uses ‘iuvo’ in this impersonal sense at Aeneid 2.776 and 10.56. Meanwhile the infinitive ‘meminisse’ can mean ‘to recall in words’. Thus the overall meaning becomes ‘perhaps it will avail me/you/us to recall in words these events too on future occasions’. This now evokes the typical exempla-filled Roman adhortatio the prototype of which Aeneas is in fact in the midst of delivering. Meanwhile on a different tack, the word ‘adhortatio’ along with several other uses of the verb ‘hortor’ in this note bring to mind a highly appropriate etymology of ‘cohors’ namely ‘mutual encouragement’ (Velius Longus De Orthographia 6.79: ‘a mutua hortatione’). In future Aeneas suggests his men's spirits may be usefully stirred by mention of the unheroic but ‘real’ shared experience of a storm at sea rather than the fact that they had ‘approached’ but not ‘encountered’ the mythological Cyclops. This also comments on Homer's text in that it prompts the reflection that Odysseus is exhorting his men by alluding not to shared past experiences but to shared past reports of those experiences which mythologise his role (a role he is further mythologizing in reporting all this to the Phaeacians). The word ‘perhaps’ in Virgil clearly comments on Odysseus' coyly confident ‘no doubt’. The less-than-assured unheroic leader gives unassuming advice. He adumbrates the building of a morale culture within the collective of a real Roman ‘cohort’ who experience real trials as a unit. The grammatical uncertainty over ‘who is being helped’ prioritises the guidance as a principle over the specific beneficiaries of the guidance. The confident heroic leader meanwhile constructs morale retrospectively around the legends associated with own personal resourcefulness. The word ‘perhaps’ in Virgil also glances at the power of the story to deflate morale if told inopportune. It did not avail Odysseus' men that the herald told his tale en route to Aea. Finally ‘perhaps’ also glances at Homer's text and suggests that tense of ‘μνήσασθαι’ may ‘perhaps’ be a future ‘μνήσεσθαι’.

black hole. At the same time the same tale can be cherry-picked for aspects that encourage the crew to everyone's ultimate advantage. The dispiriting aspects can be conveniently ignored. If, as we suggest, the 6 survivors of the cave are the same 6 whom Scylla devours, their parting gift to the crew is that they told their story in time. The passing down of 'what happened' has forged a culture on board. Bequeathing the tale engenders a leader-focused group dynamic that can be manipulated in engaging positively with 'what happens next'. Stories can be end-lessly retold, which is, not uncoincidentally, the note on which the first half of the *Odyssey* concludes.

Knowing the story is known in detail by everyone, Odysseus is concerned to focus attention on one specific aspect, namely the massive stone that 'penned' the men in the cave. He relates the brute strength that the Cyclops displayed not to the dashing out of the brains of 6 colleagues but to the movement of this stone to and from the doorway. Odysseus must convince the men that his mental resourcefulness is a match for any (apparently) unsurmountable obstacle the world of physical brutishness can put in the crew's way. He convinces them that he has more than enough resourcefulness to counter any sign of helplessness on their part. Thus, even as the crew's helplessness dissolves the leader's resourcefulness fills the vacuum. Odysseus is a match for the impossible.

19. Landings: Differences and Similarities (1):

We return to the nature of the landing at Aeaëa. It is generally assumed that Homeric ships come to shore in a more or less predictable way. Yet similar but not identical landings will inevitably highlight the points in which these landings differ. Account must be taken of these differences in order to reach a nuanced understanding of the different narrative contexts that lead up to the relevant ship landing in the way that it does. Odysseus' landings at Aeaëa and at the island opposite the land of the Cyclops are instructive in this regard. On both occasions, the ship makes an uncontrolled prow-first landing against the beach, but at Aeaëa the crew fail to lower the sails⁴⁸. The crew of a grounded and therefore stationary ship must always and immediately lower sail lest the mast snaps under the pressure of the wind in the canvas. There is however one possible explanation for the crew's failure to observe protocol at Aeaëa. When far out at sea the dispirited crew had simply shipped oars and headed for the hold without raising either mast or sail. This makes perfect sense. Raising the mast and sail was amongst the most taxing of all nautical drills. The crew will have had neither the strength nor the collective morale to accomplish it. The mastless ship had drifted into Aeaëa as though abandoned. Just as in the approach to the island near the Cyclops, 'some god guided [the ship] in'.

As we have seen it is a river God who both guides and propels the ship. The unseen work of the God of the Danube has been recognised down the ages. In a Victorian travel book by Edmund Spencer⁴⁹, there is the following entry: 'Within six or seven hours' voyage of Odessa, we fell in with the current of the Danube, and immediately after passed near Serpents' Island, the only one in the Black Sea The author had been travelling by steamer from Constantinople to

⁴⁸ 9.149. The Cretan ship in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo similarly fails to lower sail after grounding. One has to assume Apollo's majesty miraculously preserves the mast intact or that he calls off the wind.

⁴⁹ Edmund Spencer *Travels in Circassia, Krim Tartary etc including a Steam Voyage down the Danube from Vienna to Constantinople and round the Black Sea* (1836) p.213-214. He continues: 'As a land-mark it is of great service to the mariner, in consequence of the fogs which frequently hang over this part of the Black Sea, and the lowness of the coast about the mouths of the Danube'.

Odessa. The ship is clearly skirting Serpent's Island to the west when the residual force of the Danube redirects it eastwards. An ancient ship without motorised propulsion would inevitably be drawn along the same route as soon as it too reached the efflux of the Danube Delta. There are two striking aspects of Spencer's account (a) the fact that the force of the Danube will have been strong enough to carry a ship like Odysseus' 40 kilometres to Leuce ('Serpents' Island') and (b) the fact that Odysseus sailed for 6 -7 days between Berezan and Odesa while Spencer's ship took 6-7 hours to reach Odesa from the Danube Delta.

We are particularly concerned with (b) since it points to a possible corruption in the text. It is only 31 kilometers from Berezan to Odesa which we consider to be the ancient Laestrygonia. The harbour entrance is very narrow thanks to an arm that almost makes a lake of the interior. Meanwhile, the seven-day 'forced march' seems excessive in terms of what is required. The text would make more sense if the 6-7 period of days were reduced to hours - and only 5 at that - and if the night shifts were considered a scribal error. With that in mind, we suggest lines 10.80-81 which currently stand as follows:

‘ἐξῆμαρ μὲν ὁμῶς πλέομεν νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμαρ / ἐβδομάτῃ δ’ ἰκόμεσθα Λάμου αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον’
‘Nonetheless we sailed day and night for 6 days; / on the seventh night we reached the towering fortress of Lamos’

were intended to read:

‘πενθ’ ὥρας πλέομεν, νοσφ’ ἡματος ἦε τι νύκτος; / τῇ ἕκτῃ δ’ ἰκόμεσθα Λάμου αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον’.

‘we sailed for 5 hours taking no regard for day or night; at the sixth hour we reached the towering fortress of Lamos’

Our reconstruction of events is this. Odysseus has reasoned that, with the crews exhausted from rowing and with no favourable wind to be expected from the intransigent Aeolus, he will have no choice but to put out to sea with everyone resigned to their fate and huddled in the hold of their respective ship. At the same time this retreat from the world will be a way of dealing with inconsolable loss. Homer's diction here (‘πλέομεν ... ἰκόμεσθα’: Od 10.80-81) is the same as that used later in describing the single-ship departure from Laestrygonia when we suggest all aboard were soon to take refuge in the hold, and with even more to grieve about (‘πλέομεν ... ἀφικόμεθα’: 133 & 135). Apropos of diction, the imperfect tense of ‘τείρετο’ (10.82) is reflective. The grievous rowing had become accumulative. It ‘had been wearing down’ the crews’ resolve over time. It is not the current rowing that causes this fall in morale. For the most recent bout of rowing has been very brief. Here is the emended text of the relevant passage 10.78-81:

τείρετο δ’ ἀνδρῶν θυμὸς ὑπ’ εἰρεσίῃ ματίῃ τε./ ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ ἀφραδίησιν ἐτ’ οὐτις φαίνεται πομπή, / πενθ’ ὥρας ἔλασαν, νοσφ’ ἡματος ἦε τι νύκτος,/ τῇ ἕκτῃ δ’ ἰκόμεσθα Λάμου αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον,
 ,the men's morale was being eroded by their rowing and their vain efforts; but since due to their folly there still did not appear any favourable wind, they rowed for 5 hours having no regard for night or day; / at the sixth hour we reached the towering fortress of Lamos’

In this our latest and last reappraisal of the line we have repunctuated with a full-stop after ‘ματίῃ τε’ This brings us to the realisation that (a) whilst continuous rowing followed by disappointment has affected morale (b) yet the current lack of an accompanying wind is a direct result of the disrespect the men had exhibited towards Aeolus (c) the crew can only blame themselves (d) to redeem themselves and to counter the lack of wind, they should take up oars. No doubt the sails have been set, but as distinct from Odysseus' earlier management of the sheet on the approach to Ithaca, this is in hope not expectation. However from our perspective, there is

one more diagnostic that can be applied to the text. If we are right to estimate the Phaeacian rowing speed at 10.1841666 km/hr, then the 51 kilometers to Odesa become a surmountable obstacle⁵⁰. They will be covered in 5.028 hours, just as each of the fifteen hours plus spent crossing from Circe's island to Peuce under canvas had absorbed 4.73 kilometers. This brief period at the oar means that the usual pattern of daytime labour followed by nocturnal rest goes by the board ('νοσφ' ἤματα ἢε τι νύκτος'). The Greek here could also be persuaded to express Homer's own somewhat dry attitude to his diction. In this part of the epic there are many references to days and the number of days spent at the oar. Here, for a change, there is no regard paid by the author to days and nights. The context here revolves around hours.

