exhortative message of revenge. So, it would have cast Octavian in the role of the avenger even before this identification became useful as an excuse for an uncomfortable past.

A second passage seems to suggest that the myth of Orestes was one of Augustus' personal favourites. Although a product of the later days of Augustus' principate, it points to a rather general disposition. I refer to *Tristia* 2, Ovid's lengthy letter of apology and plea to the Princeps. As part of his excuse for the apparently indecent *carmen* (207), mentioned as one of the reasons for Augustus' displeasure, the author adduces a series of examples of eroticism in literary history, and thereby implies that hardly any literature can be written without erotic motives (361–470). In this extended catalogue, authors and works are never introduced in a way that would present Augustus as an actual reader except for the verses 395–6: *qui legis Electran et egentem mentis Oresten, / Aegisthi crimen Tyndaridosque legis*. Much more hypothetical (because of the future tense and the semantics of *invenio*) is the only other comparable verse in this respect: *invenies eadem blandi praecepta Properti* (465). Of course, given the grammar, both passages could address a general second person ('if one reads…', 'People will find…'). Still, in a letter addressed to Augustus and in a context in which he is the one to be convinced by the enumeration of authors and works, this would not be the natural reading.

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A VAGINA IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

Poetic descriptions of the vagina, its physical features and its excellence as a route to delight, are, I surmise, infrequent in the writings of bishops. It is a piquant surprise to find one lurking in Hippolytus' *Refutation of All Heresies* (if indeed the work is his). In a passage concerned to show that Gnostic doctrines are derived from the Greek mysteries (5.8.41–5), the Greater Mysteries (those of Demeter) are taken to stand for spiritual birth (ἡ γένεσις ἡ πνευματική, ἡ ἐπουράνιος, ἡ ἄνω), the Lesser (those of Persephone) for that of the flesh (τὰ τῆς σαρκικῆς γενέσεως):

περὶ ὧν μυστηρίων καὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀγούσης ἐκεῖ, οὔσης 'πλατείας καὶ εὐρυχώρου' (Matth. 7. 13) καὶ φερούσης τοὺς ἀπολλυμένους ἐπὶ τὴν Περσεφόνην <ὁ σωτὴρ εἴρηκεν>. καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς δέ φησιν·

αὐτὰρ ὑπ' αὐτήν ἐστιν ἀταρπιτὸς ὀκριόεσσα[1]
κοίλη, πηλώδης, ἤ θ'[2] ἡγήσασθαι ἀρίστη
ἄλσος ἐς ἱμερόεν πολυτιμήτου Ἀφροδίτης.

… περὶ τούτων, φησί, διαρρήδην εἴρηκεν ὁ σωτὴρ ὅτι 'στενὴ καὶ τεθλιμμένη ἐστὶν ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ζωήν, καὶ ὀλίγοι εἰσὶν οἱ εἰσερχόμενοι εἰς αὐτήν, πλατεῖα δὲ καὶ εὐρύχωρος ἡ ὁδος ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν, καὶ πολλοί εἰσιν οἱ διερχόμενοι δι' αὐτῆς' (Matth. 7. 13–14, inaccurately).

[1] ὀκριόεσσα Duncker-Schneidewin: ὀκρυόεσσα P.
[2] ἤτ' P: ἥ δ' Duncker-Schneidewin.

About these Mysteries, and the road that leads there, which is 'level and capacious' and takes the damned to Persephone, <our Saviour has spoken>. The poet too says:

> But below it there is a rugged path,
> enclosed and muddy, which is the best one for leading
> to the delightful grove of much-esteemed Aphrodite.

… On these matters, he says, the Saviour has stated explicitly that 'narrow and tight is the road that leads to life, and few are they that enter upon it, but level and capacious is the road that leads to perdition, and many are they that pass along it'.

The anonymous hexameter fragment clearly describes the vagina. This must surely have been evident at least to some in the scholarly community, though I have not found anyone who has stated it. Those who indicate how they understand the lines seem to assume, following the context in which Hippolytus sets them, that they really had to do with the Mysteries and that they come from some account of the topography of the afterlife in which alternative routes were described. So, for example, Preller:

> Auf Freuden der Venus deuten die wahrscheinlich Orphischen Verse b. Hippol. ref. haer. [etc.]…*κοίλη, πηλώδης* (der Weg zur Unterwelt, s. Arist. Ran. 123, Apul. Met. VI 18)…Es ist die muselmännische Ansicht vom Paradiese, auch die der Heraklessage.[3]

Aristophanes and Apuleius in the two passages that Preller cites speak of paths leading from the upper world to that of the dead. But the path in our fragment leads to a grove of Aphrodite, which there is no reason to locate in the other world. That the path is *πηλώδης* may recall the mystic doctrine that the unrighteous or uninitiated will lie in *πηλός* in the afterlife.[4] But the progress towards the delightful grove of Aphrodite is clearly a good fate; why should the path lead through the mud that engulfs the bad? If there are two contrasted ways, it ought to be clearly separated from the way of mud.

