THE *ARGONAUTICA* OF APOLLONIUS

LITERARY STUDIES

RICHARD HUNTER

In recent years the subtlety and complexity of Apollonius' *Argonautica* have been better appreciated, but in Dr Hunter's view the purposes and aesthetic of the epic are still not readily understood and much basic analysis remains to be done. The present book seeks both to offer some of that analysis and to place the *Argonautica* within its social and intellectual context. A series of studies deals with notions of heroism; with *eros* and the suffering of Medea; the role of the divine; poetic voice and literary self-consciousness; and the Ptolemaic context of the poem. A pervasive theme of the book is Apollonius' creative engagement with Homer, and a final chapter sketches out an approach to Virgil's use of Apollonius in the *Aeneid*. The *Argonautica* emerges as a brilliant and original experiment.

This book is the only advanced study of the *Argonautica* currently available. Scholars of Greek and Roman literature, especially Alexandrian poetry and the epic, will find it essential reading. All Greek is translated.

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Literary studies

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Preface

Why I have written this book is set out in the Introduction. Here is rather the place to acknowledge debts and give thanks to those who have helped in one way or another, and I hope that Alan Cameron, Susan Moore, Peter Parsons and two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press will accept this small token of my gratitude for their much larger help. Parts of this book have been inflicted on many audiences over the past few years on both sides of the Atlantic. I have got far more from this experience than they have; where I am conscious of a particular debt, I have sought to acknowledge it, but these occasions have often identified weaknesses and obscurities in ways which I can no longer associate with a particular individual. The final version was prepared during an idyllic few months at Princeton University as a guest of The Council of the Humanities and the Department of Classics; I am deeply indebted to Elaine Fantham, Froma Zeitlin and all their colleagues for offering me the chance to work in such a *locus amoenus*, for the warmth of their welcome and the stimulus of their company.

As I read over what I have written, I recognise one debt which outweighs all others. For many years now I have been lucky enough to have the chance to discuss ancient literature week in and week out with a group of Cambridge friends. Unlike the Argonauts, they require no Catalogue but, like good Greeks, they will know who they are; Orpheus, for example, comes in all shapes and sizes. I am very conscious how much they have taught me, though this book may make them wish to deny it; I offer it to them, nonetheless, with gratitude and affection.

Earlier versions of parts of Chapters 2 and 3 appeared in *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987) and 38 (1988), and are here reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

Cambridge R.L.H.
February, 1992

Abbreviations

1. The text of Apollonius is cited, unless otherwise stated, from the Budé edition of Francis Vian (Paris 1974–81). Reference is made to the three volumes of this edition as Vian I, II and III.
2. Unless otherwise specified all translations are my own. The *Iliad* is normally cited from the translation by Martin Hammond (Harmondsworth 1987) and the *Odyssey* from the version of Walter Shewring (Oxford 1980).
3. Abbreviations for periodicals usually follow the system of *L'Année Philologique*.
4. In the spelling of Greek names, ease of recognition rather than consistency has been the principal aim. Thus, familiar names are usually latinised, whereas less familiar ones may simply be transliterated.
5. Modern works cited in the notes by author and date only are listed in the Bibliography.
6. Standard abbreviations for collections of texts and works of reference are used, but the following may be noted:

CA	J. U. Powell (ed.), *Collectanea Alexandrina* (Oxford 1925)
Ebeling	H. Ebeling (ed.), *Lexicon homericum* (Leipzig 1880–5)
KRS	G. S. Kirk, J. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (edn 2, Cambridge 1983)
LIMC	*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (Zurich/Munich 1981–)
Roscher	W. H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1884–1937)
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (eds.), *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin/New York 1983)

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The study of Hellenistic poetry in general and of Alexandrian poetry in particular ought to stand on the threshold of a golden period.[1] On the one hand, there are the important accessions to our corpus of texts which the papyri have brought and which are now gathered in the splendid *Supplementum Hellenisticum* of Peter Parsons and Hugh Lloyd-Jones. Although it is only Callimachus who has been a big winner in terms of new texts, our sense of what is typical of the period has improved dramatically; it would be churlish to complain that Egypt has not necessarily given us what we would have wished.[2] Moreover, many recent trends in literary criticism would seem to suit well a poetry as self-conscious as that of the high Alexandrian period, and there are indeed signs that these texts are now finding new and sympathetic readers. Nevertheless, some attempt must be made here to analyse the reasons for the generally poor critical reception of Alexandrian poetry in general and of the *Argonautica* in particular, both because future progress must have a context and because these reasons will explain many structural features of the present book. Four broad types of explanation – beyond the poor state of textual survival – may be identified; the types do, of course, overlap at many points.[3]

The first is a matter of both literary and political history. The tendency to view Alexandria as a staging-post – or, perhaps rather, detour – on the road between classical Athens and imperial Rome

[1] On the history and development of the notion of the 'Hellenistic' cf. R. Bichler, '*Hellenismus*'. *Geschichte und Problematik eines Epochenbegriffs* (Darmstadt 1983). I do not imagine that my use of 'Hellenistic' and 'Alexandrian' throughout this book has been entirely consistent, but I use the former as the more general term; I have tried to refer to poetry as 'Alexandrian' only when there are good grounds for associating it (or its author) with Alexandria.

[2] A significant fragment of a poem of Apollonius other than the *Argonautica* would be a precious find indeed.

[3] Any full account would presumably demand a history of taste in the twentieth century; I hope that no one will be disappointed not to find that here.

has greatly restricted the range of questions which has usually been asked of its poetry. Seen either as a scholarly game of 'fooling around' with classical models,[4] or as a series of almost prophetic foreshadowings of Roman developments to come, the texts have been viewed as mediators between other bodies of texts, rather than themselves as significant products (and definers) of a dynamic society. There are, of course, important exceptions in the history of scholarship, but the broad truth of this generalisation is, I think, hard to deny.[5] Ptolemaic culture is, after all, of less importance for the cultural history of the West (as narrowly defined) than that of classical Athens or Augustan Rome; the ultimate 'failure' of Ptolemaic power and culture has affected the way that the poetry of third-century Alexandria has been read. The seeds and omens of this 'failure' *must* be visible in Alexandrian poetry of the high period; or so, I think, did the (often) unstated assumption run.

Secondly, Alexandrian poetry is, by and large, the product of royal patronage; thus the *Argonautica* was probably composed in Alexandria by the Head of the Royal Library in the middle years of the century, during the latter part of the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.[6] A rather vague distaste for 'patronage-poetry' and the prob-

[4] Cf. still Hainsworth 1991.57: 'prettified verse [which] flattered its readers' pretensions to Hellenism and the cultivated mind and did not disturb their moral complacency'. Unsurprisingly, this assertion is not accompanied by any argument.

[5] Fraser 1972 is a partial exception, but serious literary criticism is not that book's concern. On Hutchinson 1988 cf. *JHS* 110 (1990) 233–4.

[6] For the evidence and discussion cf. Hunter 1989. 1–9. I did not there discuss Anthony Bulloch's important argument for the priority of *Arg.* 2.444–5 over Call. *h.* 5.103, cf. *AJP* 98 (1977) 121–2, his edition of *h.* 5 at p. 41 and his note on vv. 103–4; if correct, this would have important chronological implications, as the Callimachean poem seems to be parodied by Asclepiades/Poseidippus at *Anth. Pal.* 5.202.4 (= *HE* 977), which is unlikely to be later than *c.* 260, cf. A. Cameron, *GRBS* 31 (1990) 304–11. The argument is a strong one, but not, I think, conclusive. Both Call. *h.* 5.103 and *Arg.* 2.444 echo *Il.* 1.526 (Zeus to Thetis), a passage which is a crucial model also at *h.* 5.131–6; thus the echo of the *Iliad* in v. 103 fits a repeated theme of the close association of Athena and Zeus and a repeated pattern of allusion, and certainly does not need an origin in Apollonius (where the Iliadic echo reminds us that Zeus is behind Phineus' blindness). Bulloch's claim that 'reminiscence of Apollonius adds various dimensions to Callimachus' text' really amounts to very little. More potent is his observation that the placing of a proclitic immediately before the central caesura is paralleled three times in the *Argonautica* (2.1203, 3.115, 4.1554), but is otherwise unexampled in our corpus of Callimachus; he argues, with proper caution, that this seems to point to the priority of Apollonius. This, however, leaves unanswered the problem of why Callimachus should at this point abandon his normal practice and offer a verbatim quotation which may well be metrically marked as such. I wonder whether the apparent stylistic oddity is not of a piece with the repetition of δῖα γύναι (vv. 97, 103) in characterising Athena's striking mixture of firmness – the caesura in v. 103 isolates and highlights the negative – and consolation. At the very least, I do not believe that the priority of either poet in this instance has been established.

lems it raises has until recently exercised an unhealthy influence on the attitudes of many classical scholars; this may be seen in the extraordinary contortions which some critics have performed in order to free, say, Pindar and the Augustan poets from the dreaded 'shackles' of patronage. Where those 'shackles' have been accepted, it is the esteem of critics for the value and success of the patron that has too often been influential in the critical reception of the poetry honouring that patron: it is one thing to write for Augustus, quite another for Nero. Scholarship on both Pindar and imperial Latin poetry has apparently emerged from this coyness, and a similar freedom is now being enjoyed by Callimachus. Very little attention has, however, been paid to the Ptolemaic context of Apollonius' epic, to the question of why the Head of the Library should write on *this* subject rather than any other. Even in formulation the question sounds strange. Until recently it would have been thought hardly worth asking.[7]

Thirdly, there is what is perhaps the most discussed aspect of Alexandrian poetry – its creative re-use of the literature of the past, its overt and self-conscious 'textuality', the fact that, for example, the *Argonautica* consistently demands to be read against Homer, indeed can only thus be understood, and in a way which is qualitatively different from, say, Attic tragedy's constant engagement with archaic epic. Related to this feature is the open display and exploitation of the apparatus of scholarly learning which so marks this period. These phenomena remain stumbling-blocks for many modern readers. Despite modern parallels, the notion of 'scholarly' poetry has seemed to many 'scholars' who themselves stand, ironically enough, in a fairly direct line of descent from their Alexandrian prototypes to be rather a poor thing after the public grandeur and self-proclaimed importance of the poetry of the archaic and classical periods. 'Callimachus is not Aeschylus' is not a very sophisticated critical position, but it is not hard to feel it lurking behind much that – at least until recently – has dominated the field. When a scholar who probably did more than anyone else for the study of Hellenistic poetry in this century was able to say of it that 'it showed no original magnitude of subject or gravity of religious and ethical ideas',[8] it is plain that those less knowledgeable and thoughtful were

[7] For an attempt at an answer cf. Chapter 6 below.

[8] Pfeiffer 1955-73. Cf. Dover 1971.lxix '[the great Hellenistic poets] did not bring their intelligence to bear upon profound issues which excite the intellect and the emotions simultaneously'; what is most surprising about this assertion – above all from this scholar – is the assumption that we could always identify such issues, particularly in another culture, and that everyone in a culture will be 'excited' by the same issues.

unlikely to have much patience with these poems. For what it is worth, I believe that this assertion is quite false, but we must recognise that such attitudes to Alexandrian poetry arise not least from the very different rhetoric which, broadly speaking, distinguishes Alexandrian poets from their predecessors – namely, a persistent and ironic rhetoric of doubt, self-effacement, deferral. These poets have indeed written their own reception. A poetry which so openly advertises its dependence upon the past, what has rightly been called its sense of 'perceived epigonality and artistic disjunction',[9] is unsurprisingly damned with faint praise. A particular manifestation of this attitude is the (sometimes unintentional) implication that Hellenistic poetry is not 'about anything'. A familiar quotation from Wendell Clausen may serve as illustration: 'The poetry of Callimachus and others like him could be appreciated by only a very few readers as learned or nearly as learned as themselves. Theirs was a bibliothecal poetry, poetry about poetry, self-conscious and hermetic.'[10] This interpretation is, I think, derived not merely from a reading of the poems themselves, but also from views about the circumstances of production and narrow circulation of these texts.