One reason we feel these emendations are not gratuitous relates to the alternative division of letters to produce a fresh text. Thus the words 'ἢε τι νύκτος' ('nor taking any whit of regard for the night') could be reformed as 'ἢ ἐτι νύκτος' ('nor taking further account of the night / nor any longer showing regard for the night'). The crew dismiss their normal timetabling concerns from their minds as they struggle with their consciences. They knuckle down to a task they have brought upon themselves.

We suggest that Homer expects the reader to factor scientific learning into a constant process of reconsidering 'what must have happened' or 'why things happened as they did'. Certainly Pliny's information was that the Danube's waters only became fully salinated 50 Roman miles into the Black Sea⁵¹. However information is nothing without interpretation. In Pliny's passage, the 50 milia passuum may be applied in a north-south direction rather than from the west out into the Euxine.

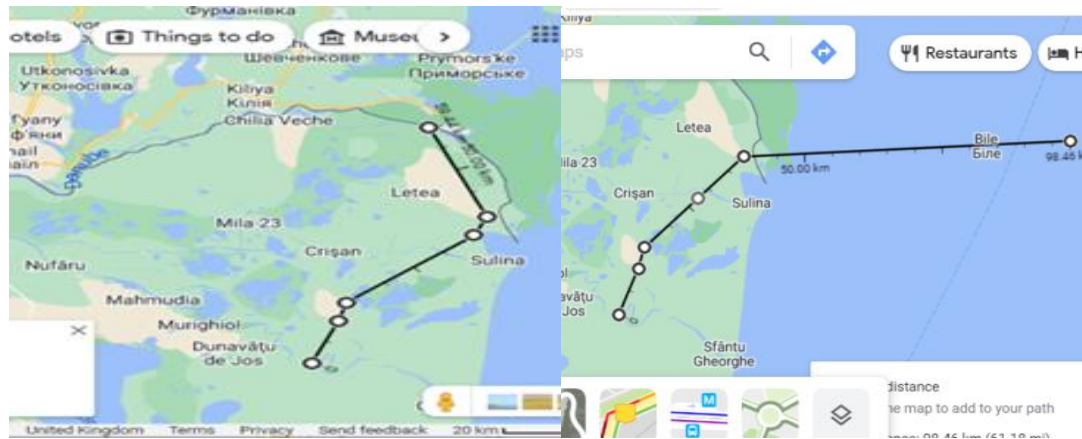


Fig. 8 & 9. *Pliny's 40 mp Danube mouth*

In fact our ideal position is that both interpretations are correct. The Danube will be salty from Babina Island's most easterly point down as far as the later site of Ad Stoma. Pliny's estimate of the saltiness of the Danube also serves as a means to express his opinion about the top and bottom extent of the Danube mouths or the abandoned Galinova on Peuce in the south.

⁵⁰ See my *Disiecta Membra* (2019).

⁵¹ Pliny NH 4.79: 'singula autem ora sunt tanta, ut prodatur in XL passuum longitudinis vinci mare dulcemque intellegi haustum'; 'but so huge are the several mouths [of the Danube] that it is said that over a distance of 40 miles [59.270 km] the sea is conquered, and the water found to be fresh'.

But, heading east across the Euxine, the Danube will also constitute a brackish current until it loses all impetus 14.75km beyond Leuce.

20. Landings: Differences and Similarities (2):

Meanwhile the Laestrygonian harbour also provides an instructive comparison with that of Aeaea. The former is never beset by waves, while the bay at Aeaea is ‘ship-sheltering’ or (literally) a place ‘where ships may lie at ease’. Both harbours are ideal for mooring but mooring is not the procedure adopted at Aeaea. The failure to moor at Aeaea is not only the result of the crew’s insensibility in the hold. It is also an indication of the crew’s indifference to their lot. A careful, painstaking mooring had not availed the crews in the Laestrygonian harbour⁵². Meanwhile a cavalier decision on Odysseus’ part to tie up near rocks beyond the ‘bright calm’ of the Laestrygonian harbour proves life-saving. Sometimes speed, expediency, and intuition are of the essence.

21. The Stag:

Thus the unrecorded events on board ship between the land of the Laestrygonians and Aeaea can be reconstructed by extrapolating the narrative backwards from the method of landing at Aeaea. This provides the key to unravelling ‘what must have happened’. However this process of narrative reconsideration, like the reach of the Danube’s current, is difficult to delimit.

When Odysseus had cast the dead stag in front of the ship on Aeaea we expected the men to be on the beach where Odysseus had left them on that third morning (10.142-147). However, whilst he has been away, they have reverted to a state of insulation from the world. They must have wrapped themselves in their cloaks since we learn later that they uncover their faces (10.179: ‘ἐκ δὲ καλυψάμενοι’). The sound of the falling beast does not initially seize their attention. Instead Odysseus is forced to come close to each of them and address them in gentle words. One reason for their inattention is that they seem to be asleep. The phrase ‘ἀνέγειρα δ’ ἑταίρους’ (10.172) means inter alia ‘I woke up my comrades’. Another reason for their failure to notice the stag may relate to their location.

In the Septuagint Jonah descends into the hold of the ship and falls asleep even at the height of a storm (‘Ἴωνᾶς δὲ κατέβη εἰς τὴν κοίλην τοῦ πλοίου καὶ ἐκάθευδε’: Jonas 1). If Odysseus’ men are asleep with their heads veiled, they are unlikely to have omitted an intermediate stage in the process of withdrawing from the world. They must be thought to have returned to the ship’s hold. If this is correct, it is incumbent to ask ourselves if the men might have succumbed yet again to their post-traumatic stress after two days on the beach. First of all it will not be the case that they have slept on the beach. The tiredness and grief has led them, not to sleep, but to rack their hearts continually, whilst avoiding food⁵³. They will be chewing over the words of the herald whilst their exhaustion will be draining their mental resolve and keeping their minds locked in a spiral of negative images. When Odysseus quickly disappears ‘upwards’

⁵² A windless harbour such as that of the Laestrygonians will encourage crews to moor close together since there will be no likelihood of the ships being thrown against each other by gusts. However this means that the stoning of such ships from the cliffs will be a turkey shoot. The care needed to moor side-by-side means the crews are still aboard when the Laestrygonians attack. See Aeschylus *Choephoroi* 767 for mooring as a time-consuming, pernicky process.

⁵³ Arrestees at police stations will often not eat or drink during the entire period of their detention.

to reconnoitre the land, they will be reminded of his reconnoitering of the Laestrygonians' harbour. There Odysseus had not climbed far since he saw no more than that which the crew saw, namely smoke. But his very act in climbing to a look-out on Aeaea will remind them of that smoke which will, in turn, conjure up the image of stone-throwing cannibals. Lastly the departure of their leader out of sight on Aeaea may have provoked a sense of helplessness in the men.