If we forget about eschatology and give the verses a straightforwardly sexual interpretation, we shall find that the imagery can all be illustrated from other classical sources and that everything is coherent. The best parallel for the fragment as a whole is to be found in the 'Fescennine' section of Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis*, 110–19, where the bride's vagina is described:

> est in secessu, tenuis quo semita ducit,
> ignea rima micans: exhalat opaca mephitim;
> nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen.
> hic specus horrendum; talis sese halitus atris
> faucibus effundens nares contingit odore. …
> insonuere cauae gemitumque dedere cauernae. (119)

Ausonius was learned in Greek verse and may perhaps have known our fragment. As to the details:[5]

[3] L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie* i (Berlin, 1894[4]), 828, n. 0; cf. A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (Leipzig, 1893), 191–3; W. Kranz in H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin, 1934–5[5]), i. 246.

[4] Pl. *Resp.* 363D; more often *βόρβορος*, Ar. *Ran.* 145, Pl. *Resp.* 533D, *Phaed.* 69C, Plut. fr. 178, etc.; F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin–New York, 1974), 103–7; cf. M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford, 1997), 161–2.

[5] I am indebted to Dr J. N. Adams for some additional references.

(i) *ὑπ' αὐτήν*: not under the earth, as suggested by Kranz (as in n. 3), but *ὑπὸ τὴν γαστέρα*, cf. Philo, *De agric.* 38 *ἡ φύσις ὡς ἔοικεν ὑπογάστρια τὰ συνουσίας ὄργανα ἐδημιούργησε*; id. *De opif. mundi* 158 *τοὺς ὑπογαστρίους οἴστρους*; id. *De special. legibus* 2. 163 *τάς τε γαστρὸς ἡδονὰς καὶ ὑπογαστρίους*; id. *De somniis* 2. 148, *De vita Moysis* 1. 28, 2. 23; Longus 4. 11. 2 *ὁ δὲ Γνάθων, οἷα μαθὼν ἐσθίειν ἄνθρωπος καὶ πίνειν εἰς μέθην καὶ λαγνεύειν μετὰ τὴν μέθην καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ὢν ἢ γνάθος καὶ γαστὴρ καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γαστέρα*.

(ii) *ἀταρπιτός*: cf. Ausonius' *semita*, with J. N. Adams's commentary, 'Ausonius, Cento nuptialis 101–31', *SIFC* 53 (1981), 199–215, at 206. For the sexual imagery of gates and passageways see id., *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), 89; Jeffrey Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New York–Oxford, 1991[2]), 137–8, 243, 245 (*θύρα, πύλη, ἰσθμός*).

(iii) *ὀκριόεσσα*: the transmitted *ὀκρυόεσσα* 'chilling, horrible' might be supported by Ausonius' *specus horrendum*, but *ὀκριόεσσα* 'rugged, rocky, uneven', which is often corrupted to *ὀκρυ-*, gives a more focussed sense. A similar metaphor is to be assumed in Archilochus 190 W. *καὶ βήσσας ὀρέων δυσπαιπάλους, οἷος ἦν ἐφ' ἥβης*, 'and (I used to explore) (your) rocky mountain glens, being as I was in my youth'.[6]

(iv) *κοίλη*: applied to a path, this means 'enclosed, steep-sided': *Il.* 23.419 *στεῖνος ὁδοῦ κοίλης*; Pind. *Ol.* 9.34 (Hades' rod,) *βρότεα σώματ' ἅι κατάγει κοίλαν πρὸς ἄγυιαν θνᾱισκόντων*. Cf. Ausonius' *tenuis*, as well as his *specus* and *cauae cauernae*; *Hist. Aug.*, *Heliogabalus* 5.2 *per cuncta caua corporis*; for the sexual imagery of holes, pits and hollows, Henderson, op. cit. 139–42 (*βάραθρον, κόλπος, κύτος, μυχός, ὀπή, σαλάμβη, τρῆμα, τρύπημα*); caves, *Priapea* 83.28, 35; Adams, *SIFC* 53 (1981), 207, and *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 85–6.