Any response to such criticism must, of course, be grounded in close readings of the relevant poems, but certain general observations may be made. We *know* very little about the contemporary performance and circulation of the poems of Callimachus and Apollonius, even if it is in fact conceded that such knowledge could illuminate the nature of the poems themselves. Comparative evidence shows clearly that 'intensely intellectual' poetry[11] can be enjoyed by readers and listeners who are themselves not intense intellectuals, and that such poetry does not necessarily aim exclusively at a very narrow audience. Both Callimachus and Apollonius, to judge from the numerous papyri, were widely circulated in later antiquity;[12] what external evidence there is indeed points away from the more extreme versions of the 'ivory tower' view of their poetry. More important for present purposes, however, is the fact that the prominent use of intertextual allusion may be (perhaps, usually is) a significant mode for conveying often complex meaning. What that meaning is it is the

[9] Bing 1988.75. There is much of interest and importance in W. R. Johnson, 'The problem of the counter-classical sensibility and its critics', *CSCA* 3 (1970) 123–51.

[10] *GRBS* 5 (1964) 183. Bulloch 1985.543 stands in the same tradition.

[11] The phrase is from Bulloch 1985.542–3.

[12] For Apollonius cf. Vian I lxxxviii–xc; Haslam 1978. Note also the remarks of Hutchinson 1988.6–7.

task of readers and critics to elucidate, but a strong sense of 'historical self-consciousness'[13] does not necessarily go hand in hand with shallowness of ideas. Put like this, of course, the idea seems completely absurd, and yet it is precisely that notion which surfaces all too often in discussions of post-classical poetry.

Pfeiffer's apparently damning observation which I have just quoted is couched in terms ultimately derived from Aristotle's *Poetics* ('magnitude', μέγεθος; 'gravity', σπουδαῖον), and this fact points to a final feature which has worked against the reception of Alexandrian poetry and of the *Argonautica* in particular. Post-Aristotelian 'classicism' has tended to privilege (often unexamined) notions of unity and consistency, whereas it may well be that the predominant Alexandrian aesthetic is to be sought elsewhere. This is something much more than a concern for variety over long stretches of text or within a corpus; it is central to the whole conception of this poetry.

Inconsistency and unevenness reign in all aspects of the *Argonautica* – narrative style, tonal level, characterisation, *Realien*,[14] literary texture, and so forth. To what extent this may be a deliberate shattering of received norms – specifically Aristotelian prescriptions – will be considered later.[15] Here it will be sufficient to note that, for example, many modern readers have found it hard to believe that Book 2, with its long stretches of ethnography and geography, and the universally admired Book 3 belong to the same poem, hard to understand Medea's 'character' except as a sign of singular poetic incompetence, and hard to accept Jason's virtual disappearance from large parts of Book 4. Such readers are, I believe, operating for the most part with an explicit or implicit notion of unity and consistency which is held to be 'artistically satisfying' and would be defended, if need be, by appeal to two proofs: Homer and Virgil on one side, and 'real life' or 'common sense' on the other. Only the former need be considered here. Homer and Virgil do, each in his own way, display an extraordinarily powerful poetic vision, which manages to impose order upon threatening disorder, where the myriad voices of the text all seem to 'speak the same language', even when – as with Dido and Aeneas – the gap of incomprehension is at its widest.[16] In the

[13] Cf. Greene 1982.17.

[14] Thus, for example, whereas there is a fairly consistent attempt to reproduce 'Homeric' sailing technology, the architecture of Aietes' palace spans both the 'Homeric' and the contemporary.

[15] Cf. the Appendix.

[16] Cf. below p. 172.

Argonautica, however, the myriad voices work against each other, creating disorder and fracture. When the poet professes himself helpless before his task (4.1–5), this is not merely a passing literary fancy; it is a statement, or perhaps a particularly obvious manifestation, of a total poetic strategy. The material, in all its diversity, imposes upon the poet and runs uncontrollably riotous.[17]

If the poet lays the difficulties of his task before us, it is also true that the *Argonautica* is not an easy poem to read. Written in epic hexameters on a traditional subject of Greek heroic myth, it nevertheless seems to flaunt an awkwardness of structure, unevenness of tone and style, and a refusal to treat tradition in traditional ways. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that it is now finding new admirers at a time when literary criticism is concerned as never before with the difficulties and pleasures of 'reading' (in all its manifold senses). Thus, for example, in the last ten years the *Argonautica* has been the subject of a detailed and fruitful narratological reading,[18] and (with rather less argumentation) it has been claimed that 'Apollonius was what we now call a Deconstructionist'.[19] This epic is thus set fair to become – indeed has become already – a site of critical struggle, as the process of revising the way we look at 'post-classical' literature continues to gather pace; the current critical interest in 'Silver Latin' epic may be an analogous phenomenon. In one way, at least, both the criticism of Apollonius and that of the 'Silver Latin' poets have, until recently, suffered from a similar handicap: prior assumptions about these poets' intentions and methods and the quality of their poems have affected the way in which the poems have been read (or not read, as the case may be). Thus even a very sympathetic reader has recently described the *Argonautica* as 'one of the finest failures in the whole of Greek literature',[20] apparently confident that 'it is patent that Apollonius conceived his poem as being fundamentally Homeric ... an attempt to construct a Homeric epic for the Alexandrian world',[21] an attempt which then clearly failed. My own impression is that the purposes and aesthetic of the epic are not (or at least not to everyone) 'patent', and that much basic analysis, of the kind we take for granted with

[17] For the actual control of the poet cf. Chapter 5 below.
[18] Fusillo 1985.
[19] John Gardner in Beye 1982.x–xi.
[20] Bulloch 1985.586.
[21] Ibid. 589.

most ancient poetry, remains to be done before any judgement is possible (if indeed we believe that that is a task proper to the literary critic). This present book seeks both to offer some of that analysis and to place the *Argonautica* within its social and intellectual context.

The *Argonautica* is a poem which invites 'readings' rather than 'a reading', and though I hope that my overall conception of the poem does emerge, I have tried not to conceal my awareness that criticism of this epic is at a very early stage. It need hardly be said that if this book can prompt others to read or re-read the *Argonautica* and then take discussion beyond what is offered here, it will have fulfilled one of its most important tasks.

CHAPTER 2

Modes of heroism

(i) EPIC CHARACTER

For many readers of poetry 'epic' and 'heroic' are virtually synonymous terms; epics, after all, are about heroes. Achilles is named, and Odysseus and Aeneas alluded to, in the opening verses of the epics devoted to their deeds. At one level, the *Argonautica*, which is to tell of the 'glorious deeds of men of old' (1.1), follows the pattern, although Jason does not actually enter the poem until the sixth verse. The Argonauts, like Homer's heroes, belong to Hesiod's age of 'semi-divine heroes', and during the classical and Hellenistic periods some of them in fact received cult honours as 'heroes' in the technical sense of Greek ritual; the hymnic coda with which the poem ends makes a clear allusion to this status.[1] Nevertheless, many modern readers have wished to deny 'heroic' status to Apollonius' characters and to his poem.[2] This is not just the result of a consideration of the difference between oral and written epic – that is, the belief (in my view mistaken) that only the former can be truly 'heroic' – but also arises from various specific contrasts between the *Argonautica* and the Homeric poems.

One is the centrality of death in the *Iliad*, most famously expressed in the great speeches of Achilles and the haunting words of Sarpedon to Glaukos in *Iliad* 12:

> 'Dear friend, if we were going to live for ever, ageless and immortal, if we survived this war, then I would not be fighting in the front ranks myself or urging you into the battle where men win glory. But as it is, whatever we do the fates of death stand over us in a thousand forms, and no mortal can run from them or escape them – so let us go, and either give his triumph to another man, or he to us.' (*Il.* 12. 322–8, trans. Hammond)

[1] Cf. below pp. 128–9.

[2] Cf., most recently, Hainsworth 1991.67, 'the first epic that we know of in which the heroic element is not dominant'.

It is the *Iliad* which has most crucially shaped western notions of epic 'heroism', and in that poem the struggle with death on the battlefield seems decisive. In the *Argonautica*, however, not only do battles play only a small part in the narrative,[3] but many of the most important Argonauts – Heracles, Orpheus, the Dioskouroi, the sons of Boreas – are too far removed from 'ordinary humanity' to qualify as 'heroes' in this secondary, Iliadic sense. However nuanced the moral and social issues fought out in the *Iliad* might be, the simple fact of the ever present danger of death in combat gives Iliadic 'heroism' a stark clarity which every listener or reader can readily grasp. In the *Argonautica*, however, though the threat of death constantly attends the heroes, the danger is usually of being overwhelmed pathetically by natural and irresistible forces – the sea, fire, hunger. An Achilles or a Diomedes can fight against rivers or divinities – they are to this extent larger than their environment – but, as I hope this book will demonstrate, actions in the *Argonautica* are too often morally layered and ambivalent for any simple construction of 'heroism'. Moreover, the tone and style of Apollonius' epic are, in comparison with Homer, too various and inconsistent to conform with the pattern derived from Homer; the jarring juxtapositions with which the poem abounds inevitably threaten to undermine this pattern. Further, as we shall see,[4] Apollonius appears to engage in some stylistic parody of the archaic epic, and this too obviously affects the presentation of 'heroism'.

Related to these issues of character and style is the fact that much of the Hellenistic epic is devoted to adventures which are 'fantastic' or 'magical' in a way which, modern scholars have argued, works against any deeper sense of the human condition. In the *Odyssey*, it is claimed, the elements of fantasy are set off against and help to define the 'reality' of the social structures on Ithaca; they are not themselves at the centre of the epic's poetic concerns. In the *Argonautica*, however, there is no such 'reality' to set against, say, Jason's magical victory over the Earthborn, the eerie world of Circe, the terrible landscapes of Libya, or the victory over Talos; these scenes are at the heart of the epic, and as such destroy the assumptions upon which epic heroism is based. Finally, there is the problem of Apollonius' central character, Jason. The heroes of epic should be, if not idealised or 'perfect' figures, at least admirable ones who inspire in listeners

[3] Cf. below pp. 41–5.
[4] Cf. below p. 108.

and readers an awe and a desire, however misplaced or unrealisable, to imitate them; heroes should be exemplars of moral and physical action. It is on this count above all that Apollonius' Jason is held to fail. Jason has not chosen to undertake the expedition for heroic *kleos*, as a demonstration of *arete*, but rather the deadly task has been imposed upon him by Pelias (1.15–17) and its beginnings are marked by gloom and foreboding.[5]

Many responses to criticism of this kind are possible. At one level we must note ancient and modern warnings[6] against the assumption that an epic must have a single 'hero' of extraordinary skills at its centre. Moreover, we must be clear what precisely is at stake in trying to decide whether Apollonius' characters are 'heroic'. If this label is used as a heuristic device in order to help to define how Apollonius exploits the epic tradition, then it may be positively useful. If, however, the label is used – as it too often has been – merely in an attempt to decry the characters of Apollonius in comparison with those of Homer, then it is an obstacle to understanding; here, as commonly in the literary criticism of classical texts, the analysis of difference soon slides into the assertion of qualitative hierarchies.[7] More concretely, Apollonius did not inherit from Homer a monolithic and fixed picture of 'heroism', but rather a series of contesting models in which 'heroic values' were always matters for dispute.[8] Even when allowance is made for the fact that, for their own literary purposes, poets regularly present their predecessors as more internally consistent, less problematic, than they really are,[9] there are clear affinities between the behaviour of heroes in both epics. Thus, for example, the doubts and even despair to which Jason seems prone have close parallels in the Homeric epics. Iliadic heroes are affected by fears and anguish just as strong as those which trouble the Argonauts, and the feeling of helplessness (*amechanie*) which strikes Odysseus and his comrades after the Cyclops' first bloody meal (*Od.* 9.295) matches closely the various shocks which the collective of Argonauts receives (cf. 2.408–10, 3.502–5, 4.1278–9). Despite these obvious similarities, the figure of Jason remains for many critics a curious puzzle, and it is to this which I now turn.

[5] Cf. below p. 84. Contrast the 'simple heroism' of Theocritus 13 in which Pelias is not mentioned; vv. 25–6 suggest that the expedition is a normal event following the start of the new sailing season.

[6] Cf., e.g., D. C. Feeney, 'Epic hero and epic fable', *Comparative Literature* 38 (1986) 137–58.

[7] For a similar instance with Apollonius and Virgil cf. below p. 171.

[8] Cf., e.g., Goldhill 1991.313.