Having deposited the stag, Odysseus, we suggest, boards ship, and descends into the hold. He approaches each man individually suggesting a concern for personal intimacy. His words as well as being gently humorous and encouraging give a strong indication of his immediate environs. He begins with the word 'γάρ' which elliptically suggests he has just proposed the only viable course of action given the circumstances (that is, that they should 'wake up')⁵⁴. The men's slumber feeds into the trope of sleep as an age-old euphemism for death and Odysseus is alert to the potential this affords for irony. Not to awake is to be dead. 'Wake up' Odysseus implies, after which he explains that they are 'not yet about to sink [like a ship] into the house of Hades' ('οὐ γάρ πω καταδυσόμεθ' ἀχνύμενοί περ εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους': 10.174-175). The verb 'καταδύω' carries several apposite nuances all expressive of a wry humour, and only one of which is conveyed by the translation above. It also means 'we shall not yet slink away and hide [in Hades]'. With this figure of speech Odysseus twits the men with their actions in returning to the hold. The verb also means 'to set' as of the sun and this creates further irony. Hades' portion of creation is described in the Iliad as being 'the murky darkness' (15.191: 'Ἄϊδος δ' ἔλαχε ζόφον ἠερόντα'). Moreover Odysseus later wonders how Elpenor has managed to reach 'the murky darkness' of Hades so quickly after his death⁵⁵. In the meantime, the word 'ζόφος' also defines the area of darkness into which the sun sets in the west (Od.3.335). By waking the men however, Odysseus is implying rather that they are 'rising suns' who are not yet about to set into Hades. This constitutes a clever conceit. Meanwhile the conceit in the words 'μηδὲ τρυχώμεθα λιμῶ' ('lest we be eaten by hunger') and the reference to the men's comatose state in 'πρὶν μόρσιμον ἡμαρ ἐπέλθῃ' ('until the day of death steals over us [like sleep]') will add to the gently mocking tone. Nonetheless, the impact of Odysseus' fund of gallows humour will be lost unless the action takes place in the hold and unless the crew had been asleep.

However the gallows humour may go deeper than has been realised. For Jonas uses the same word ('belly') not only of the ship's hold, but also of the whale's belly, and of Hell itself ('ἐκ κοιλίας ἄδου ... ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτου': Jonas 2). This is a tantalising hint that for the ancients 'Hades' may have been sailors' slang for 'the hold'. Moreover, as we have seen, two Homeric adjectives appended to ships express the cavernousness of the hold ('γλαφυρός' 'κοίλος') and the latter of these adjectives is also evocative of 'the hollowness' of the grave⁵⁶. Clearly an equation of the hold with Hades will interpose a further layer of allusiveness into Odysseus' address to his men on Aeaea⁵⁷. This brings us back briefly to the Homeric Hymn to

⁵⁴ Compare 10.190 ('ὄ φίλοι, οὐ γάρ τ' ἴδμεν ...') through which Odysseus pre-announces his option as being the best of bad lot by reference to the extreme parlousness of their situation. See also 12.208 and below. Odysseus' decisions are all Scyllas to everyone else's Charybdes.

⁵⁵ The vignette is also proleptic of the imminent visit of the crew to the House of Hades in Book 11. Odysseus' words in lines 10.174-175 ironically allude to the crew's 'day of destiny' which for these men will not constitute the day of their death but a visit to the halls of death. When Odysseus says 'not yet shall we descend to Hades' he is unaware that that descent will be not long delayed.

⁵⁶ E.g. Iliad 24.797; Euripides Alcmene 898.

⁵⁷ See Appendix B.

Apollo. We suggested that the Cretan crew at Taenarum must have intended to exit the ship by the hatch(es). Taenarum's fame rested on more than the dolphin who saved Arion⁵⁸. It was also the location of the 'mouth of Hades'⁵⁹. If the hold of the ship was called 'Hades' then the exit from that hold will have been called 'the mouth of Hades'. We suggest that this allusion was in the mind of the author of the Homeric Hymn, and that the allusion demonstrates, despite the circularity of the argument, that ships had hatches in the stern.

On Aeaia Odysseus next insists that the men eat and drink. They carry out his instructions with alacrity. The food and drink to which he refers could be interpreted as being in or on the ship. In *Odyssey* 2 the barley skins and amphorae loaded onto a ship by Telemachus' comrades are said to be placed 'on the well-decked ship' ('*ἔυσσέλμῳ ἐπὶ νηὶ*': 2.414). Of course that ship was a 20-oared vessel and it may have had special provision for keeping comestibles in the upper part of the ship. Nevertheless even if Odysseus' food was in the hold, the drink he refers to seems to have been on the *ikria* or 'deck', assuming a passage in Archilochus is to be relied upon⁶⁰. Archilochus enjoins his interlocutor to prepare a degustation of the various wines on board ship. The wine-jars are on the '*σελματα*' ('deck planks'). Meanwhile the '*σελματα*' in Euripides' *Helen* are located on the prow *ikria*. In that play the heroine has instructed the Greeks to carry a mettlesome bull onto the prow to be sacrificed. We are told that the men duly deposit the bull on the '*σελματα*'. Meanwhile in the Homeric Hymn to Dionysos the god transforms himself into a lion 'at the farthest extremity of the ship'⁶¹. We soon learn that this lion is on the outermost '*σελμα*', a circumstance which causes the crew to 'flee in alarm to the stern'. This proves the lion was on a '*σελμα*' ('plank') at the prow and it brings us back to the Homeric epithet '*ἔυσσέλμῳ*' ('well-decked') which we saw being used in the context of the provisioning of Telemachus' ship. The suffix '*-σέλμῳ*' derives from '*σελμα*'. Thus, even if '*σελμα*' technically means no more than 'a plank for the deck' at the very least it locates provisions on the decked area of ships. And it is the prow *ikria* that seems to be particularly associated with '*σελματα*'.

As they uncover their heads in the hold the men will descry the skins of barley lying next to them⁶². This will add immediacy to Odysseus' specific injunction to the crew to 'bethink themselves of food'. (10.177). However, the earlier mention of 'drink' is designed to encourage a majority of the men to ascend to the prow *ikria* to fetch the heavy amphorae (9.204-205). As soon as they step onto the *ikria* they will see the stag lying on the beach below. The men gaze long and hard at it because their disbelief is almost overpowering ('*ἐκ δὲ καλυψάμενοι παρὰ θῖν' ἄλῳς ἀτρυγέτιοι / θηήσαντ' ἔλαφον ...*': 10.179-180)⁶³. Odysseus has stage-managed a

⁵⁸ Note that in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo the men were eager to disembark at Taenarum. This town was famous for being the point where a dolphin had spirited the bard Arion to safety after the crew of Arion's ship had forced the latter to meet his death on board or to jump overboard. Herodotus (1.24) provides the standard account. The Cretan men in the Homeric Hymn (as infamous liars) can be associated with Arion's Corinthian crew who later lie about the fate of the bard. The Cretans had hoped to see the conflated dolphin/bard (Apollo [in two guises]) jumping ship but not coming to shore just as the Corinthians had seen Arion jumping ship but had not seen their dolphin/bard (dolphin + Arion) coming to shore. Both Cretans and Corinthians look upon a 'mega thauma' 'an extraordinary wonder' (Apollo as a dolphin and Arion as an expert singer).

⁵⁹ See Apollodorus 2.5.12; Pindar *Pythian Odes* 4.44f; Euripides *Hercules Furens*. 23ff.; Pausanias 3.25.5; Seneca, *Herakles Furens* 807ff. Sophocles may have written a Satyric drama on the descent of Herakles into Hades at Taenarum. See *The Fragments of Sophocles*, ed. A. C. Pearson, vol. i pp. 167ff.

⁶⁰ Archilochus frg. 5A (Diehl3) lines 6-7: *ἀλλ' ἄγε συν κωθωνι, θοῆς δια σελματα νοῆς / φοῖτα καὶ κοῦλων ποματ' ἀφελεκε καδῶν*: 'but come, go along the deck planking of the swift ship with a cup, and draw off draughts from the wine jars'.

⁶¹ *Helen* 1562-1563: '*... ταῦρειον δέμας / ἐς πρῶραν ἐμβαλεῖτε...*'; 1566: '*... ταῦρον φέροντές τ' εἰσέθεντο σέλματα ...*'

⁶² One presumes the food has been gifted by Aeolus.

⁶³ There is a long gap between the action of the participle ('having uncovered their faces') and the verb ('they gazed'). On certain occasions Homer chooses to telescope his plot. It is our task to disentangle these knotted parts of his thread. The adjective

psychological coup in masterly fashion. The crew are awoken from their torpor and stunned into reengaging with their leader. This brings us back once more to the Scylla episode. To remind the men there of his resourcefulness in the Cyclops' cave, Odysseus had approached each man individually, just as he had done with such success in the hold at Aeaea. Clearly Odysseus, the leader, learns from experience how best to treat his charges. Treating them as individuals is crucial to getting his message across. In the Scylla episode, rather than wait until the men have fled to the hold, Odysseus uses his acquired leadership skills to pre-empt any such occurrence. The success of the passage of Scylla is founded on the wisdom won at, and even on the way to, Aeaea.