(v) *πηλώδης*: literally 'muddy'; applied to a path, it would imply 'slippery'.[7] In relation to the vagina it expresses the idea of 'moist, squishy, viscous'; *πηλός* is the material from which humanity was made according to myth (Ar. *Av.* 686 *πλάσματα πηλοῦ*, etc., with Nan Dunbar's note). It may have a suggestion of uncleanness, though not as definitely as would *βορβορώδης*.[8] Hipponax (135b W.) used *βορβορόπη* or some similar form as an opprobrious predicate of a woman, and the *Suda* ß 391 gives *βορβόροπιν* (*-ωπὸν* Cobet) *κῆπον* as a phrase for the (female) genitals, which may or may not refer to the same passage in Hipponax. Virgil's farmers, eager for their ewes to breed, keep them active in the summer, *nimio ne luxu obtunsior usus | sit genitali aruo et sulcos oblimet inertis* (*G.* 3. 135–6), 'lest from excessive idleness the genital field's serviceability be blunted and cause the unworked furrows to silt up'; the implicit *limus* here, part of the whole ploughland image, represents presumably the natural secretions that might, it is feared, congeal and block the birth canal. In other places the 'mud' metaphor becomes distinctly pejorative: *Priapea* 83.36–7, of an old crone's vagina (the addressee is the poet's penis), *superbia ista proderit nihil, simul | uagum sonante merseris luto caput*; Pompeian epigram, *CIL* iv. 1516 = *CLE* 955 *hic ego nu*[*nc f*]*utue(i) formosa(m)*

[6] See M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin–New York, 1974), 134.

[7] Cf. Thuc. 3. 22. 2 *τὸν ἀριστερὸν μόνον πόδα ὑποδεδεμένοι ἀσφαλείας ἕνεκα τῆς πρὸς τὸν πηλόν*, and the tale of Homer's demise in *Certamen Hom. et Hes.* 18, *ἀναχωρῶν δὲ ἐκεῖθεν, ὄντος πηλοῦ ὀλισθὼν καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὴν πλευράν, τριταῖος ὥς φασι τελευτᾶι*.

[8] Cf. Pl. *Phaed.* 111D *πηλοῦ καὶ καθαρωτέρου καὶ βορβορωδεστέρου*; Heraclitus DK 28 B 5 *οἷον εἴ τις εἰς πηλὸν ἐμβὰς πηλῶι ἀπονίζοιτο*.

fo[*r*]*ma puella(m),* | *laudata(m) a multis, set lutus intus erat*; of the anus, Auson. *Epigr.* 115. 9 Greene *luteae Symplegadis antrum.*

(vi) ἄλσος Ἀφροδίτης: cf. sch. Eur. *Phoen.* 18, Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ὁ φυσικὸς (DK 31 B 66) ἀλληγορῶν φησι 'σχιστοὺς λειμῶνας [v.l. λιμένας] Ἀφροδίτης', ἐν οἷς ἡ τῶν παίδων γένεσίς ἐστιν.

We can now advance to the problem of the authorship of the verses. Meineke, *Zeitschrift für Altertumswissenschaft* 10 (1852), 375, ascribed them to Parmenides, and Diels printed them as Parmenides fr. 20 ('Dubium') in his *Poetarum philosophorum fragmenta* (Berlin, 1901), commenting 'tribuit Parmenidi Meineke perdubia coniectura, alii Pampho'. There the fragment remained in his *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (DK 28 B 20). I do not know who was responsible for the attribution to Pamphos, the legendary poet of hymns recited at the mysteries at Phlya.

Preller (as quoted above) had taken the fragment to be probably Orphic. He was followed by Dieterich, who quoted it in his discussion of the motif of the two alternative ways.[9] He remarked that this motif, first found in Hesiod (*Op.* 287–92), was taken up by Orphics and Pythagoreans and used in eschatological contexts; 'auch der ποιητής bei Hippolytos wird Orpheus sein'. Otto Kern included the verses in his *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin, 1922), albeit in the section Spuria vel Dubia (fr. 352).