[9] Apollonius does this to Homer, and Virgil does it to Apollonius, cf. below pp. 174–5.

Apollonius' Jason has received a mixed response from modern readers. Carspecken's destructive summary – 'Jason ... chosen leader because his superior declines the honour, subordinate to his comrades, except once, in every trial of strength, skill, or courage, a great warrior only with the help of magical charms, jealous of honour but incapable of asserting it, passive in the face of crisis, timid and confused before trouble, tearful at insult, easily despondent, gracefully treacherous in his dealings with the love-sick Medea but cowering before her later threats and curses, coldly efficient in the time-serving murder of an unsuspecting child,[10] reluctant even in marriage'–[11] finds many echoes throughout the critical literature. Scholars have often differed only about whether poetic design or incompetence is responsible for this apparent travesty of an epic hero. Where design has been admitted, Jason has been classified in a variety of ways: he is the quiet diplomat who works through consensus rather than force,[12] his is a heroism of sex-appeal,[13] he is an anti-hero,[14] the embodiment of Sceptic 'suspension of judgement',[15] or he is 'one of us', credible and lifelike.[16] There is value in these approaches, particularly where they appeal to previous representations of Jason which Apollonius has exploited. Thus, for example, the Pindaric Jason deals with Pelias in the 'diplomatic' manner commonly ascribed to Apollonius' Jason, 'letting drip the soft words in his gentle voice, he laid a foundation of wise speech' (*Pyth.* 4.136–8). So too in Euripides' *Medea*, Jason's opening words are a rejection of inflexibilty (vv. 446–7, cf. 621–2), and he claims to have tried to soothe the rulers' anger (vv. 455–6), just as in the *Argonautica* he has to calm Aietes down 'with gentle (μειλιχίοισι) words' (3.385–96); in both works alliance with a princess provides Jason with a solution to 'many irremediable (*amechanous*) disasters' (πολλὰς ... συμφορὰς ἀμηχάνους, *Med.* 551–4). To anticipate somewhat, the very literariness of Jason's character, its overt debt to and dependence upon previous representations of this

[10] This of course quite misrepresents Apollonius' treatment of Apsyrtus, although the poet does use our knowledge of versions in which the prince was indeed a small boy, cf. below p. 21.

[11] Carspecken 1952.101.

[12] E.g. Herter, *RE* Suppl. 13.36; Vian 1978; Zanker 1987.202–3.

[13] Hübscher 1940.22–3; Beye 1969.

[14] Lawall 1966; Fusillo 1985.

[15] T. M. Klein, 'Apollonius' Jason: hero and scoundrel', *QUCC* 13 (1983) 115–26; on this view cf. Hunter 1988. 436 n. 6.

[16] E.g. Fränkel 1960.1; Beye 1982.79; Zanker 1987.201; Hainsworth 1991.73, 'a person, not a paragon'. For a more subtle version of such approaches, linking Jason to the presentation of the divine in the epic, cf. A. Henrichs' contribution to A. Bulloch, E. Gruen, A. Long and A. Stewart (eds.), *Self-definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley 1992).

'hero' ought to have warned against any appeals to a simple 'realism' of character presentation. It has not done so.

Most modern criticism (in both senses) of Apollonius' Jason has some basis, acknowledged or implicit, in the Aristotelian approach to tragic – and, by implication, epic – character. In Chapter 15 of the *Poetics* Aristotle prescribes that characters should be 'morally good' (χρηστά), 'appropriate' (ἁρμόττοντα),[17] 'like [us]' (ὅμοια),[18] and 'consistent' (ὁμαλά), or at least consistently inconsistent. The last three qualities in particular define a type of representation which has been called 'the realist tradition'.[19] Whether or not the central characters of Apollonius' poem conform to such a pattern is at best doubtful. The case of Medea, who charms terrible dragons but is frightened of a snake(4.1521–2), is perhaps the clearest example, and the apparently contradictory elements in her character have long been recognised. Such a fracturing of 'good' poetic practice, as sanctioned by Aristotle, would not surprise in this epic.[20] On the other hand, there is much in Jason's speech and action which does form coherent patterns, when judged by 'Aristotelian' standards, and some of the other features which modern criticism has found most puzzling can be seen as appropriate to the mythic and ephebic pattern which Jason acts out (cf. below). Apollonius thus breaks with the past while taking over much that the past offered. This same tension is seen in the virtual effacement of Jason from the central action of Book 4,[21] which is very different from Achilles' 'disappearance' from long stretches of the *Iliad*. Achilles' 'absence' hangs over the action with determinative force; it is a crucial organising and unifying poetic stratagem, as Homer exploits our knowledge and desire that Achilles *must* return. The organisation of *Argonautica* 4 is entirely different; Medea, Peleus, Orpheus and others take leading roles in a narrative which relies on variety and surprise.

Aristotle's combined treatment of the characters of epic and tra-

[17] Young men should behave like young men etc.

[18] Cf. Halliwell 1986.160–1, 'the characters should not stand at an ethical extreme, but should be such that an audience can experience a sympathetic moral affinity with them'. Halliwell notes that this affinity does not imply 'moral mediocrity ... but it does impose a kind of ethical upper limit'.

[19] Cf. M. Silk in Pelling 1990.154–6.

[20] Cf. below pp. 193–5. In Christopher Gill's terminology, the 'personality–viewpoint' would predominate over the 'character-viewpoint', cf. 'The question of character and personality in Greek tragedy', *Poetics Today* 7.2 (1986) 251–73, 'The character-personality distinction' in Pelling 1990.1–31.

[21] Particularly telling is the absence of specific mention of Jason at 4.1126–7.

gedy must to some extent be dependent upon shared performative elements – in epic, characters can speak 'for themselves', and drama gives an important place to narrative (particularly in the messenger-speeches);[22] Plato's *Ion*, however humorously exaggerated the portrayal of Ion may be, bears eloquent witness to the importance of 'acting' in rhapsodic practice. The much greater stress in Alexandria upon reading and upon the book as the transmitter of literature[23] may well have contributed to a less 'representational' mode of character portrayal. The change, if change there was, will again have been a gradual one – poems were, after all, still recited. Nevertheless, reading, silent or otherwise, may suggest a quite different conception of human character, and this factor must not be overlooked. Moreover, two aspects of the *Argonautica* actively promote a non-Aristotelian conception of character. One is the greatly reduced prominence from Homer of direct speech; characters in fact speak 'for themselves' much less than in Homer.[24] The epic has become much less 'dramatic'. Secondly, the world in which the Argonauts move is very overtly and deliberately an 'unreal', fractured one in which different times and different material cultures compete for space. In jettisoning the stable Homeric setting, the poet creates characters which are also less stable, more 'textual'.

A second, related, assumption of much modern discussion of Jason is – to put it simply – that he is 'a real person' with a past and a present and a recoverable psychology, and that his words and behaviour are explicable by reference to that psychology.[25] The inadequacy of this approach to the study of character in classical drama is now generally acknowledged,[26] and it is *a fortiori* likely that this will hold good for Hellenistic epic also. To our reading of Jason's character we bring our knowledge of previous representations of him – particularly those of Pindar and Euripides – but what he says and does in the *Argonautica* is an inseparable function of the concerns of the poem as a whole. This is to deny neither the 'natural' desire to vivify the characters of ancient epic in accordance with our own ex-

[22] I am, of course, using 'narrative' here in a loose, but common, way. Whether and how 'dramas' are 'narratives' is a different, and more difficult, question.

[23] Cf. Bing 1988 *passim*.

[24] Cf. below pp. 138–51.

[25] Cf., e.g., Beye 1982.24.

[26] Cf., e.g., the contributions of Easterling and Goldhill in Pelling 1990. For the general issues raised see the surveys by Chatman 1978.116–38, Rimmon-Kenan 1983.29–42, Bal 1985.79–93.

perience and/or our imaginative reconstruction of the ancient world, nor the fact that ancient critics tended to apply the same standards and stereotypes to the characters of epic that they did to, say, speakers in the lawcourts. Nevertheless, our first guide in this matter must be the text of the poem itself. I choose two examples here from the relations of Jason and Medea, not because they are 'typical', but because the questions they raise illustrate what is at issue in the current discussion.

In pleading for Medea's help Jason appeals to the precedent of Ariadne and Theseus:

> 'Once upon a time too a kindly maiden, Ariadne daughter of Minos, rescued Theseus from terrible challenges; her mother was Pasiphae, daughter of Helios. She too, when Minos had laid aside his anger, embarked upon his ship and left her homeland; the very immortals loved her, and as her sign in the middle of the sky a crown of stars, which men call "Ariadne's Crown", revolves all night among the heavenly constellations. Thus will the gods show gratitude to you also, if you save so great an expedition of excellent men ...' (3.997–1006)

This brilliant passage[27] may well be a result of the grace which Hera has bestowed upon Jason's words (cf. 3.920–3), for his use of the exemplum of Ariadne seems really 'inspired'. He finds a closely analogous situation in which a young girl, a relation of Medea, helped a Greek hero and was rewarded by the gods. Pointed ambiguity[28] allows him to gloss over the fact that the hero abandoned the girl on the way home. Ariadne is also an exemplary figure in other parts of the poem, and so this passage fits a recurrent poetic pattern;[29] moreover, the immediately preceding verses in which Jason urges upon Medea the image of the heroes' wives and mothers 'sitting in lamentation upon the shore' seem in retrospect to point forward to the image of the abandoned Ariadne. We know that Jason speaks ὑποσσαίνων, 'flattering [Medea]' (3.974), and his stress upon the need to speak 'openly' (3.982) has alerted us to the likelihood of deceit,[30] but are we to say that Jason, like (?) Odysseus with Nausicaa, is merely allowing Medea to hope for more than he, for the moment, is prepared to offer? Or that he has already formulated

[27] For a recent discussion cf. Goldhill 1991.301–6.
[28] φίλαντο, 'loved' (1002), is the clearest case.
[29] Cf. my note on 3.997–1004.
[30] Cf. below p. 50.

a plan to 'elope' with her and then abandon her? Or that the appropriateness, at a deep level, of the example was unknown to him, and his words – as words in real life often are – are merely truer than he knows? We cannot reconstruct Jason's mind beyond the recurrent concerns of the narrative, among which deceit, persuasion and memory are prominent.[31] Jason says nothing which makes it literally impossible to 'believe in' him as a 'real person', but what he does say directs us away from such belief.

A second example may be drawn from the fourth book. When Jason seeks to calm Medea's fury by assuring her that the pact with the Colchians 'will accomplish a trick (δόλος) by which we shall bring Apsyrtus to destruction' (4.404–5), we can be no more sure than Medea whether we are to understand that the plan to kill the prince had been part of Jason's strategy all along, or whether the idea suddenly occurs to him as an *ad hoc* way of calming Medea down. Similar uncertainties are, of course, familiar from our everyday dealings with other people. To this extent, then, Apollonius' presentation in this scene may even be thought 'novelistic', but for the guiding presence of the narrator's clues as to how to read the speech, cf. 4.394 'fearful Jason spoke soothing (μειλιχίοις) words', 4.410 'he spoke calming her (ὑποσσαίνων)'. Time and again, then, we see that Jason's character is presented to us not as an authorial given, but rather through the perceptions of others, and it is this unstable perspective which is perhaps the principal reason for modern dissatisfaction. Medea, however, is a different case: we 'know' far more about her than we do about Jason because of the poet's lengthy third-person descriptions of her suffering.

(ii) THE HEROISM OF JASON

Jason's story is one of a number of Greek myths concerning young heroes who undergo terrible ordeals before claiming their rightful place in adult society; generational passage is secured by the successful accomplishment of difficult tasks. Orestes and Theseus are two of the most prominent examples, and the most relevant for Apollonius' Jason.[32] The recent work of Pierre Vidal-Naquet and others has es-

[31] Cf. below pp. 59–60.
[32] Cf. Hunter 1988.448–50.

tablished in new detail the connection of such myths with Greek institutions and rituals of adulthood, such as the Athenian ephebate.[33] That the Argonauts as a whole pass through some kind of 'initiation' has long been recognised, and is clear in the repeated designation of the heroes as 'young men', νέοι,[34] and in the stress throughout the work on the weapons of guile and cunning, typical hallmarks of the 'ephebe'. The marks of this inherited pattern in the presentation of Jason are clear to see, and this is one further reason why we cannot abstract his 'character' from the events of which he is a part. From one perspective at least, he is playing a role in a traditional mythic 'performance', and his words and actions must be considered in this light. Thus, for example, the much discussed *amechanie* ('lack of resource'), the doubts and occasional despair to which he and most of the other Argonauts are prone, is strongly reminiscent of the ambivalent insecurity of the tragic Orestes, another young man who requires support and encouragement to accomplish difficult tasks imposed by oracular command.