22. Verbal and Visual Orientation:

At Aeaea, once the morale of Odysseus' men has been restored by a day spent feasting on the stag they lie down to sleep but not - as one tends to expect - by the stern cables⁶⁴. This is another subtle reminder that the ship is prow-on to shore. Yet cables could no doubt be attached to the front of the ship, just as anchors could be dropped from the stern. The point here is that cables are unnecessary given the strength of the onshore 'Danubian' current and the absence of wind. Next morning Odysseus makes a speech knowing that he has bad news to relay but confident that the men are physically and mentally prepared to handle the worst. His confession that he and his crew know the location of neither the dawn nor the darkness, nor of the sunrise nor the sunset, has been widely discussed by commentators⁶⁵. In fact the words suggest not that the men do not perceive these phenomena, but that they have no geographical fixed point by which to gauge their whereabouts. They see the sun set, but not being familiar with the landscape behind which the sun sets, they cannot orient themselves within the parameters of their geographical knowledge.

This is the same predicament one might encounter with a compass on a mountain. The compass will help one to go north-east from where one is. But if one does not know where one is then the compass will be ineffective in getting one to where one desires to go. Odysseus realises that, if they are already further west than Ithaca, then heading towards the setting sun will be counterproductive. Conversely, if they are east of Ithaca, then heading east will take them further from their destination. He does not know which way to go. Thus staying put and setting sail into the open seas is a choice between Scylla and Charybdis. In fact this passage anticipates the choice of the lesser evil which lies at the root of the Scylla and Charybdis episode in book 12.

Odysseus' words at 10.192-193 have been particularly misinterpreted ('ἀλλὰ φραζώμεθα θᾶσσον εἴ τις ἔτ' ἔσται μῆτις. ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἴομαι εἶναι'). A typical translation makes Odysseus appear intellectually laboured in diction and thought ('but let us straightaway consider whether there is still any plan. As for me I do not think there is'). The problem concerns 'ἔτι'. It must mean 'a further ['plan']'. It is often used adverbially in this sense alongside 'ἄλλος' ('another

'ἀτρυγέτιοι' meanwhile, as applied to the sea, may derive from 'ἀ' privative and 'τρυγαῶ' ('I harvest'). The 'unharvested' sea however may suggest an 'unreaped abundance' (of fish) rather than 'barrenness'. In our passage above, a nuance of plenty seems appropriate. It also meshes with the sense of a nexus such as 'πόντον ἐπ' ἰχθυόεντα (Od.9.83: 'over the teeming deep'). See however Richard Hunter *On Coming After: Studies in Post-Classical Greek Literature and its Reception* (2008), p.464.

⁶⁴ *Iliad* 1.476.

⁶⁵ Od.10. 190-192: 'ὦ φίλοι, οὐ γάρ τ' ἴδμεν, ὅπη ζόφος οὐδ' ὅπη ἠώς, / οὐδ' ὅπη ἠέλιος φρασεσίμβροτος εἶσ' ὑπὸ γαῖαν, / οὐδ' ὅπη ἀννεῖται.'; 'friends, for we know neither where the darkness is nor the dawn, neither where the sun that brings light to mortals goes beneath the earth nor where it rises'.

further ...')⁶⁶. However on this occasion it does the work of 'ἄλλος' on its own. Odysseus is suggesting that the crew might wish to see if they can devise a 'further' or 'alternative' plan, or simply 'another' plan (other than the one he seems about to propose). The word 'ἔτι' here is an adverb to be taken with 'ἔσται' and it operates in the same way as the Romanian word 'încă' (= 'still' 'yet' but also 'a further'). For instance, in Romanian, the question 'aveți încă un plan?' means 'do you have another plan?'. If the word order were changed to 'încă aveți un plan?' the meaning would become 'do you still have a plan?'. Meanwhile 'nu aveți un plan încă?' means 'do you not yet have a plan?'. This illustrates the changes that can be rung on the word 'ἔτι' which is open to a range of simultaneous interpretations thanks to the flexible word order of its ancient language.

Odysseus is implying that there is only one viable option (which he does not immediately make clear). Whilst appearing to canvas for alternative ideas Odysseus is in fact discounting any such ideas even before they trip off the men's tongues. One possible alternative is certainly excluded and that is setting sail into what Odysseus tellingly describes as the 'boundless' sea (10.195: 'πόντος ἀπείριτος'). As we have seen, this will be suicidal given the crew have no other point of repair and are effectively lost. Odysseus soon pre-empts another alternative plan, again by implication. From a rocky outcrop he has seen that the land is an island which means that setting sail and hugging the coast will also be pointless. Whichever of the two directions they choose, they will be going round in circles. In sum, Odysseus dismisses alternative courses of action by presenting information which if true will render these alternatives unfeasible. He skilfully pre-empts the men's arguments.

Odysseus had seen nothing but smoke from his look-out point on Aeaea. However we must presume this smoke had been invisible to the men. They had been in the hold after all. Odysseus will realise that, with the men out of the hold, broaching the idea of appealing to 'the source of smoke' for help will risk triggering another 'flight to the hold'. He speaks pre-emptively because he knows his men will react instinctively against his point of view. However what he had seen from his rocky vantage point requires further investigation. Circe's palace has a wide outlook suggesting it is on an eminence (10.211 & 253: 'περισκέπτω ἐνὶ χώρῳ'). When Odysseus sets off for the palace he 'goes up' (10. 274: 'παρὰ νηὸς ἀνήιον ἠδὲ θαλάσσης'). En route he meets Hermes who speaks of Odysseus 'going through the heights' (10.281: 'δι' ἄκριας ἔρχεαι οἴος'). The clear impression is that Circe's palace stands on the highest point of the island. Now from a 'ship-sheltering' shore the bluffs are unlikely to allow Circe's smoke to be visible. Odysseus takes advantage of this perspective of the crew when he says that 'the island is low-lying and in its midst [he] saw smoke' (10. 196-197: 'αὐτὴ δὲ χθαμαλὴ κεῖται: καπνὸν δ' ἐνὶ μέσση / ἔδρακον ...'). This juxtaposition of facts with its quasi-causal link ('and') is designed to give the men to believe that the smoke comes from below Odysseus' position on the rock. The over-elaboration of 'ὀφθαλμοῖσι' ('I saw with my own eyes') and the suggestion that he has been peering '[down] across' the dense oak-thickets ('διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ') tell the same story. In fact he has been peering rather up 'through' the dense oak-thickets ('διὰ').

Odysseus' disingenuousness is necessary in order to be able support his thesis that Aeaea is an island around which the sea is set as a garland' ('τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωται': 10.195). If the crew can be made to believe that Odysseus had reached the highest point of the island then they will have to conclude that he has seen sea on all sides. The mention of smoke in

⁶⁶ Aeschylus *Choephoroi* 114: τὴν οὖν ἔτ' ἄλλον τῆδε προστιθῶ στάσει; Homer *Iliad* 6.411: 'οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλη / ἔσται θαλπωρὴ'; Hesiod *Works and Days* 157-158: 'αὐτίς ἔτ' ἄλλο τέταρτον ... Ζεὺς Κρονίδης ποιήσε'.

the same breath as ‘a garlanded island’ is tantamount to persuading a patient to take a poison that will prove life-saving. In fact Odysseus will not be entirely sure the island is an island since he cannot see its entire circumference. Certainly the shore behind Circe’s palace will not be visible to him. On the one hand then his reference to the sea garlanding the island is a self-conscious embellishment of his story. He has to convince the men that they are on an island, have no geographical points of repair, and that appealing to ‘the producer of the smoke’ is their only recourse. On the other hand ancient garlands were not always a closed circle or oval. A skyphos shows Nike preparing to crown an athlete in anticipation of his victory. The olive wreath is clearly horseshoe-shaped⁶⁷. If challenged Odysseus will claim this is the type of garland he had in mind when using the image. Strictly speaking then Odysseus tells the narrow truth though with words that his audience is encouraged to receive in their usual, broader meaning. One might add that Homer’s strategy viz-a-viz his reader is not greatly different.