Reinhardt in his brilliant early book on Parmenides suggested another author:

> Das 'zweifelhafte' Fr. 20 wird bei Diels doch wohl nur darum weitergeführt, damit man über seine Zweifelhaftigkeit nicht mehr im Zweifel sein könne. Vermutlich stammt es aus Empedokles Katharmen; vgl. Emp. Fr. 120 und 128.[10]

Empedocles fr. 120 is the one where the ψυχοπομποὶ δυνάμεις were represented as saying to the souls whom they were bringing to incarnation in our world 'ἠλύθομεν τόδ' ὑπ' ἄντρον ὑπόστεγον', 'we have come down into this roofed cavern'. Fr. 128 describes the reign of Aphrodite in a former age. Neither passage seems relevant to our fragment.

Walther Kranz in his re-edition of Diels's *Vorsokratiker* left it where Diels had put it, as Parmenides 28 F 20, but also assigned it a number under Empedocles as 31 B 154d. In a note in the Parmenides section he writes, 'Parmenides nach Meineke, doch ohne zureichenden Grund; eher "Orpheus" oder Empedokles (Fr. 120. 128 vergleicht Reinhardt)'. For the style of the verses he compares '1 B 17ff.', that is, the 'Orphic' Gold Leaves. There is indeed a similarity, in that there too we see directions being given in hexameters on how to find, by reference to something already encountered, the right path to follow to a desirable goal. But our fragment clearly does not come from instructions for the dead, and it is hard to imagine in what other kind of Orphic poem it might have had a place.

Its style may have been humorously modelled on that of some mystical text, or of oracles. But its content suggests that it belonged in some less serious type of composition – broadly speaking, in entertainment literature. I have two more specific possibilities to suggest.

(1) It appears to be imparting knowledge that is the common property of adult humanity. In what circumstances did someone need such instruction? There was one

[9] A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (Leipzig, 1893), 191–3.

[10] K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt, 1916), 46, n. 1.

man who notoriously did not know the facts of life and who, when he married, had to be instructed in them: Margites, the incompetent simpleton whose comical adventures were the subject of a narrative poem ascribed to Homer. It was composed, perhaps in the late sixth century, in an irregular mixture of hexameters and iambic trimeters. It was still current in the second century C.E., as appears from its presence in two papyri of that date.[11]

When Margites got married he did not not know what he was supposed to do in bed (fr. 4 W.). As Eustathius reports it, 'He did not fall upon his bride until she, at her mother's instigation, pretended to have suffered a wound in her lower parts, and said that no remedy would be of any help except for a male member being fitted to the place: so it was that he made love to her, for therapeutic purposes.' According to Hesychius she pretended to have been bitten between the legs by a scorpion.

There is no hint in the testimonia that Margites received any guidance of the kind represented by our hexameter fragment. But it would not be difficult to fit it into the story. Before marrying he might have consulted an oracle and been given advice that included how to have sexual intercourse, and he might have been represented as too stupid to understand what he was told. The oracle would naturally have been framed in hexameters without admixture of trimeters.

It is a slight argument in favour of the attribution to the *Margites* that Hippolytus refers to the author of the fragment as ὁ ποιητής. This expression does not always mean Homer, as one may see from LSJ, but it does so in all five of the other passages where Hippolytus uses it: *Ref.* 5.7.32, 34, 8.35, 20.8; 8.12.1. Those are all references to the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. If he here meant 'Homer' *qua* author of the *Margites*, it need not follow that he was personally acquainted with the work and knew the fragment in its context. It would be hard then to understand quite how he arrived at the interpretation which he gives it. Assume a middleman, and it becomes easier to imagine.

(2) Alternatively we may consider an origin for the fragment in Attic comedy. A slight pointer in this direction is given by its final phrase, πολυτιμήτου Ἀφροδίτης. The adjective is not a conventional one of the epic language. It is first attested in Epicharmus (88.1 K.–A.), applied to the fish ἔλοψ. As an epithet of gods it is very frequent in invocations in Old Comedy: Pherecr. 166 K.-A. ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμητ', Ar. *Ach.* 807 ὦ πολυτίμηθ' Ἡράκλεις, *Vesp.* 1001 ὦ πολυτίμητοι θεοί, etc.[12]

We might imagine a situation in which mock-solemn instruction in sex was given or reported on the authority of either an oracle or an esoteric book (perhaps by Orpheus). We find passages of hieratic or oracular hexameters in many places in comedy, e.g. Ar. *Eq.* 197–201, 1015–95, *Pax* 1063–114, *Av.* 967–85, *Lys.* 770–6, frr. 29, 267; Eupolis 249; Cratinus 349–54; Diphilus 125.[13] For lubricious elements in such an oracle cf. Cratin. 354, μισηταὶ δὲ γυναῖκες ὀλίσβοισι χρήσονται.[14]

If our verses were represented as coming from an Orphic book or an oracle (possibly of Musaeus), some author before Hippolytus might have quoted them out

[11] M. L. West, *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer* (Cambridge Mass.–London, 2003), 225–8 (introduction), 240–53 (testimonia and fragments); *POxy.* 3963–4 = frr. 8–9 W.