The central challenges of the expedition are presented in ways which make their initiatory aspects clear. The information and advice which the Argonauts receive from Phineus is structured as the help of an 'old man' (2.411) to a 'child' (2.420). The ploughing of the field with bronze bulls and the slaying of the Earthborn are complementary acts: the first requires heroic strength, aided by Medea's drugs, the second relies on *metis* and cunning (3.1057, 1369). This complementarity points to Jason's intermediate position on the threshold of manhood, and his preparations for the contest (3.1256–64) recall the *pyrrhiche*, the armed dance particularly associated with young men in their training for war.[35] Half-way between Apollo, the model *kouros*, and the warrior Ares (3.1282–3), Jason prepares to meet the great test of his 'manhood'. The only previous killing which Jason had done in the poem was that of the young prince Cyzicus (1.1026–35),

[33] P. Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter* (Baltimore 1986); id., 'The Black Hunter revisited', *PCPS* 32 (1986) 126–44. Many other relevant publications may be traced through these two works.

[34] This seems to have special significance at 1.341 (contrast with Heracles), 458 and 1134 (cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 1.1139), and perhaps also at 3.194 and 555 (the young associated with *metis* rather than *bie*?). More general seem to be 1.382, 4.184, 503. There are, of course, also age-divisions within the group (cf. 1.408, 1107, 2.263, 495). It has frequently been remarked that roughly fifty is a standard number for initiatory groups of various kinds, cf. Sergent 1984.174.

[35] For further discussion and bibliography cf. Hunter 1988.450–1, adding J. Winkler in J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (eds.), *Nothing to do with Dionysos?* (Princeton 1990), pp. 54–7.

and that was a ghastly mistake committed in the confusion of night, in a scene more reminiscent of the 'ephebic' *Doloneia* of *Iliad* 10 than of the open duels of Homeric heroes.[36]

The main object of the expedition, the acquisition of the Golden Fleece, is also achieved with the aid of Medea's magical powers. She and Jason leave the *Argo* in the early hours, at the time when hunters who begin while it is still dark get up (4.109–17); the significance of this indication of the time of deceit and concealment is obvious in the light of Vidal-Naquet's work on the 'Black Hunter'. After the Fleece has been won, Jason's delight in it is compared to that of a *parthenos* who sees the full moon caught on her fine dress (4.167–73).[37] It can hardly be irrelevant that *rites de passage* are often characterised by games or ritual involving sexual reversal; at the moment of Jason's greatest success – the acquisition of both the Fleece and Medea – the simile of the young girl marks his readiness to enter upon 'manhood'. Thus, when he comes to exhort the crew at their departure (4.190–205), he speaks as both 'hero' and 'hoplite', and he dons the armour of war (4.206) to mark his new status.

The patterns considered here operate for the most part at the level of the individual episode, and we should not expect to find a linear, chronological, progression through a transitional rite from beginning to end. Thus, although the victory over the Earthborn and the acquisition of the Fleece may seem to mark Jason's successful completion of his *rite*, the deceitful killing of Apsyrtus clearly restages it with frightening urgency. It is tempting to see here a further refusal by the poet to impose neatly ordering patterns upon the poem: there is rather a constant tension between the many such patterns visible in the work and the striving for variety, *poikilia*, of both theme and treatment. Jason's 'character' is a very striking manifestation of this tension.

A number of scenes from the outward voyage have always been at the heart of discussions of Jason's leadership and his 'character', and it is in these scenes that the general account of Jason which I have offered must find support.

[36] There is an obvious temptation to label the scene 'the Dolioneia'.

[37] J. M. Bremer, 'Full moon and marriage in Apollonius' *Argonautica*', *CQ* 37 (1987) 423–6, rightly points to the erotic and nuptial associations of the full moon. The young girl of the simile is to cross a crucial life-barrier, just as Jason does. For further resonances in this passage – looking forward to the destruction of Jason's second bride – cf. V. Knight, 'Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.167–70 and Euripides' *Medea*', *CQ* 41 (1991) 248–50.

When the Argonauts come to select their leader (1.331–62), Jason, 'wishing what was best for them (ἐυφρονέων)',[38] stresses the common task ahead and urges them to choose 'the best man (ὁ ἄριστος)' to lead them, regardless of anything else.[39] Heracles is the immediate (and obvious) choice – who else could be 'the best'? – but he refuses and imposes the election of Jason, who is given the epithet 'warlike' (ἀρήιος) and accepts 'joyfully'. Vian's interpretation of this scene is not untypical of modern reactions: 'Jason ... knows that, whether he likes it or not, the leadership falls to him, but he is at the same time aware of his inferiority to Heracles' and '[he offers Heracles the leadership] through sincere deference and diplomacy, in the hope that Heracles will refuse it'.[40] Of importance here is the critic's appeal to what the poet does not say and to an explanation for action which is based upon the concealed workings of the mind. An alternative to this approach has been to see penetrating irony at work: Jason enters in a blaze of heroic glory – the Apollo simile of 1.307–11 – but is immediately shown up and embarrassed, as the parodic epithet 'warlike' reveals.[41] It is, however, hard to think of any Greek hero who would not be 'shown up' when matched against Heracles. A more fruitful approach to this scene may thus be, as so often, from Homer.

Jason's speech, with its stress on the responsibilities of the leader to the group as a whole, makes clear why the expedition could not be led by Heracles, a hero of notoriously solitary and idiosyncratic virtue (cf. section (iii) below). Jason is indeed 'the best man' (*ho aristos*), if *arete* consists in the possession of appropriate qualities for a particular task and involves notions of what is fitting in a particular context. His speech both gestures towards Heracles (ὁ ἄριστος) and away from him (the closing references to communality and 'agreements'). To ask whether Jason understood all this in speaking as he does would be to make the naive assumptions about literary character which have already been laid aside. Be that as it may, both Jason and Heracles, like Nestor when he seeks to calm tempers in *Iliad* 1, do in fact base their appeals not on a strict hierarchy of absolute worth, but rather on a recognition of what is fitting and appropriate;

[38] For other views of this word cf. Vian 1978.1029, Fantuzzi 1988.72–4.

[39] Choice in 1.339 between ὑμείων and the much less well attested ἡμείων is not easy; those who adopt the former are split as to whether to take it with ἄριστον or with ὄρχαμον. I am not convinced that Fränkel was wrong to plump for ἡμείων.

[40] *Gnomon* 46 (1974) 349, and Vian 1978.1028–9.

[41] Cf. Beye 1982.31, 82–3.

in so doing, Apollonius' characters both replay and resolve the issues of the Iliadic quarrel, a quarrel which is also about the meaning of and rights to the label 'the best'.[42] Homer's opening quarrel becomes the opening harmony of the Argonauts. Nevertheless, in the very act of imposing a leader, Heracles takes the lead. To the essential dissonance which his presence brings to the expedition I shall return presently,[43] but I would note here that this ambiguity in his status is marked by the ambiguity of the phrase with which the poet characterises his decisive intervention, μέγα φρονέων (1.348) – 'high-mindedly' or 'arrogantly'?[44] Probably both, as his high-minded concern for what is proper is matched by his knowledge that he can impose his will.

Before setting out, the Argonauts pass the night in feasting on the shore (1.450–9). Not all is happy, however, as Idmon has just prophesied not only their successful return after 'countless trials' but also his own death. During the symposium 'the son of Aison, quite self-absorbed ('*amechanos* in himself', ἀμήχανος εἰν ἑοῖ),[45] was pondering on everything, looking like one depressed (κατηφιόωντι ἐοικώς)'. Idas, presumably influenced by his appearance, accuses him of being afraid and delivers a proud and blasphemous speech which leads to a nasty quarrel with Idmon. What is most important here is the stress on appearances and the conclusions drawn from them. Appearances give no access to any simple, unmediated 'truth': you cannot tell with any certainty what someone is thinking or what their mood is from their facial expression.[46] The description of Jason in fact recalls literary descriptions of representations in works of art which both invite interpretation and withhold certainty:[47] we and the Argonauts must try to 'read' Jason, and we must therefore confront not only the fragile basis upon which interpretations of mood and motive are made, but also one of the differences between the usual practice of looking at art and 'looking at' literature. Jason's 'pondering on everything' picks up his earlier speech on the duties of a leader

[42] Clauss 1983.49–51 recognises the importance of the reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 19 for this scene, but draws different conclusions.

[43] Cf. below p. 26.

[44] Cf. 2.19 of the arrogant Amycus, and 3.517 of Idas, at the very least a problematic character.

[45] So Frankel 1968.74–5, 'in sich selbst versunken'; contrast Vian 1978.1037. For further discussion cf. Hunter 1988.443.

[46] Cf. Hypereides fr. 196 Blass-Jensen 'men's faces carry no mark (*character*) of their mind (*dianoia*)'.

[47] Cf. below pp. 56–7 on Jason's cloak.

(1.339–40) and this allows us a 'favourable' interpretation of his silence; his comrades, however, are not lucky enough to have such privileged, authorial information, and must therefore draw their own conclusions.[48] Here the poet's discretion exposes a fundamental truth about the presentation of character in narrative literature. Such an overt concern with the problems of literary character will also call in question any attempt to construct a coherent 'human intelligibility' for Jason.

Two further crucial scenes on the outward voyage also display 'character' as a reworking of Iliadic motifs. When the Argonauts discover that they have left Heracles behind, a fierce argument breaks out on board (1.1280–6). Jason, 'helpless and despairing (ἀμηχανίῃσιν ἀτυχθείς) said neither one thing nor the other, but sat deeply crushed by the grim disaster, eating his heart' (1.1286–9). This despair after the loss of the greatest hero ought to require no special explanation, but the abuse which Telamon heaps upon Jason and their subsequent reconciliation clearly draw upon the quarrel and reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad*.[49] The reworking, however, stresses the Argonautic virtues of loyalty and solidarity (cf. 1.1339–43) rather than the Iliadic pursuit of individual honour. Gone is the Iliadic stress upon gifts of compensation which constitute a visible and permanent sign of apology and acknowledgement of wrong: Argonautic society is not like that. Jason's 'character' is thus again at the service of the poem's broad concerns, expressed through similarity to and difference from the Homeric poems.

Jason's 'testing' of the crew after the Clashing Rocks have been safely passed has proved a notorious critical problem (2.607–49). To Tiphys' up-beat and optimistic speech[50] Jason replies that he should have refused to come on the expedition, that he is weighed down by the cares and responsibilities of leadership and that they are surrounded by hostile forces.[51] The poet then tells us that Jason had

[48] It might be tempting to explain (away) ἀμήχανος as 'focalised' by Idas, i.e. this is how Idas saw him, not necessarily how we should. Such an interpretation, however, precisely smooths out what the poet has chosen to highlight by making problematic; ἀμήχανος is carefully placed *before* the explicit reference to appearances.

[49] Details in Hunter 1988.444; cf. also Clauss 1983.159–61.

[50] Of Tiphys' speech, vv. 611–14 are addressed to the crew at large, and vv. 615–18 specifically to Jason. Schwinge 1986.98 concludes from this that Jason needed more encouragement than the others; maybe, but the most important thing is that it is *his* expedition and *he* upon whom Pelias' charge rests.

[51] For the problems posed by μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσσι παραβλήδην in 2.621 cf. Hunter 1988.446–7. At 3.687 a rather similar 'testing' speech is introduced specifically by the poet as 'guileful' (δόλωι).

spoken 'testing (*peiromenos*) the heroes'. The crew in fact shouts encouragement, 'Jason's heart within him warmed', and he now echoes Tiphys' optimism; no more is said. Just as Agamemnon's near disastrous testing of the troops comes immediately before the real fighting of the *Iliad*, so Jason's *peira* follows the passing of the Clashing Rocks which marks the end of the major dangers of the outward journey and the beginning of the Colchian section of the poem. The scene is a vital confirmation of the Argonauts' willingness to press on with the task they have begun, and it takes the form of a reprise of the scene of Jason's election. Here, as there, he stresses the responsibilities of power (1.339, 2.631–7); here he laments its loneliness, as there he had declared the solidarity of the group; the affirmation of loyalty and support which he receives here renews the command which was entrusted to him then.