Not surprisingly Odysseus postpones mention of the word ‘smoke’ until the second last line of his speech. However ‘smoke’ also has a poetics dimension in Book 10. The ancient Greeks were familiar with the expression ‘out of the smoke and into the fire’⁶⁸. A series of occasions on which ‘smoke’ appears will therefore constitute for the crew (and reader) a series of omens of the misadventures (‘fires’) which Odysseus’ crew encounters. The Greek expression ‘out of the smoke and into the fire’ articulates a coherent and seamless narrative. The smoke is a sign of a pre-existing peril that is about to engulf the victim (‘no smoke without fire’). After two misadventures heralded by smoke - the second being much more deadly - the crew (and the reader) will be convinced that the third ‘smoke’ will lead to the crew’s imminent demise. To propose entering another ‘smoke-filled’ environment, Odysseus has had to wait until the men’s morale is fully restored with food, drink and rest. Even so his implied proposal (he never states it unambiguously) is not well received. He knew that would be the case. The susceptibility of the men to suggestion and specifically to smoke as a trigger of their syndrome is revealed in their reaction. They imagine Antiphates and the Cyclops devouring colleagues. These are images which they have conceived by proxy yet they spring instantly to mind through the conduit of an apparently unconnected word (‘smoke’).

Odysseus will count it a success that the men do not repair to the hold of the ship with their heads wrapped in their cloaks. Indeed, despite the ‘smoke-filled’ Circe eventually proving an ally, the men’s knee-jerk reaction to smoke is as strong as ever in Book 12. By then however Odysseus will know how to disable the triggers of the syndrome one by one. When, at the Planctae, his men are rendered helpless as they approach a smoke-filled scene prior to an encounter with cannibalistic forces, the resourceful Odysseus is not left wanting.

23. Conclusion

Homer’s interests lie far beyond the parameters of his narrative. He can be observed indulging in etymological play at the same time as he encourages his words to produce fresh texts by redividing and reforming. His narrative meanwhile, is always ‘telling another story’ one that sheds light on Homer’s own society and mores, on the technical aspects of his world, and

⁶⁷ Lucanian skyphos, 370 BCE. See also Apulian vase 2nd quarter 4th century BCE from Taranto workshop. Nike offers Achilles a crown as Amazons look on.

⁶⁸ Lucian Menippus 4: ‘Ταῦτα μὲν δὴ φρονῶν προσῆειν αὐτοῖς, ἐλελήθειν δ’ ἑμαυτὸν εἰς αὐτό, φασί, τὸ πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ βιαζόμενος’.

above all on the use of language to expand our literary horizons across unsuspected realms of meaning

Appendix: A *Tristia* 3.9.10:

'dicitur his remos applicuisse vadis'

'[Medea] is said to have applied the/her oars to these shoals'.

The Argonauts have been fleeing across the Black Sea, pursued by King Aeetes of Colchis. On board ship with Jason and his runaway bride-to-be Medea is the Golden Fleece, stolen from Aeetes. When the *Argo* lands at Tomis, Ovid signals he is a resident of Tomis by deictically pointing out 'these ... shoals' ('his ... vadis'). Ovid sees the shoals from his bedroom window as it were. They are an inevitable concomitant of maritime sand banks. Meanwhile authors such as Ammianus Marcellinus, Apollonius Rhodius, and Strabo speak of the serious scourge of Danubian sand flats and of the 'breast-like dunes' of alluvial deposits in the sea. Ammianus is particularly concerned. His epithet 'vadosus' applies to the entire Euxine and echoes Ovid's 'vadis': 'Omnis ... Pontus est ... vadosus, quod ... inruentium undarum magnitudine temperatur, et consurgit in brevia dorsuosa': 22.46).

Thus the shoals in Ovid's line are a specific part of the seascape and not merely a worn metaphor for 'the sea'. Meanwhile we initially wonder how it is that only Medea brought [her] oars to bear on the shoals. Even more mystifying is the fact that she has two oars (again the plural is not to be treated as simply 'metri causa'). She seems to have 'set' her [plural] oars on the shallow sea bed'. The only crewman who would regularly have two oars would be, one assumes, the helmsman. Numerous Greek vases show helmsmen on the stern with their two steering oars protruding backwards at different angles towards the seas behind the ship.

Clearly a helmsman does not use these oars as a means to propel the ship. The steering-oars are the ship's rudder. Meanwhile in the text of *Tristia* 3.9.10 there is no suggestion that the ship was making a high-speed landing known as beaching. We know this because we later learn that the anchor is raised and the stern cable disengaged during departure. This proves that the crew did not drive the ship ashore in the manner of the Phaeacians charged with bringing Odysseus home to Ithaca at *Odyssey* 13.113-115. Put simply, the way the *Argo* departs tells us everything about the way it had arrived. It had glided in to land gently, as indeed one might expect if the waters were ridden with sandbanks and shoals. On approaching land, the usual well-known mooring procedure will have been set in motion (see *Aeschylus Suppliants* 764ff).. Meanwhile even if the *Argo* were being beached, the steering oars were a precious commodity. They were not there to stop a runaway train. That is, it would be absurd to imagine Medea (for instance) somehow planting her oars on the beach to absorb the shock of the ship's headlong arrival.

Greek ships commonly approached the desired harbour or beach backwards. This will have been the case with the *Argo* at Tomis. Medea is at the helm but only because she is the best person for a particular manoeuvre that required only steadiness of hand. As the *Argo* approaches land, the crew will want to avoid grounding the ship on a sandbank lying unseen below the waterline. The most likely scenario is that Medea simply holds the tiller-bars rigidly such that the

steering-oar blades are vertical and flush against the sides of the ship. She ensures they remain perpendicular to the direction of the ship's progress during what follows. We consider the oars were designed to stretch down as far past the bottom of the ship as will have allowed them to impact the seafloor *before* the incoming ship grounded. Medea has one hand on each tiller. She simply waits for the bottom of the blades to make contact with the sand as it rises towards the surf line. The little toe that can be seen protruding from the the bottom of the blades of Greek steering-oars was intended to bury itself and hold firm in the sea floor. The crew will feel the slow-moving ship come to a halt. Medea meanwhile will not be relieved of her duties until the anchor is dropped & stern cables attached to a rock or a tree. The ship must remain steady in the water.

Now it stands to reason that the Argonauts would not have posted a look-out ('speculator') on an eminence ('tumulo') unless it was vital they received as much warning as possible of any threat to their vessel. Aeschylus' passage shows how time-consuming a departure from a mooring could be. Nevertheless, on a hostile shore, there were ways in which such a departure could be expedited rapidly as it is in this case. As the Argo's anchor is hauled up, the stern cables are simultaneously reeled in. We suggest it was quite normal practice to tie a slip-knot on both sides of the ship in order to instantly release one end of each of the two cables. The crew would then reel in the cables from the stern without having to go near the rock or tree around which the cables were looped. The other end of each of the cables would be permanently and very securely tied to the sides of the ship.

The details of Ovid's narrative have much in common with the closing scene of Euripides' *Iphigineia in Tauris*. The Tristian line in which the anchor is hauled in through a flurry of hands, is inspired by the Euripidean crew's reeling in of the stern cable (1352: ἦγον χερῶν πρυμνησια'). In Euripides' play the anchors are mentioned first, as being hung from the catheads. In both works, *Iphigineia in Tauris* and *Tristia* 3.9, the main protagonists are ashore as the crew prepares to leave. In both cases the heroine comes up with a delaying tactic which buys the Greeks precious time. There are many other parallels between these two myths. To name but a few (a) the heroine's theft of Artemis' statue in Euripides (1383f) equates to the theft of the Golden Fleece (implied in Ovid) (b) the female *dramatis personae* are both temple wardens, both sacrificers of guest-friends from Greece, both intent on committing a sacrireligious act before escaping to Greece from the western Black Sea via the Clashing Rocks en route to Attica (c) both heroines achieve their ends by improvised acts of deceit (Euripides 1330ff).

The passage Euripides 1292f is particularly in Ovid's mind as he writes: Ἀγαμεινονείας παιδὸς ἐκ βουλευμάτων / φεύγοντες ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε καὶ σεμνὸν βρέτας / λαβόντες ἐν κόλποισιν Ἑλλάδος νεώς' ('fleeing thanks to the plans of the daughter [of the king] in a Greek ship having taken the holy image'). The two heroines steal or help to steal precious cargoes which are either 'fallen from the skies' or connected to a fall from the sky⁶⁹. Lastly, it is in both cases the 'love of a brother' that saves the beleaguered heroine. In Ovid, the love of Aeetes for Medea's brother delays their father the king and allows the Argo to escape. In Euripides the love of Iphigineia for her brother Orestes persuades the goddess Artemis, known for her brotherly love for Apollo, to intervene.

We return to the question of Medea's requirement of a look-out. As far as eminences go, there is a considerable cliff face at Constanta-Tomis today, showing that Ovid must have known

⁶⁹ See *Iphigineia in Tauris* 1384-1385. Meanwhile the Golden Fleece derived from the airborne ram from which Helle had fallen.

his Tomis (even if, as some believe, his exile was a hoax). One might even suggest the conditions were favourable to the reception of a warning shouted from above. The cliffs will make voices resound. Meanwhile the ship may have been some distance from shore. Today the shoals around the site of nearby Histria are extensive. One can wade a long way out to sea. Thus the look-out's warning cry may have been shouted across extensive sand flats to a far distant Argo, where the crew are awaiting just such a call. No wonder they 'spring into busy action' ('trepidant') rather than 'feel fear' ('trepidant').