[12] Also *Ach.* 759, *Eq.* 1390, *Nub.* 269, 293, 328, *Pax* 978, 1016, *Av.* 667, *Thesm.* 286, 594, *Ran.* 323, 337, 398, fr. 336. 1 K.–A.

[13] Cf. Wilamowitz, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin, 1921), 348–9.

[14] Frr. 222–3 of the same author might also be thought to offer some analogy to our fragment, in that they come from a passage in which Perseus was given travel directions. And for the style of ἔστιν ἀταρπιτός cf. Eup. 249 ἔστι δέ τις θήλεια Φιλόξενος ἐκ Διομείων.

of context as the teaching of Orpheus or Musaeus or whoever. The way would then have been open for Hippolytus to treat them as connected with the Mysteries.

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THE POET'S CROAK: THE NAME AND FUNCTION OF CORAX IN PETRONIUS

Names in the *Satyrica* have long interested scholars, and the name Corax is no exception.[1] This name, which means 'raven,' proves to be something of a puzzle. First, his proper name is delayed for quite a long time, which delay may be deliberate technique or (given the state of the text) corruption. Second, Corax is a rare name and its significance in Petronius is not clear. By looking at these problems we can gain insights into Petronius's narrative technique, the habits of his excerptors, and his ironic sense of humour because the raven is notorious for its unmusical croak.

Corax is the hired help (*mercennarius*) of Eumolpus. He is not named when he enters the story, but he is simply designated *mercennarius* or *mercennarius Eumolpi*.[2] After it becomes clear that he is also a barber, the narrator refers to him as *tonsor* twice.[3] Afterwards, the narrator uses either *mercennarius* or *tonsor*.[4] It is not until much later, when the group starts their decent into Croton, that he receives a name (*Sat.* 117.11). His name is not introduced: the narrator simply designates him *mercennarius Corax* just before the character speaks for the first and only time in the extant story.[5] Afterwards, the name Corax appears only twice.[6] This pattern of naming is odd: why does the proper name appear so late and without introduction? It is either the author's strategy or textual corruption. There is evidence for each.

[1] S. Priuli, *Ascyltus: Note Di Onomastica Petroniana* (Brussels, 1975), 13–30, provides a comprehensive overview of earlier scholarship. More recently, A. Barchiesi, 'Il nome de Lica e la poetica dei nomi in Petronio', *MD* 12 (1984). Aside from a simple gloss, discussions of Corax can be found in J.A. Gonzalez de Salas, '*De Satirici personarum nominibus*', in P. Burmann, *Titi Petronii Arbitri quae supersunt*, (Amsterdam, 1743; = Hildesheim–New York, 1974), II, 83; P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius. A Literary Study* (London, 1968), 66–7; G. Schmeling, 'The literary use of names in Petronius *Satyricon*', *RSC* 17 (1969), 5–10; C. Connors, *Petronius the Poet* (Cambridge, 1998), 117; M. Plaza, *Laughter and Derision in Petronius' Satyrica* (Stockholm, 2000), 186–8; E. Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius* (Oxford, 2001), 147 and 180; and especially M. Labate, 'Di Nuovo sulla poetica dei nomi in Petronio: Corax "il delatore"', *MD* 16 (1986), 135–46.

[2] 94.12, 94.15, 99.6.

[3] 103.3, 103.5

[4] 108.4: *mercennarius.* 108.8 is a textual problem: *mercennarius* [*tonsor*] (108.8) del. Burmanus, *prob.* Müller 1995.

[5] The action and speech of Corax at this point clearly echo Xanthias in Aristophanes' *Frogs*; see Schmeling, (n.1), 6.

[6] The character Encolpius calls him *mercennarius* in 125.3. In the Philomela story he is twice Corax (140.7, 140.9) and finally *mercennarius* (140.9). In 140.7 and 140.9, the narrator reports Eumolpus' commands; thus, the presence of the name may be due to the representation of Eumolpus' speech. This is not the case, however, in 99.6.