It is not, however, merely the situation and context which recalls the Homeric *peira*; so too does Jason's confession of *ate* (2.623, cf. *Il.* 2.111). On the other hand, his statement that he should have refused to accede to Pelias' command 'even if it meant a pitiless death, my body broken limb from limb' suggests to us a famous dismemberment in the Argonautic story – the butchering of the young Apsyrtus which allowed the Greeks to escape from the pursuing Colchians. The safe return for which Jason craves was, in most versions of the myth, bought at a price like that for which he claims to have been prepared to pass up the whole expedition. In the *Argonautica* Apsyrtus is a young man killed far from Colchis, but his death contains clear resonances of the 'butchering' version.[52] Here, then, is a further clear instance where Jason's words cannot simply be explained by appeal to his 'character' or his 'psychology'; they are determined rather by a whole series of overlapping poetic concerns. In stressing the contrast between the personal worries of an individual and the greater anxieties on behalf of the collective which weigh upon a leader, Jason strikes a pose we associate with Agamemnon (cf. *Il.* 10.1ff.) or Odysseus, but by directing this appeal to the helmsman, who is responsible for everybody's safe voyage and who is the very last person who should be charged with such selfishness, the element of provocation or testing in the words is laid bare. Very soon afterwards, in fact, Tiphys' death leads the crew to despair that they will ever return safely (2.862–3). As with the quarrel with Idas

[52] Cf. 4.460, Apsyrtus is like a 'tender child'; 4.477, ritual mutilation recalling the dismemberment of the young child.

in Book 1, therefore, this scene has been shaped to lay emphasis upon the nature of literary story-telling, upon the extent to which we are dependent on the poet's 'generosity' for the interpretation of events. The classic model for such a scene was the *peira* of Agamemnon in *Iliad* 2, and that is why that scene provides the framework here. This, much more than a unitary or developing view of Jason's character, was at the heart of Apollonius' poetic concerns.

It is a function of Apollonius' difference from Homer that the familiar 'heroic' language of *arete* and *time* is not nearly so prominent in the *Argonautica* as in the Homeric epics or in Attic tragedy. At a key moment, however, the old language re-emerges, and in a way which well illustrates the layered effect of Apollonius' text.

Aietes decides to test his visitors' might, their βίη, to make sure – as he alleges – that he will be giving the fleece to good (ἐσθλοί) men, rather than to men worse (χέρηες) than himself (3.399–406). He concludes by observing that this is only what one would expect:

> 'δὴ γὰρ ἀεικὲς
> ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν γεγαῶτα κακωτέρωι ἀνέρι εἴξαι.'
>
> 'For it would not be seemly (lit."not *eikos*") for a man of good (*agathos*) birth to yield to an inferior (lit. "one more *kakos*").' (3.420–1)[53]

What follows has surprised many critics:

> So Aietes spoke. Jason sat where he was, his eyes fixed in silence on the ground before his feet, unable to speak, at a loss as to how to deal with his wretched situation (ἀμηχανέων κακότητι). For a long time he turned over and over what he should do: it was impossible to accept with confidence as the challenge seemed extraordinary. At last he replied [with crafty words][54]:
>
> 'Aietes, you have every right (δίκηι) to place this hard constraint upon me. Therefore I shall risk the challenge, terrible (ὑπερφίαλον) though it is, even if I am fated to die; for there is nothing worse for mankind than the cruel (κακῆς) necessity which forces me to come here at the behest of a king.' (3.422–31)

Here is another silence which invites interpretation: Jason is *amechaneon kakoteti*, 'helpless in his wretched plight' *or* 'helpless because of his cowardice', with an ironic echo of Aietes' *kakos* language. (There is a closely parallel ambivalence in this phrase again at 2.410 in the description of the Argonauts' stunned response to Phineus' account

[53] Cf. 3.437–8 'so that another man may shrink from attacking a better hero (ἀρείονα φῶτα)'.
[54] The transmitted κερδαλέοισιν seems impossible, but cf. n. 57 below.

of the dangers they must face.) Here even authorial interpretation offers no sure guide to 'character.'[55] The ambivalence also serves to point again to the different interpretations of the principals involved. Jason's silence may well indicate to Aietes a different form of *kakotes* than it will to us or to his fellow Argonauts; no authorial guidance can control such multiple reactions, whether of the characters or the readers.

Aietes' final observation (3.420–1, quoted above) also mocks traditional heroic values; this tyrant knows how the dice are loaded. There is, however, also a much more subtle use of the traditional language here. The language of *arete* and *kakia* is particularly at home in the context of a *peira* or test. In *Odyssey* 21, for example, one of the suitors explains to Penelope why the disguised Odysseus should not be allowed to attempt to string the bow:

> 'Wise Penelope, daughter of Icarius, we have no fear that this man will wed you – that would indeed be past all reason (lit. "not *eikos*"). But we feel shame at what might be said by Achaean men and women – the common talk of the baser ones (lit. "the more *kakos*"): "See these men who are wooing a hero's wife! What feeble creatures they are to him (lit. 'much worse', χείρονες), quite unable to string his bow! Yet a man from nowhere, a roving beggar, has come and strung the bow easily and shot through the iron." So all the gossips' tongues will wag, and that would mean our humiliation.' (*Od.* 21.321–9, trans. Shewring)

Penelope answers that the stranger looks well built and (21.335) 'claims to be the son of an *agathos* father'. This passage shows clearly how Aietes presents the challenge of the bulls in very traditional terms. When Jason finally replies, he seems to acknowledge the fairness of the king's procedure. *Huperphialos*, however, a word associated with the arrogance of Amycus and Aietes,[56] clearly hints that the test goes beyond what an *agathos* should require or be expected to do. It thus unmasks the hollowness of Aietes' appeal to traditional heroic values. Moreover, it also colours Jason's acknowledgement of the fairness of Aietes' demand: Jason answers in the same 'code' which the king has used, but makes it clear that the test is neither fair nor *agathon*.[57] He has, however, no choice in the matter: he is helpless in the face of necessity.

[55] Elsewhere κακότης is nowhere unambiguously 'cowardice', but this is hardly decisive.

[56] Cf. 2.54, 129, 758, 3.15, 4.1083; elsewhere only 1.1334 (Telamon's words) and 2.1243 (the Sapeires).

[57] If this reading is correct, then κερδαλέοισι in 426 might just conceivably be sound, but I remain unconfident about it.

In considering the epic as a whole, a very striking difference from the Homeric poems lies in the relationship between Jason and the other Argonauts. Whereas Odysseus' cunning and capacity for endurance strongly differentiate him from his largely anonymous crew, Jason, often *amechanos* rather than *polumechanos*, is marked by the absence of extraordinary intelligence and the supernatural skills possessed by some of the most prominent Argonauts. The difference between Jason and his comrades is also one of freedom of action. When Jason seeks to calm Aietes' anger, he pleads lack of free choice:

> 'οὔ τι γὰρ αὖτως
> ἄστυ τεὸν καὶ δώμαθ' ἱκάνομεν, ὥς που ἔολπας,
> οὐδὲ μὲν ἱέμενοι. τίς δ' ἂν τόσον οἶδμα περῆσαι
> τλαίη ἑκὼν ὀθνεῖον ἐπὶ κτέρας; ἀλλά με δαίμων
> καὶ κρυερὴ βασιλῆος ἀτασθάλου ὥρσεν ἐφετμή.'
>
> 'We have not come to your city and palace for the reason you no doubt suppose; we did not even wish to come here. Who would be so reckless as to choose to cross so great a stretch of sea to take another man's possession? But I have been sent by a god and the chilling command of a wicked king.' (3.386–90)

The answer to the question 'Who would be so reckless etc.?' is, of course, 'Every Argonaut except Jason', as the change from the plurals of 387–8 to the singular of 389 clearly hints. To this extent at least, Jason's position resembles that of Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. During the quarrel in Book 1, Achilles tells Agamemnon that he and the other Greeks have come, not because the Trojans have harmed them, but 'so that you may rejoice, bringing honour to you and Menelaos' (*Il.* 1.158–9).

Jason's difference from Odysseus is matched by the prominence given to ideas of communal solidarity and mutual interdependence, solemnified by the building of a shrine to Homonoia ('Likeness of Mind') and an oath 'always to help one another in solidarity of mind (ὁμοφροσύνῃσι νόοιο)' (2.715–16). Jason's words to his comrades as they sit concealed in the Colchian marshes are virtually a programmatic rejection of Odyssean behaviour:

> 'ὦ φίλοι, ἤτοι ἐγὼ μὲν ὅ μοι ἐπιανδάνει αὐτῶι
> ἐξερέω, τοῦ δ' ὔμμι τέλος κρηῆναι ἔοικε.
> ξυνὴ γὰρ χρειώ, ξυνοὶ δέ τε μῦθοι ἔασι
> πᾶσιν ὁμῶς· ὁ δὲ σῖγα νόον βουλήν τ' ἀπερύκων
> ἴστω καὶ νόστου τόνδε στόλον οἷος ἀπούρας.'

> 'Friends, I shall tell you the plan which I myself favour, but it is for you to give it your assent; for common is our need, and common to all the right to speak. Let him who holds back his view and counsel in silence know that he alone deprives this expedition of its safe return.' (3.171–5)

Jason's subsequent praise of *muthos*, however, does associate him with familiar Odyssean virtues, and we must not see this as further evidence of Jason's lack of martial 'heroism'. There is no suggestion in this passage that he has anything against the use of force if more peaceful methods prove fruitless.[58] Indeed the plan which he proposes – first to test Aietes by asking for the Fleece back – does not seem too different from what we are told of the action of the archaic epic *Cypria* in which, after an initial engagement, 'the Greeks sent an embassy to the Trojans, demanding back Helen and her property'.[59]

My analysis of Jason has stressed that such discussion cannot take place in isolation both from Apollonius' general concerns and from detailed textual analysis, as it is clear that the episodic character of the work gives an independence to individual scenes of a kind generally unfamiliar from Homer. In different scenes Apollonius experiments with his heritage in different ways, and through an aesthetic which can appear strange when viewed with classicising eyes. Misunderstanding is too often the result of an assumption that Apollonius wanted to be like Homer (or, rather, certain visions of Homer), but somehow (probably through lack of talent) failed in the attempt.

(iii) HERACLES

The greatest hero among the Argonauts is Heracles, the greatest of all Greek heroes; the crew is in no doubt how things would have turned out differently had he not been lost to them in Mysia.[60] With

[58] For a quite different view cf. Schwinge 1986.106–8. An instructive case is 4.338–41 where the 'few Minyans' avoid a battle in which they would be outnumbered by coming to a bargain with the Colchians; Vian ad loc. properly cites the Homeric verbal model of *Il.* 13.739 (Polydamas to Hector) and comments 'cette conduite héroïque n'est pas celle des Argonautes d' Apollonios'. In the *Iliad*, however, Polydamas precisely urges that a battle in which you are outnumbered is not a good idea, and Hector accepts this wise advice. This is a good instance of where an over-simplified view of Homeric 'heroism' can lead to misreadings of Apollonius.

[59] Cf. Proclus' summary printed on p. 105 of Vol. v of the OCT Homer [= *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* p. 32 Davies].

[60] Cf. 2.145–50, 774–95, 3.1232–4. His loss is marked at the very opening of Book 2 by Amycus' challenge to fight 'the best man' (2.15, cf. above p. 18); Heracles was, of course, also the divine patron of boxers. Cf. *Il.* 7.50–1 where Helenus' instruction to Hector to challenge 'the best of the Achaeans' points to Achilles' absence; Margolies 1981.140.

his greatness came a protean versatility. As many recent studies have emphasised, Heracles, the civiliser of mankind, is also wild and brutish, long-suffering, given to fits of violent temper, deeply tragic and grotesquely comic, the hero who returned from the Underworld to become a god; as Walter Burkert puts it, he 'contains his own antithesis. The glorious hero is also a slave, a woman, and a madman.'[61] From the divine Heracles the Ptolemaic dynasty claimed descent, and Heracles figures prominently in the literature written under Ptolemaic patronage.[62] A comparison, however, of his amusing appearance in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* (vv. 145–61), where the needs of his stomach determine the low cunning with which he greets the goddess as she returns from the hunt, and the picture of him in Theocritus' *Encomium of Ptolemy* (17.26–33), accompanied to bed after a symposium on Olympus by Ptolemy Soter and Alexander, shows that poets were not straitjacketed in the ways in which they could present the great hero; considerations of genre and literary purpose were as important as ever.