The shoals - and the need for an expeditious departure through those shoals - explain the crew's decision not to beach. Refloating a beached ship may be problematical in such a seascape. Now in general the long, thin Danubian sandbanks are aligned along the direction of the Sfantu Gheorghe current. Odysseus however seems to have beached inadvertently on a mature island that stretches across the river mouth. Meanwhile, according to Apollonius at *Argonautica* 4.310 'the triangular island of Peuce 'rises as to its width in the form of beaches' ('εὖρος μὲν ἐς αἰγιαλοὺς ἀνέχουσα') We believe this alludes to the sea-facing coast of the island that lies immediately south of the Sfantu Gheorghe branch of the Danube. The slowing Danube has been casting alluvial deposits ahead and to its right as soon as it loses touch with Peuce's north-eastern-facing shore. The sand bars created through this process develop one after the other and parallel to the shore. Thus it is that along its north-eastern facing shore the breadth of Peuce 'rises' (i.e. 'increases in territory') as one sandbar after another is formed. To clarify, Peuce does not become ever broader. Rather its breadth is maintained as the sand banks extend its territory seawards.

Appendix B: Aeaea as the Romanian island of Insula Șerpilor

Our view is that the ancient island of Leuce (also known today in Romanian as 'Insula Alba' or 'Insula Șerpilor') was the island Homer had in mind when writing Book 10 of the *Odyssey*. As the largest island in the Black Sea⁷⁰ it lies in the path of the Danube current, a current which we contend carried Odysseus' unsupervised ship to its shores. The island was famous for its cult of Achilles, the hero's body having been snatched from his funeral pyre and spirited away to Leuce by his mother Thetis (according to the 'Aethiopsis'). Pausanias (3.19.11)⁷¹ describes Leuce as 'bristling all over with forest and full of animals both tame and wild' ('δασεῖα δὲ ὕλη πᾶσα καὶ πλήρης ζώων ἀγρίων καὶ ἡμέρων'). Though treeless today, Homer's Aeaea was entirely covered by trees (10.197: 'through the thick brush and wood' ; 'διὰ δρυμὰ πικνὰ καὶ ὕλην'). The island provides the billets of wood for Elpenor's funeral pyre (12.11) and a woodland pasture for a stag (10.159). The rise to Circe's palace is characterised by wooded glades or simply glens (10.252, 275). Furthermore, in Homer's portrait there are both wild animals, (such as the stag brought down by Odysseus) and tame animals, (specifically the wolves and lions that fawn on Odysseus' men when they arrive at Circe's palace [10.214-215]). One is tempted to make a connection between these mythological animals and the real animals brought and left on the island by travellers. The *Periplus of the Euxine Sea* records sources who state that 'some of the men who reach this island, come here intentionally. They bring animals in their ships, destined to be sacrificed. Some of these animals they slaughter, others they set free on the

⁷⁰ Berezan and Kefkan are also considered islands.

⁷¹ Pausanias *Description of Greece*.

island, in Achilles' honour'. Animals bred for sacrifice suggest animals bred to behave tamely in the interest of avoiding ill-omens during the ceremony.

Specific similarities between the physical geography of Leuce and Homer's Aeaea can be supported either through other ancient texts or by contemporary observation. As Odysseus says, Aeaea is an island 'garlanded by the boundless sea and low-lying' (10.195-196: 'νήσον, τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωται: / αὐτὴ δὲ χθαμαλὴ κεῖται ...'). This accords with its present appearance. From Leuce nothing but sea is visible. It has sea cliffs, but once one has climbed, like Odysseus, to a height, it appears relatively flat. As we have seen Odysseus was telling the truth about the island though in a somewhat misleading way. At 135ft the island's highest point is the culmination of a gentle conical slope in the middle of its west side. From there, as from Circe's palace (10.211), a panoramic view extends out to sea. Circe's palace is on the highest point and it too is in the middle of the island. Meanwhile the cave into which Odysseus is advised to drag his ship by Circe finds several parallels today according to a Romanian website: *Țărmurile sunt înalte, în medie de 12-15 m, dar ajungând și la 21 m, și terminate cu faleze în care pot fi descoperite râpi și peșteri* ('the coast rises to an average of 12-15 metres, sometimes reaching 21 metres; it forms into cliffs at the sea's edge in which there are caves and chasms')⁷².

The Greek geographer Dionysius Periegetes of Bithynia, observes that 'the souls of Achilles and other heroes ... wander up through the island's 'deserted glens''⁷³. Here the author has borrowed Homer's word for the wooded slopes leading to Circe's palace. A major stumbling block however is presented by the stag killed by Odysseus which was descending to drink from 'a river'. Yet it is clear that Leuce is little more than a huge grass-grown rock with no fissures at all. There are certainly no rivers. There is one way to resolve this crux and again the solution reflects the way Homer, just like Odysseus, uses words that tell a narrow and sometimes undetectable truth. The stag was on its way down to drink at a river, but that river was the Danube. Pliny, as we have seen, is adamant that the fresh water of the Danube stretched 40 miles into the Black Sea. Even a sober look at modern statistics will suggest the salinity of the Black Sea is only 14 PSU in the area east of the delta. This is well below the Black Sea average (17.5-18 PSU) which is itself low compared to other oceans. The fresh water that enters the sea does not intermingle with the stagnant underbelly which is rich in Hydrogen Sulphide and comprises a huge 87% of the total mass. By the time the Danube waters reach Leuce they are brackish but no more than that. As far as Homer and Pliny are concerned, 35 kilometres out from Sulina, the Danube is still the Danube.

However deer rarely drink fresh water if their diet is rich in green vegetation. In other words this stag was going to drink the 'river', not in spite of its salinity but because of it. Deer seem to require salt to supplement their diet when that diet is such as is provided by the forests of Leuce. The sun that oppressed the stag was, if anything, draining it of salt through perspiration. Deer are adept at swimming the ocean, which in itself argues for their tolerance of salt water. So regularly are they found swimming at sea that Homer may even be suggesting this stag has migrated from the mainland. Deer inhabiting small islands is a widely-reported phenomenon. Furthermore they do not seem to mind the sort of cramped environment provided by Leuce⁷⁴.

⁷² [https://contravantului.wordpress.com.03/09/08-insula-serpilor-pamant-romanesc-marea-tradare!](https://contravantului.wordpress.com.03/09/08-insula-serpilor-pamant-romanesc-marea-tradare!september-3,2008) september 3, 2008 <http://www.insulaserpilor.info/Geografie.asp>.

⁷³ Description of the Known World (2014) ed J.L Lightfoot lines 541-548.

⁷⁴ The following comments on deer will be found instructive: 'Recently I saw a fawn drinking from the canal in Lewes. Pretty much full salt water, I think. I figured that it was a goner but was told by an old timer that it is not unusual to see'. 'I have only

The circumference of Leuce as reported by Strabo (20 stades) does not correspond to today's much smaller circumference (7.897 stades). Of course the island may have suffered erosion or cataclysmic damage over the centuries, or Strabo is simply mistaken. However when Odysseus returns to Aeaëa to perform Elpenor's funeral rites in Book 12, the dead oarsman is buried on 'the furthest extreme of a jutting headland' (12.11). Leuce has such a headland which forms a low-lying extension to the north-east beyond an ever narrowing isthmus⁷⁵. Furthermore Elpenor had earlier mentioned being buried 'on the shore of the grey sea' (11.75) and this is not inconsistent with the very moderate height of the headland as it enters the sea, particularly on its western flank⁷⁶. Pliny's Natural History (4.27.1) meanwhile refers to the burial mound of Achilles on Leuce. This was clearly a landmark ('Insula Achillis tumulo eius viri clara') which suggests that Elpenor's burial could have been intended by Homer as an 'aition' to explain the contemporary presence of this 'widely-known' and/or 'widely-visible' tumulus.