Heracles is anomalous among the Argonauts. The expedition takes place under the protection of Hera, but from Homer onwards[63] Hera's persecution of Heracles is a familiar fact, and Apollonius does not seek to hide it (cf. 1.996–7); his very presence, therefore, is a dissonant element in the expedition. Moreover, no theme is more insistent throughout the poem than that of 'the common good', 'mutual assistance', 'collective virtues', but Heracles is traditionally a figure of solitary virtue and suffering – he is ill at ease in the socialised community. When he joins the expedition he is in the midst of his labours (1.122–32), and in his last appearance in the poem he is on his way to Olympus; he is not a young man like the others, and the expedition does not carry the same meaning for him as for them. Some versions of the story indeed omitted him from the crew, or made the *Argo* refuse to carry him because he was too heavy;[64] this latter version is a physical embodiment of his difference – he unbalances what is most important in the boat.

The expedition follows in Heracles' tracks, visiting some of the

[61] Burkert 1985.210.

[62] Cf. Gow's note on Theocr. 17.26; Griffiths 1979, Index s.v. Heracles. For a statuette of Philadelphus as Heracles cf. C. C. Edgar, *JHS* 26 (1906) 281–2.

[63] Cf. *Il.* 18.119, Hes. *Theog.* 315.

[64] Cf. 1.532–3, Σ 1.1289–91. Arist. *Pol.* 3.1284a22–5 reports that the Argonauts left him behind because the *Argo* did not wish to take him 'because he far surpassed (ὑπερβάλλοντα πολύ) the sailors'; this is perhaps best taken as a further reference to his weight.

places he visited and doing some of the things he did; he acts as an inimitable exemplar,[65] a fact which Valerius Flaccus' poem makes explicit (*Arg.* 1.33–6). Thus, for example, he shoots down the Earthborn giants as they hurl boulders (1.992–7) in a foreshadowing, with significant differences, of Jason's battle with the other Earthborn. In Book 2 Lycus tells the crew how Heracles visited his country, won a boxing match, and subdued various neighbouring peoples for his father the king; this latter feat foreshadows Jason's offer to Aietes to assist him in his frontier wars (3.352–3, 392–5). Most striking of all is the parallel and contrast between Jason's acquisition of the Fleece and Heracles' successful theft of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides.[66]

In Homer, Heracles is generally represented as a violent and successful mortal hero of an earlier generation. Various stories suggest both his temper and his greed for possessions,[67] and he was quite prepared to challenge the gods, if need be.[68] In the Underworld, however, Odysseus sees a different Heracles:

> 'τὸν δὲ μέτ' εἰσενόησα βίην 'Ηρακληείην,
> εἴδωλον· αὐτὸς δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
> τέρπεται ἐν θαλίῃς καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφυρον "Ηβην'
>
> 'Then I saw the mighty Heracles, a phantom; he himself enjoys delightful banquets among the immortal gods and has as wife fair-ankled Hebe' (*Od.* 11.601–3)

Verses 602–3 were athetised in later antiquity and modern scholars have argued that they rely upon post-Homeric notions of the afterlife.[69] There is, however, no good reason to doubt that Apollonius knew them in this place in Homer, and we shall see that they are probably echoed as Heracles leaves the poem in Book 4.[70] When

[65] Standard now is Feeney 1986 (summarised in Feeney 1991.95–8); cf. also Händel 1954.28–9, Galinsky 1972.111–12, Beye 1982.117, Fusillo 1985.51, Goldhill 1991.314–15.

[66] Cf. below p. 29. Valerius compares Jason carrying the Fleece to Hercules putting on the lion-skin for the first time (*Arg.* 8.125–6). He probably took his cue from 4.179–80, where Jason throws the fleece over his left shoulder and it reaches the ground (ποδηνεκές); ποδηνεκής is used of a lion-skin at *Il.* 10.24 (= 10.178) and again by Apollonius of a bull-hide cloak at 1.324.

[67] Cf. *Il.* 5.638–42, *Od.* 21.20–30.

[68] Cf. *Il.* 5.392–404, *Od.* 8.224–5.

[69] Cf. Σ *Od.* 11.385; E. Rohde, *Psyche*[2] (Freiburg 1898) 1 60–1; J. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton 1983) 81–2; Heubeck ad loc. Verse 604 seems to be post-Aristarchean, cf. G. M. Bolling, *The External Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* (Oxford 1925) 212.

[70] Cf. below pp. 31–2.

Heracles speaks to Odysseus in the Underworld, he recognises a similarity between them:

'Son of Laertes, subtle Odysseus – you too, then, it seems, are trailing with you some such evil fortune as I endured while I saw the sunlight. My father was Zeus the son of Cronos, yet I suffered measureless misery. I was made to serve a man much beneath me who forced upon me some fearsome tasks. Indeed he once sent me even here to fetch away the hound of Hades, for he thought that no task could be more fearsome for me than that. But I brought the hound out of Hades' house and up to earth, because Hermes helped me on my way, and gleaming-eyed Athene.' (*Od.* 11.617–26, trans. Shewring)

Odysseus is following in Heracles' footsteps, just as Jason is to do;[71] both are forced by 'lesser men' to grievous challenges.

The passages which follow the two occasions when the Argonauts 'lose' Heracles – in Mysia when he disappears in search of Hylas, and in North Africa when he makes a ghostly reappearance – emphasise the extent of the loss by presenting other Argonauts acting out 'Heraclean' roles.

The fight between Amycus and Polydeuces with which Book 2 opens is presented as a clash between the forces of Olympian fairness and justice and dark, pre-Olympian chthonic forces, or as a kind of Gigantomachy, as suggested by the comparison of Amycus to 'a son of Typhoeus or a Giant' (2.38–40);[72] as a 'sporting contest' won by skill and cleverness over brute force (2.70–6) it foreshadows Jason's 'Gigantomachy' which concludes Book 3. Typhoeus and the Giants were among the pests against which the great civiliser Heracles had fought;[73] Polydeuces therefore here replays the struggles of the hero whom the Argonauts have just lost. Polydeuces' gleaming erotic power, 'like the star in the heavens, whose rays are the most beautiful when it appears in the dark evening sky' (2.40–2), and the clear foreshadowing in the episode of his divine status (cf. 2.161–3) do not merely replay the epinician themes, most familiar from Pindar, of the immortality and divine grace conferred on the athletic victor by his

[71] For the Argonautic voyage as a *katabasis* cf. below pp. 182–8.

[72] Cf. Valerius Flaccus 4.236–8; Fränkel 1968.157–8. The great noise of the fight (2.83–4) may be seen as a humorous reworking of the great noise of cosmic battles (cf. Hes. *Theog.* 678–83, 858).

[73] Typhoeus: Bond on Eur. *HF* 1271–2; A. Loyen, 'Hercule et Typhee' in *Mélanges ... Alfred Ernout* (Paris 1940) 237–45. Giants: Pind. *Nem* 1.67; F. Vian, *REG* 65 (1952) 11–15.

victory and the poems which celebrate it,[74] but are also a further Heraclean motif: like Heracles, Polydeuces wins divine status for ridding the earth of a pestilential monster.

The second site where Heracles is lost is around Lake Triton, near the town of Euhesperides (modern Benghazi).[75] Here the Argonauts arrive thirsty and exhausted after having carried the *Argo* on their shoulders for twelve days and nights, and are saved by the fact that just previously Heracles had been there to gather the golden apples of the Hesperides. The Argonauts come upon the already rotting body of the serpent, Ladon, which guarded the apples and which Heracles had killed, and they drink from a spring which had been caused to well up from the earth by a savage kick from the great hero.

The Argonauts' difference from and dependence upon Heracles is underlined by the contrast between the latter's brutal method of winning the apples (μῆλα) and the magic powers upon which Jason relied to gain the fleece of a sheep (μῆλον) by overcoming the Colchian dragon; both dragons were the children of Earth.[76] That the site of the golden apples is imagined to be a shrine with the Hesperides as sacral attendants reinforces the parallelism between the Colchian Grove and the Libyan scene.[77] The Argonauts, who arrived parched and looked for a spring 'like mad dogs' (4.1393), are saved by Heracles, the 'most dog-like' (ὁ κύντατος, 4.1433).[78] This is Heracles' last action. He is already on his way to Olympus as the divine ἀλεξίκακος, 'averter of evil', and saviour.[79] This is what Lynceus' report that 'no searcher would come across [Heracles] again' (4.1481–2) means: he has disappeared from the poem, leaving only visible signs (4.1445–6) and *aitia* behind him.[80] A particularly

[74] For further discussion cf. Hunter 1991b.87–90, and for the 'Ptolemaic' aspect of this scene below pp. 160–1.

[75] Cf. Pliny, *HN* 5.5.31, Delage 1930.261–70, Vian III 57–64 and *Note complémentaire* to 4.1399, S. Ferri, *Quaderni di archeologia della Libia* 8 (1976) 11–17; cf. further below pp. 152–3.

[76] Cf. 2.1209–13, 4.1398 χθόνιος ὄφις.

[77] 4.1396 ἱερὸν πέδον, 1399 Ἑσπερίδες ποίπνυον, cf. Pliny, *HN* 5.5.31 *lucus sacer*. For the Colchian grove cf. 2.1268–9, 4.100, 123 ἱερὸν ἄλσος.

[78] Dog imagery is also operative at 4.1442 δίψῃ καρχαλέος, cf. my note on 3.1057–60.

[79] Cf. Feeney 1986.63, Herter 1955.286. Σωτήρ is found as a title of Heracles on second-century Thasos (*RE* Suppl. 3.1004).

[80] Whatever the origin of the serpent's name, Ladon must be an implicit *aition* for the river Lathon or Lethon which flowed in the area (cf. below p. 31). At 4.1397, εἰσέτι που χθιζόν κτλ., the standard language of aetiology (εἰσέτι νῦν etc.) is perverted to show how Heracles has changed the very course of the poem.

pointed marker of this is the poem's complete silence about Heracles' wrestling with Triton. The hero was said to have wrestled with this god, or his double Nereus, to force out of him directions as to how to get to the apples;[81] by the time the poet introduces Triton, however, both Heracles and all memory of this encounter have gone from the poem.

Very striking in this scene is the ignorance of the Hesperides, divine beings who apparently do not even know Heracles when they see him and seem to know nothing of the Argonauts.[82] That they are unsure of the origin of Heracles' creation of the spring, ἐπιφρασθεὶς ἢ καὶ θεοῦ ἐννεσίῃσι, 'either because he had thought of it or because a god planted the idea in his mind' (4.1445) – a verse which presents Heracles as like the savage Cyclops – [83] assigns to them the same uncertainties as mortals endure and stresses the ambiguities of their being. Aigle's speech in which she describes Heracles' 'visit' is in fact reminiscent of the rude welcome which Dionysus, dressed as Heracles, receives in the Underworld in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.[84] There Heracles was best remembered for his theft of the watch-dog Cerberus, and the word-order at 4.1433–4, ὅς τις ἀπούρας | φρουρὸν ὄφιν ζωῆς, 'who took away the guardian snake from life', plays with the idea that Heracles has in fact stolen the Hesperides' beloved snake.[85] An echo of comedy itself reflects Heracles' many-sidedness, a hero as comic as he is epic.

If we are indeed to think of Heracles in the Underworld at this point, this would not be the only indication that this part of Libya, like the Syrtis, is a kind of Hades. Only Lynceus is able to catch a very distant glimpse of Heracles, and he could see beneath the earth (1.153–5). When Odysseus was in the Underworld he saw the *eidolon* of Heracles, whereas the hero himself was already in heaven. Apol-

[81] Sources vary betwen Triton and Nereus as Heracles' opponent (cf. *RE* 7A.257–61, Suppl. 3.1070–1, Bond on Eur. *HF* 400–2), but this is not significant; in the context we cannot fail to connect Heracles and Triton.

[82] Cf. Ibscher 1939.163. Their total ignorance is uncertain in view of 4.1432–3, but those verses may merely take up Orpheus' plea. The echo of the heroines (cf. 4.1320) can mark contrast as well as similarity.

[83] Cf. *Od.* 9.339 (the Cyclops bringing all his sheep into the cave), ἤ τι ὀισάμενος, ἢ καὶ θεὸς ὣς ἐκέλευσεν 'either because of some thought, or at this instruction of a god'.

[84] Cf. esp. *Frogs* 549 ὁ πανοῦργος, 571 μιαρὰ φάρυγξ.

[85] Note also *Frogs* 468 ... ὤιχου λαβών ~ 4.1435 ... οἴχετ' ἀειράμενος. I would like to believe that the second half of that verse, στυγερὸν δ' ἄχος ἄμμι λέλειπται, echoes *Frogs* 1353 (from the 'Euripidean' monody about the lost cock) ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχε' ἄχεα κατέλιπε.

Ionius has elaborated this Odyssean scene into the marvellous simile describing Lynceus' vision of Heracles:

> ἀτὰρ τότε γ' Ἡρακλῆα
> μοῦνος[86] ἀπειρεσίης τηλοῦ χθονὸς εἴσατο Λυγκεὺς
> τῶς ἰδέειν, ὥς τίς τε νέωι ἐνὶ ἤματι μήνην
> ἢ ἴδεν ἢ ἐδόκησεν ἐπαχλύουσαν ἰδέσθαι·
>
> At that time only Lynceus thought that he saw Heracles far off across the endless land, as one sees or thinks he sees the moon shrouded in mist on the first day of a new month. (4.1477–80)

Virgil caught this history and resonance of the simile when he transferred it to Aeneas' sight of the ghost of Dido in the Underworld (*Aen.* 6.451–4). Moreover, the serpent Ladon must be connected with the river Lathon or Lethon which flowed, perhaps underground, at Euhesperides. This name inevitably recalls Lethe, the great river or lake of the Underworld;[87] here then, at the limits of life and death, Heracles and the Argonauts finally part company.

It is hardly surprising in the present connection that two Argonauts should meet their death in such a setting. Of particular interest is the death of Mopsus from snakebite.[88] Heracles had killed a 'chthonic serpent', a χθόνιος ὄφις (4.1398); Mopsus is killed by a 'dread serpent' (δεινὸς ὄφις, 4.1506), one of the brood which arose spontaneously from drops of Gorgon's blood which fell on the land (4.1513–17). There is a justice to the revenge perpetrated by the 'race of snakes' (4.1517) which perhaps recalls the poison motif in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. Heracles killed the hydra and used its poison to kill Ladon; now one of the Argonauts – for Heracles himself has passed beyond revenge – is killed as recompense by a poisonous snake whose origin is traced to the blood of another murdered snaky horror. The Colchian snake which lost its precious fleece is also in part revenged, as its creation too was traced by the poet to the bloody

[86] μοῦνον is the reading of nearly all witnesses. Beye 1982.97 finds it 'so typical' that Heracles was all by himself, but the nominative stresses that Lynceus' magical powers were necessary in order to catch a final glimpse of the hero.

[87] Lucan at least connected the two (*BC* 9.355–6), cf. *RE* 12.2144. Lethon is also connected with the Underworld by Iulius Solinus, a writer of *memorabilia* of the third or fourth century A.D. (27.54 Mommsen). He did not find this in Pliny, his usual source; he may be drawing on Lucan (so Housman), but there may also have been a wider tradition now lost to us.

[88] On the identification of the snake cf. Herter 1955.398, Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.1531; Dickie 1990.283–4.

death of a monster (2.1209–15). Here again the point is made by contrast. Ladon was ever-watchful (4.1434), but Mopsus' snake was normally drowsy and passive (4.1505–7); when the Argonauts arrived, Ladon was lifeless but for the tip of his tail, whereas Mopsus treads precisely on the snake's back,[89] in a fatal action which recalls and reverses Heracles' life-giving creation of the spring. Ladon's wounds are rotting before he is quite dead (4.1405), and Mopsus rots instantly and completely; the Hesperides mourn for their serpent as the Argonauts mourn for Mopsus (4.1532–6). More uncertain perhaps is a further consideration. Later tradition, but perhaps going back to Eratosthenes, catasterised the serpent of the Hesperides as the constellation Drakon and identified the figure in the sky 'above' Drakon, the *engonasin* or 'man on his knees' – also called *eidolon, imago* – as Heracles stepping on the serpent in the act of killing it.[90] It is tempting to believe that Mopsus re-enacts this version of the death of the serpent; his death would then, in a sense, be Heracles' death. The relevant astronomical interpretation cannot certainly be traced as early as Apollonius, but only an excess of scepticism would deny that it is likely to have been known; Aratus' description of the *eidolon* (cf. *Od.* 11.602 of Heracles) indeed suggests the suffering hero, μογέοντι ... ἀνδρὶ ἐοικὸς | εἴδωλον, 'a phantom resembling a man labouring hard' (*Phaen.* 63–4).[91]

Apollonius' Heracles is not, as so much recent criticism would have it, Jason's polar opposite, a straight-talking, unsubtle hero who throws Jason's shortcomings into relief. In refusing the leadership of the expedition he had shown a sensible realisation of what is required, as well as exuding the menace of physical threat.[92] Moreover, as the Argonauts approach their meeting with the sons of Phrixos, the *metis* by which Heracles drove off the Stymphalian birds is recalled (2.1052–7), and thus the use of guile is sanctioned by the memory of Heracles just as that part of the epic where 'guile' is most important begins. The contrast between the two heroes is, of course,

[89] Note 1403 ἄκνηστιν ~ 1518 ἄκανθαν.

[90] Cf. Aratus, *Phaen.* 63–70, Eratosthenes, *Catast.* iii–iv Robert.

[91] Note also *Phaen.* 65 οὐδ' ὅτινι κρέμαται κεῖνος πόνωι which also suggests Heracles. At 4.1401–2 ἄκρηι | οὔρηι of Ladon may echo *Phaen.* 50–1 ἄκρη | οὔρη of *Drakon*, but coincidence cannot, I suppose, be ruled out. Aratus, following Eudoxus, makes the *engonasin* tread with his right foot on the dragon's head (*Phaen.* 70, Eudoxus fr. 17 Lasserre), and ancient critics thought that this should have been the left, cf. Σ Aratus, *Phaen.* 69, Hipparchus 1.2.6 Manitius; does 4.1519 'correct' Aratus?

[92] Cf. above pp. 18–19.

real enough. The different methods of dealing with the Colchian and African serpents speak volumes, as does the contrast between the designs on Jason's cloak and the bloody scenes portrayed on Heracles' belt in Homer (*Od.* 11.609–12) and on his shield in the Hesiodic *Scutum* (*Shield of Heracles*). Just before Heracles' reappearance in North Africa, Jason is compared to a lion in a famous 'non-simile' (4.1337–43);[93] Heracles, by contrast, is the very anthropomorphic manifestation of the lion.

When the Argonauts leave the ship to enjoy themselves with the women of Lemnos, Heracles remains behind with a few comrades to guard the ship (1.992–3, cf. 1.1111). Many modern critics have seen here disapproval by Heracles of what happens on Lemnos;[94] on this reading, Heracles reveals himself either as spurning heterosexual love-making[95] or as the virtuous ascetic of a tradition which begins for us in earnest with Prodicus' fable of the young Heracles choosing between the paths of Virtue and Vice.[96] Support for this is sought in the speech which Heracles delivers as the delay at Lemnos becomes lengthy:

> 'δαιμόνιοι, πάτρης ἐμφύλιον αἷμ' ἀποέργει
> ἡμέας; ἦε γάμων ἐπιδευέες ἐνθάδ' ἔβημεν
> κεῖθεν, ὀνοσσάμενοι πολιήτιδας; αὖθι δ' ἔαδε
> ναίοντας λιπαρὴν ἄροσιν Λήμνοιο ταμέσθαι;
> οὐ μὰν εὐκλειεῖς γε σὺν ὀθνείῃσι γυναιξὶν
> ἐσσόμεθ' ὧδ' ἐπὶ δηρὸν ἐελμένοι· οὐδέ τι κῶας
> αὐτόματον δώσει τις ἑλὼν θεὸς εὐξαμένοισιν.
> ἴομεν αὖτις ἕκαστοι ἐπὶ σφέας· τὸν δ' ἐνὶ λέκτροις
> Ὑψιπύλης εἰᾶτε πανήμερον, εἰσόκε Λῆμνον
> παισὶν ἐπανδρώσῃι μεγάλη τέ ἑ βάξις ἵκηται.'
>
> 'Poor fools, does the shedding of kindred blood prevent us from returning home? Have we left our homes to come here in search of brides, scorning the women of our own cities? Do we want to live here and cut up the rich plough-land of Lemnos? We will not win glory (lit. "have good *kleos*") by shutting ourselves up here interminably with foreign women. No god is going to hand over the fleece to us in

[93] Cf. below p. 133.

[94] For these critics (e.g. Fränkel, Vian and Paduano) διακρινθέντες in 856 means not 'chosen', but 'remaining aloof'.

[95] The cult of Heracles μισογύνης at Phocis is of doubtful relevance; on this cf. N. Loraux in D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (eds.), *Before Sexuality* (Princeton 1990) 25–6.

[96] Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21–34, cf. R. Hoistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King* (Uppsala 1948) 22–50, Galinsky 1972.105–8, Feeney 1986.54–5.

> answer to our prayers; we will have to work for it. Let us all return to our own countries and leave him to wallow all day in Hypsipyle's bed until he has won great renown by filling Lemnos with his sons!' (1.865–74)

Elements of the 'virtuous' Heracles are clear enough: in Prodicus' fable, Virtue stresses that the gods give men nothing without hard work (*ponos, epimeleia*), so that someone who wishes to win *kleos* must strive to work on Greece's behalf.[97] We may, moreover, also detect resonances of moralistic readings of the *Odyssey* which viewed Odysseus' time with Calypso and Circe as examples of unheroic lust.[98] Nevertheless, it is the delay to the expedition, not the fact of casual love-making, which upsets Heracles; the expedition itself represents for him an interruption to his Labours and to the *kleos* which accrues from them. Apollonius' Heracles is allowed intimations of his own fate and future status: he is in a hurry to get there.

Heracles' speech is not the simple rant which much criticism has made it. The opening reference to 'kindred bloodshed' suggests recent events on Lemnos,[99] and the sarcastic question about scorning the women of their own cities hints at an equation between the Argonauts and the dead Lemnians. Moreover, much of what Heracles has to say suggests familiar incidents from his own legends. He himself killed his own children, and we can hardly doubt the existence of a version in which the Labours, and hence a long absence from his homeland, were the direct result of this murder;[100] at any event, we are later told of a trip by Heracles to Corfu to purify himself (4.539–41). Heracles was also notorious for his 'brides' all over the Mediterranean, and we might well think in particular of Iole and Omphale.[101] No Greek hero was more fertile than Heracles, and 'descendants of Heracles' populated large areas of Greece. In staying with Hypsipyle, then, and rousing Heracles' anger, Jason is in fact merely following in Heracles' footsteps; this complex irony cannot be

[97] The fact that Heracles joined the expedition 'of his own free will' (1.130) may reflect poetic and philosophical discussions of the role of fate and necessity in his labours, cf. Galinsky 1972.101–2.

[98] Cf. E. Kaiser, *MH* 21 (1964) 210–13; below pp. 178–9. Note the context of the Virgilian 'version' of Heracles' speech: Mercury's reproof to Aeneas at *Aen.* 4.265–76.

[99] Cf. Margolies 1981.50.

[100] The sources are uncertain (cf. Bond's edition of Eur. *HF*, pp. xxviii–xxx), but excessive scepticism is unwarranted.

[101] Note that the sexual resonances of 867–8 – ploughing being a familiar image of intercourse – also occur in the language of Deianeira at Soph. *Trach.* 31–3.

accommodated by the simplistic readings of the Apollonian Heracles which are currently fashionable.