Appendix C: The ship's hold as Hades

Our contention that 'Hades' was common parlance amongst sailors for 'the ship's hold' gains support from a passage in Aratus' *Phaenomena* ('ὀλίγον δὲ διὰ ξύλον ἄϊδ' ἐρύκει')⁷⁷. The speaker here seems to be an experienced oarsman with a sardonic sense of humour. 'A little bit of wood keeps Hades at bay' is his ostensible meaning ('ξύλον' = 'the ship' by synecdoche). The same line however could also be read as a didactic note (with humorous, figurative asides) to the effect that 'the little ship encloses Hades completely' or 'keeps Hades thoroughly in its place'⁷⁸. On the one hand the image of the real Hades being contained within a small ship creates humour. On the other hand that humour depends to a large extent on the hold being termed 'Hades'. The vast size of Hades emerges from, amongst others, Plato ('the river Periphlegthon] falls into a vast region burning with a great fire and makes a lake larger than our Mediterranean sea')⁷⁹ and Aristophanes ('you will come to a vast lake ... then a wide stretch of mud and ever-flowing dung')⁸⁰. Furthermore, if the words 'διὰ ξύλον' were to fuse as 'διάξύλον' and the elided termination of the word ἄϊδ' were considered a locative, the same line could also be thought to allude to Plato's myth of Er in the Underworld where a head of spiny Genista ('διάξύλον') is used to card the bodies of wicked tyrants who are prevented from entering the 'stomion'

seen a deer drink water once, maybe twice in 35 yrs. They don't need water to live. I have seen the Everglades so dry it looked like the desert and the deer can live through drought and fires for months'. 'Deer get a lot of their hydration through their diet in the spring and summer. Leaves and grasses have a high moisture content. They often times need salt to balance out the hydration level. That's why salt blocks and other mineral licks are so popular among deer this time of year but not as much come hunting season [August 19 2010]'. 'All our deer depend on water. If there isn't any, there's no deer. We don't have a lot of what you'd call lush vegetation though either'. 'Yes they swim in the ocean. There are islands in the Chesapeake that are populated with deer. There are no fresh water sources on these islands which raises the question of how they thrive on the islands. I suppose they drink the brackish water...I don't have any explanation for this one'. 'They also like seaweed as a food source'. 'It was on the Wildwood side frolicking around on the beach, near the tree line. I never knew there were deer there. How the hell do they survive in such a small area? I have seen individual deer and small herds pretty far out [in the ocean]'.
⁷⁵ <http://www.mediafax.ro>: 'Solul moale de pe istm se erodează foarte rapid, afirmă specialistul Viktor Ostrohiad'.

⁷⁶ Elpenor dies when falling off the roof of Circe's palace. From this highest point of the island he will have noticed the headland he later earmarks for his grave. Achilles was already dead by this time.

⁷⁷ *Phaenomena* 299. The words 'διὰ ... ἐρύκει' are thought to constitute a verb *in tmesi*.

⁷⁸ Compare *Odyssey* 19.16 for the use of 'ἐρύκει' here. The prefix 'διὰ' becomes intensive as with many such verbs ('διεπικον = 'I tell fully, distinctly'; 'διελυνω' 'I cease completely').

⁷⁹ Plato *Phaedo* 113a; *Republic* (10.614-621).

⁸⁰ Aristophanes *Frogs* 137;145-146: 'ἐπι λίμνην μεγάλην ἤξεις ... εἶτα βόρβορον πολλὸν καὶ σκῶρ ἀείνων'.

(‘mouth’) of the exit chasm that leads out from earthly sufferings into the afterlife. Those who fail to enter the ‘stomion’ are eventually demoted to Tartarus ‘the deepest gulf of the earth’ which is as far beneath Hades as heaven is above it. In other words a reader of Plato would not be surprised at the sentiment ‘in Hades a little Genista forces [men] back’.

In general Aratus’ words owe much to Iliad 10.161 where ‘a little piece of ground still holds at bay [the Trojans]’⁸¹. The Trojans are described as being on the rising ground of the plain⁸² (10.160). They are clearly not beside the ditch since next morning the Greek infantry line up on what must be the Trojan side (11.51-52). The night raid of Book 10, including the Greek Council meeting on No-Man’s-Land and Dolon’s approach to the Trojan positions tells the same story (10.344-345). Yet a short stretch of ground on the plain can hardly be said to ‘keep at bay’ the enemy (as would a ditch). More naturally it will simply ‘separate’ the enemy (from oneself). This we suggest is one of the meanings of ‘ἐρύκει’ in the Aratus passage. Even if it is a step too far to suggest ‘ἐρύκει’ could take a double accusative (‘it separates A from B’) nevertheless it could simply be understood twice (‘it holds off A and B = ‘it separates A and B’).

Now the nexus ‘ὀλίγον ... ξύλον’ could also evoke a single rowing bench (‘a small plank’). The rowing benches (‘short planks’) constituted both the ceiling of the hold and the floor of the upper ship. Their Janus-like role is expressed chiastically in Aratus by the words that surround the ‘plank’ namely ‘διὰ ... ἄϊδ’ the letters of which are palindromic. Moreover, ‘διὰ’ also means ‘Zeus’ in the accusative. If Zeus’ domain is the sky, the position and conformation of the words ‘διὰ ξύλον ἄϊδ’ will emblematised the precise role of the rower’s bench in separating what is above from what is below. The presumption that ‘διὰ’ could be ‘Διὰ’ (‘Zeus’, ‘sky’) allows for a didactic observation on life at sea (‘the little benches separate the sky and the ship’s hold’) as well as suggesting that the ship represents Poseidon’s interstitial role as the flat sea and as the middle brother of three (‘a little bench separates Zeus and Hades’). That the speaker of these lines will be a rower lends immediacy to these reflections on the rower’s bench and simultaneously makes it more likely that an allusion to the bench is intended.

An Aratean postscript:

,αἰψά τε κοῦφά τε πάντα καὶ ἄρτια ποιήσονται, / αὐτίκ’ ἐλαφρότερος πέλεται πόνος: εἰ δέ κε νηὶ
 ὑψόθεν ἐμπλήξῃ δεινὴ ἀνέμοιο θύελλα / αὐτως ἀπρόφατος, τὰ δὲ λαίφεα πάντα ταραξῆ, / ἄλλοτε
 μὲν καὶ πάμπαν ὑπόβρυχα ναυτίλλονται, / ἄλλοτε δ’, αἶ κε Διὸς παρανισσομένοιο τύχωσιν /
 εὐχόμενοι, βορέω δὲ παραστράψῃ ἀνέμου ἴς, / πολλὰ μάλ’ ὀτλήσαντες ὅμως πάλιν ἐσκέψαντο /
 ἀλλήλους ἐπὶ νηϊ. *Phaenomena 421-429*

‘they will at once make all easy to manage and proper to the occasion; immediately the effort will be lighter; but if a terrible squall of wind should fall on the ship from above; all unpredicted, and if it throws all the canvas into confusion; then sometimes they sail on wholly submerged, at other times if in prayer they happen across Zeus passing their way and there is lightning from the north wind, in spite of their many toils they nevertheless look at each other again up on deck’

⁸¹ ‘... ὀλίγος δ’ ἔτι χῶρος ἐρύκει’.

⁸² In a mythological sense Hades looks down towards Tartarus, Zeus faces upwards towards the heavens (Iliad 8.16).

The astronomical poem, the *Phaenomena*, is the surviving masterpiece of the Hellenistic poet Aratus. It is steeped in Homeric references, including *hapax legomena* which add much colour, depth, and meaning to the text. We think that lines 421-429 which superficially deal with the constellation ‘Altar’ contain references to the medical phenomenon we have been exploring in Homer.

In this passage we find ourselves with a crew on the high seas at night in winter. Northerlies have been ‘piling up’ the cloud. This forms part of an omen transmitted by Night, of the imminent arrival of a southerly, to combat which the sheets that have been keeping the foot taut on the sail (scholiast ad loc), are slackened off. Of course much depends on the direction taken by the ship. It may be heading East and using a foot [the lower corner of the sail] to make serpentine progress against a north-north-easterly. A change in the wind direction to south-westerly will mean the wind accessing the foot at speed from behind. To accommodate this the taut sheet is loosened and the foot reengages with the rest of the sail. However events overtake the luckless crew whose ship seems to suffer a microburst which renders futile the measures they have taken. Indeed the original, less-than-informative omen had omitted to tell the crew that a catastrophic ‘eknephias’ was imminent. The slackening of the foot only relieves the impact of the arriving wind but not its downdraught. Indeed downdraughts are notoriously impossible to plan for. This in turn casts a shadow over the gods’ true usefulness towards a vulnerable humanity which treats omens as warnings to be acted upon from on high.

There is a similar case in Herodotus, where an Apeliotes arriving from the Hellespont brings a strengthening wind which allows a Boreas to ‘burst downwards’ causing havoc among, indeed scattering, the Persian ships (7.188-189). It seems clear from Herodotus 7.188.3 that the Persian High Command had been informed by the local wind-watchers that the Apeliotes was a precursor to the main event (‘ὅσοι μὲν νῦν αὐτῶν ἀυξόμενον ἔμαθον τὸν ἄνεμον’ = ‘those who found out that the wind would increase’ = ‘that the Apeliotes would give way to a Boreas’). Boreas’ downdraught is credited with the dispersal of the Persians in all directions (‘τὰς μὲν ἐξέφερε πρὸς Ἴπνους καλεομένους τοὺς ἐν Πηλῖῳ, τὰς δὲ ἐς τὸν αἰγιαλόν: αἱ δὲ περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν Σηπιάδα περιέπιπτον’: Histories 7.188.3; ‘τοῖσι βαρβάροισι ὀρμέουσι Βορέης ἐπέπεσε’: 7.189.3). This is the classic evolution of a microburst (see Figure 6). Meanwhile in Aratus, it will not be the case that, as distinct from *Odyssey* 9, the entire canvas is lowered still attached to the mast. For there is no warning of the downdraught in Aratus. More problematical is the superfluity of the word ‘πάντα’. It does not need saying that a microburst, if it topples the mast, will leave ‘all’ the canvas strewn. One can hardly single out any part of the sail that would not be strewn when a microburst is unleashed. Instead, we believe that ‘all’ the canvas including the ‘foot’ was ‘ripped’ in several places as is the case in *Odyssey* 9.71⁸³ where however the location of the three to four tears in the canvas is not given. Aratus could be thought to be clarifying the text of Homer by adding ‘πάντα’ (‘all’ or ‘right across’). But of course unless a convincing emendation can be propounded such as will articulate the verb ‘to rip’, our arguments will come to nought. Our proposal is the verb ‘χαράξῃ’ which (a) reduces the emendation to one letter (b) accurately describes the parallel lines of tears that we assume are caused in the *Odyssey* (‘χαράττω’ = ‘cut into furrows’) (c) articulates a meaning that requires clarification (‘πάντα’) as to whether it refers to the ‘whole’ sail or just ‘the foot’. It will in any event be clear that we think

⁸³ See *Od.* 9.67-73 for the full passage: ἦρσι δ’ ἐπῶρσ’ ἄνεμον Βορέην νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς / λαίλαπι θεσπεσίῃ, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε / γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον: ὀρώρει δ’ οὐρανόθεν νύξ. / αἱ μὲν ἔπειτ’ ἐφέροντ’ ἐπικάρσαι, ἰστία δὲ σφιν / τριχθὰ τε καὶ τετραχθὰ διέσχισεν ἰς ἀνέμοιο. / καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐς νῆας κάθεμεν, δεισαντες ὄλεθρον, / αὐτὰς δ’ ἐσσυμένως προερέσσαμεν ἠπειρόνδε’.

it legitimate here to supplement Aratus' comments with what we have learned from Homer about a similar event (and vice versa).

The catastrophic event, or 'eknephias', whereby a Boreas bores *down* on a ship ('ὕψοθεν'), may sometimes cause the ship to sink under the weight of water cast up. Thus we hear of the crew in Aratus continuing on their way still within the ship but now submerged beneath the waterline. This should remind readers of *Odyssey* 5.319 where Odysseus seems about to drown following Poseidon's intervention. But it also recalls 12.405 where the entire ship's complement finds itself drowning following a thunderbolt from Zeus. On that occasion we think the original damage had been caused by the crew failing to realise that they had been in the eye of a slow-moving or stalled cyclone. The ship had collided with the eye wall causing wind shear so violent that the helmsman had his skull broken by the collapsing mast. We suggest the helmsman had been in a praying posture on the side of the 'sacred' stern. That is why he gives the impression of a diver as he falls. A pair of hands with the palms flat against each other in prayer will readily translate into a pair of hands aligned with each other to split the waters in a dive.

Returning to Aratus, a devotional context would be entirely appropriate in this passage since it concerns the constellation 'Ara' or 'Altar'. The medium of prayer becomes the focus of prayer as the crew must be thought to offer ritual thanks for the favours shown to them. To do this they will be turning to the South whence come the predicted southerlies and where lies the Altar constellation. Prayer is also recommended to the sailors as a way to avoid the stormy southerlies in their entirety, whilst the crew also pray at 427 as they call upon Zeus who is either 'coming to help' or merely happens to be 'passing by'. An Homeric question recurs to the reader. Are the gods indifferent to prayers and sacrifices ('Altar') from helpless humankind?

Now the submerged sailors may disguise another outbreak of PTSS. For, with the ship still afloat, the crew could be thought to be huddled 'entirely' or 'all together' below the waterline but within the hold rather than being outside 'on the ship'. If their prayers are successful they will still not see each other again 'in the ship' because it is pitch black in the hold. The crew will have to wait until they are outside 'on the ship' in order to make eye contact again. Indeed even on board ship at night the sailors will require the lightning flashes from the Boreas wind (427) in order to 'see each other again'.

Penultimately, there is an example of Aratean word play in the nexus 'αὐτως ἀπρόφατος' ('all unpredicted'). Firstly the inability to foresee the microburst is a function of the sailors' trust in the efficacy of prayer. They are blinded by faith. Secondly, the different dialects of Ancient Greece had different attitudes to aspirated consonants and the length of vowels. Thus a 'pi' would have been aspirated by some as a 'phi' and vice versa. Similarly the choice of an eta over an alpha is the other side of the coin from the choice of an alpha over an eta. Thus 'ἀπρόφατος' could be read as 'ἀφρόπατος'. As such it would now produce the etymologised meaning '[the terrible microburst] that simply provides a path for the surf'. The poet expertly draws us into the shocking intimacy of the process of drowning. The immediate context is of the ship's hold in a storm. The vicious downdraught of the 'eknephias' can only be described as a conduit that at close quarters pours surging sea water both into the hold and into the men's faces, eyes and mouths.

Lastly Aratus uses his own name as a form of textual omen. The word 'θυτηριον' occurs three times between lines 408 and 440. It means 'altar' and is positioned on the first occasion very close to the word 'ara' which means merely 'then' in Greek but becomes 'altar' when

transliterated into Latin. Moreover ‘θυτηριον’ itself according to Photius is a synonym of ‘θυμιαστηριον’ which means ‘censer’ or ‘receptacle for incense’. By wafting the censer three times across the text Aratus has left a strong aroma of himself. For if ‘ara-’ means ‘altar’ it only requires us to associate the rest of Aratus’ name (‘-tus’) with the Latin word ‘tus’ meaning ‘incense’ in order to create a supertextual odour of Aratean wordplay. We may say that ‘incense’ the concomitant of ancient prayer’ impregnates the text with a ritual ‘atmosphere’ of worship. Aratus in providing through his name the essential ingredients of ancient appeals for omens becomes himself the focus of ancient ominosity.

There is much more to be revealed about Aratus the Oracle, as the following lines show,
 ἄλλοτε μὲν καὶ πάμπαν ὑπόβρυχα ναυτίλλονται, / ἄλλοτε δ’, αἶ κε Διὸς παρανισσομένοιο
 τύχῳσιν / εὐχόμενοι, βορέω δὲ παραστράψῃ ἀνέμου ἴ: Phaenomena 425-427

Firstly the nexus ‘ἀνέμου ἴς’ reminds us of the etymological excursus in Odyssey 9. We have already noted the parallels between these passages and here we have a very clear omen of their close relationship. Nor is the echo gratuitous. There must be a creative etymology of ‘Boreas’ waiting in the wings. And one will soon decide that food or eating is the most likely candidate given the word’s morphology. For ‘βορᾶ’ means ‘food’ and ‘βορᾶω’ is the verb ‘I eat’.

Acknowledgements:

Under ‘fair use’ principles, we acknowledge the sketch map at Figure 6 as the work of Nicolae Panin (1983) based on Claudius Ptolemaeus’ coordinates and the MS illustration (p.1464) in Luminița Preoteasa, Alfred Vespremeanu-Stroe, Anca Dan, Laurențiu Țuțuianu, Cristian Panaiotu, et al.. Late-Holocene landscape evolution and human presence in the northern Danube delta (Chilia distributary lobes). The Holocene, 2021. We also acknowledge the images behind Figures 1.2,3.4.6 as the work of Google Maps. We wish to thank both Nicolae Panin, Google Maps, and Preoteasa et al. for their contribution to the illustrative side of this work. We acknowledge Admiral Cloudberg and the online article ‘Winds of Change: The Crash of Eastern Airlines flight 66’ as the source of Figure 6. The photograph of Kleimachos’ Ship Vase comes courtesy of The Louvre Museum, Paris, France

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