A further factor to be considered is the echoes in this speech of Thersites' abuse of Agamemnon before the Greek army in the *Iliad*:

> 'ὦ πέπονες, κάκ' ἐλέγχε', Ἀχαιΐδες, οὐκέτ' Ἀχαιοί,
> οἵκαδέ περ σὺν νηυσὶ νεώμεθα, τόνδε δ' ἐῶμεν
> αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ Τροίῃι γέρα πεσσέμεν, ὄφρα ἴδηται
> ἦ ῥά τί οἱ χἠμεῖς προσαμύνομεν, ἦε καὶ οὐκί·'
>
> 'My poor weak friends, you sorry disgraces, mere women of Achaia now, no longer men – yes, let us go back home with our ships, and leave this man here in Troy to brood on his prizes, so that he can see whether the rest of us are of some help to him or not.' (*Il.* 2.235–8, trans. Hammond)

Thersites also tells Agamemnon that there are lots of women ready and waiting (2.226–8), accuses him of being lustful (2.232) and of failing in his duty as a leader (2.236). These accusations echo those of Achilles in Book 1, but Thersites is at best an ambivalent figure in the *Iliad*, and he is generally treated with contempt in the higher literature of antiquity.[102] On one reading, then, these echoes may seem to invite us to laugh at Heracles, but Thersites' arguments were right, it was his person which was wrong. Moreover, Thersites' speech reopens the questions of leadership and hierarchy over which Achilles and Agamemnon had quarrelled. Whereas the dispute in *Iliad* 1 closed with the disastrous split between the *basileis*, Odysseus' intervention against Thersites brings a firm restatement, both from Odysseus (2.247–51) and from the watching soldiery (2.276–7), of the established hierarchy under the *basileis*; the problems of Book 1 are temporarily effaced by the rough treatment handed out to an *Ersatz* – Achilles. In the *Argonautica*, however, there is no 'resolution' or reassertion, even temporarily. Nothing is said (1.876), and the scene moves straight to farewells; it is as if Thersites had carried the day. The scenes of Jason's election and the loss of Heracles concluded with suggestions of Argonautic harmony which left much unspoken and unresolved.[103] Here at Lemnos it is the silence which predomi-

[102] Cf. Gebhard, *RE* 5A.2455–71; F. Cairns, *JHS* 102 (1982) 203–4; W. G. Thalmann, 'Thersites: comedy, scapegoats and heroic ideology in the *Iliad*', *TAPA* 118 (1988) 1–28 (with full bibliography).

[103] Cf. above pp. 18–20.

nates. The point is not that we should laugh at the 'heroism' of either Jason or Heracles; rather, Apollonius' poem proves to be a meditation upon the problems of 'epic' leadership, within the parameters bequeathed by Homer. This was a meditation which Virgil was to carry further and in new, specifically Augustan, directions. Again then, any simple construction of Heracles' 'character' and function in the epic is inevitably blocked: to speak like Thersites is no unambivalent sign of 'heroic' status.

(iv) HYLAS

Many of the themes of the last two sections come together in the narrative of how Heracles and his squire Hylas were lost to the expedition in Mysia (1.1153–1357). This episode is both a representation of the larger 'initiation epic' in microcosm, and a contrasting image, set off in opposition to the fuller surrounding narrative.

After leaving Cyzicus the crew compete with each other to see who can row the longest, as there is no wind at all.[104] When everyone else is exhausted, Heracles rows alone until the effort of it causes his oar to break. Upon reaching land, he goes off to look for wood for a new oar, leaving the others to prepare dinner. These verses stress the communality and mutual co-operation of the crew (1.1182–6); Heracles is always a bit apart – he wants to get on with things and detests enforced idleness (1.1170–1).[105] This difference has been made clear in the episode immediately preceding: the celebration of the rites of the Great Mother on Mt Dindymum emphasises that the Argonauts are a single group acting together, with very little prominence for named individuals. The Hylas episode, however, is introduced by the word *eris*, 'contesting' (1.1153), ominous in the *Argonautica* even in the weak sense of 'sporting rivalry'.[106] This is the closest Apollonius comes to including a scene of sports on the pattern

[104] Collins 1967.88 suggests that we are tempted to see Hera behind the calm weather, and he notes (p. 94) that 'the son of Zeus' (1.1188) points to the role of Zeus in the Hylas episode (cf. 1.1315, Feeney 1991.71). What is clear is that Glaukos' speech (1.1315–22) suggests in retrospect that divine forces were at work every step of the way – the breaking of the oar, Hylas' trip, the sudden rising of the wind, cf. Vian 1 43, White 1979.75. The absence of earlier explicit reference to divine action is a good illustration of Apollonius' difference from Homer in this matter (cf. below pp. 78–9).

[105] παπταίνων (1.1171) recalls *Od.* 11.608 where Heracles is constantly active even in death, δεινὸν παπταίνων, αἰεὶ βαλέοντι ἐοικώς.

[106] Elsewhere only 1.773 and 4.446, on both occasions in connection with *eros*.

of *Iliad* 23;[107] it is not consonant with central themes of the epic that the heroes should compete with each other, and when they do so it leads to disaster. Heracles, however, lived a life devoted to *eris*, to struggle and competition, and presided as tutelary deity over the gymnasia in Alexandria.[108] Even his rowing threatens to break up a settled order of parts united into a functioning unit – 'he shook the fitted planks of the ship' (1.1163); so the rest of the crew form a single unit in which no individual is named and from which Heracles alone stands out (1.1161).

The Hylas episode relies on our knowledge of the story of Heracles' acquisition of the young boy, which is briefly alluded to at 1.1211–14 and which was also used by Callimachus in Book 1 of the *Aitia* (frr. 24–5). When Heracles on his wanderings met Theiodamas, king of the Dryopes, the hero had with him his young son Hyllos, and he asked the king to give the boy something to eat. When the request was refused, Heracles killed and ate one of the king's oxen with which he had been ploughing. War followed, and after his victory Heracles took away Theiodamas' orphan son Hylas and forced the whole people to seek a new home in the Peloponnese.[109] Callimachus seems to have presented Theiodamas as a nasty brute who got what he deserved (fr. 24.13–20); we do not know what, if any, capital Callimachus made of Heracles' fabulous appetite, although elsewhere he did allude to it in the context of this incident (*h.* 3.159–61). Moreover, in the *Aitia* this story is juxtaposed to a rather similar one in which Heracles took and ate the ox of a Lindian peasant, and in which the hero's capacity for food did play an important role (frr. 22–3). Apollonius' version apears to give conflicting signals: Theiodamas is δῖος, 'goodly', and is killed 'pitilessly' while ploughing 'in his misery'; the whole business was merely a pretext for Heracles to start a war to cure the Dryopes of their penchant for injustice (1.1218–19), a detail which fits the story to Heracles' role as cleanser

[107] The point was taken by Virgil, who uses this scene in the games of *Aeneid* 5: note 1.1157–8 ~ *Aen.* 5.144–7, 1.1167 ~ *Aen.* 5.158, and the broken oars of *Aen.* 5.209, 222. As often, an echo from another part of *Arg.* confirms the Apollonian resonances: 4.1541–5 ~ *Aen.* 5.273–81.

[108] Cf. Fraser 1972. II 353 n. 149.

[109] For the various versions cf. Eichgrün 1961.133–7, Vian I 46–8 and note on 1.1354–5. There can be little doubt that some interchange between Hyllos and Hylas has taken place in the details of various versions. Thus, for example, Socrates of Argos (? 2nd cent. B.C.) made Hylas Heracles' son (*FGrHist* 310 F 10), and he may well have had earlier sources for this; I suspect in fact that Theocr. 13.8 alludes to just such a version.

and 'averter of evil'. Fränkel sought to remove these apparent contradictions by stressing that Apollonius has suppressed Heracles' eating of the ox and by emending the text, and some problems may indeed be variously explained away;[110] this whole critical exercise is, however, misguided. Apollonius has left the detail and interpretation of the story as ambiguous as the placing of νηλειῶς, 'pitilessly', at the head of v. 1214 where it could refer to the behaviour of either Heracles or Theiodamas.[111] Far from 'suppressing' Heracles' appetite, the reference to the ox in 1214 activates our knowledge of it, and the placing of this story within a narrative in which, for once, food is not uppermost in Heracles' mind, and his squire aims to prepare an 'orderly' evening meal for him (κατὰ κόσμον, 1.1210), highlights the contradictions inherent both in this story and in the figure of Heracles. He is hungry for both food and justice.

The Hylas episode 'replays' some of the events of the story of Theiodamas. Hylas' search for water suggests Heracles' hungry search which led to him acquiring the young boy; now he will lose him. The quarrel with Theiodamas was over an ox; in his distress Heracles will be compared to a bull (1.1265–9).[112] Just as Heracles took Hylas and forced the Dryopes to leave their home, so after losing Hylas he took some young boys of the local area and settled them as hostages in Thessaly (1.1354–7). Heracles loses Hylas because of a nymph's love for the boy, and Heracles himself had taken Hylas from his father. When Polyphemus fears that Hylas has been carried away by strangers (1.1251–2), we think of what Heracles did to the boy. In Theocritus 13 and in Valerius Flaccus[113] Heracles is explicitly presented as an *erastes*, subject to a violent passion for Hylas. This has been denied for Apollonius, but it is in fact obvious both from the general shape of the story and from the details which Apollonius highlights.[114]

The myth tells of a young[115] boy who passes from the protection and education (1.1211) of an older man into adulthood. That the

[110] Thus Ardizzoni notes that δῖος is a word of social, not moral, status.

[111] To be taken with ἔπεφνε or ἀντιόωντα? Cf. Köhnken 1965.54–5. Clauss 1983.147–52 rightly recognises the elements of the traditionally violent and hungry Heracles here, but strangely sees *only* these.

[112] Note also βεβολημένος of both Theiodamas and Heracles (1.1216, 1269).

[113] Cf. *Arg.* 3.573, 736, 4.36–7 etc.

[114] For a correct assessment of the situation in Apollonius cf., e.g., Faerber 1932.64, White 1979.65–70, Palombi 1985.75–83. Sergent 1984.185–94 recognises the nature of the relationship, but misses the specifically erotic features of Apollonius' account.

[115] πρωθήβης, 'showing his first beard', at 1.132 is a clear 'erotic' signpost.

older man in such a relationship acted under the sign of *eros* was universally assumed in classical antiquity (however variously that sign was interpreted). Moreover, Heracles' demand for young boys as hostages for the return of Hylas shows clearly how the latter's disappearance 'reverses' a pattern of transitional homoerotic rape familiar from the mythology of a number of Greek states and attested for the historical period in Crete;[116] Hylas is captured by a female, rather than a male, admirer. We do not, however, have to rely on the shape of the myth to identify *eros* at work. Heracles' reaction to the news of Hylas' disappearance inevitably suggests it,[117]

> τῶι δ' ἀίοντι κατὰ κροτάφων ἅλις ἱδρὼς
> κήκιεν, ἐν δὲ κελαινὸν ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις ζέεν αἷμα.
>
> When Heracles heard this, sweat poured down over his temples and deep in his body the dark blood boiled. (1.1261–2)

and the simile of the bull bitten by the *oistros* (1.1265–9) points clearly in the same direction.[118]

Heracles' loss is emphasised by the fact that he does not even hear Hylas cry out as he falls into the water; he must be told of the boy's fate by Polyphemus, just as Antilochus tells Achilles of the fate of his dear Patroclus.[119] Polyphemus' reaction to Hylas' cry no doubt alludes to a version of the story in which Hylas was his, not Heracles', *eromenos*,[120] and the irony by which Polyphemus is compared to a

[116] Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 149, cf. Sergent 1984.15–71 with reference to earlier work (particularly that of Vidal-Naquet). For a challenging alternative to the now standard view cf. K. J. Dover, 'Greek homosexuality and initiation', in *The Greeks and Their Legacy* II (Oxford 1988) 115–34.

[117] Cf. White 1979.64–5, Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *C.* 1.13.4; the hesitations of R. Pretagostini, *Ricerche sulla poesia alessandrina* (Rome 1984) 93–4 are unnecessary. I wonder if descriptions of Heracles' suffering in the poisoned robe are also relevant, cf. Soph. *Trach.* 767.

[118] Cf. my note on 3.276–7.

[119] *Il.* 18.15–21, esp. 17 φάτο δ' ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινήν ~ 1.1255–6 αὐτίκα δ' ἄτην | ἔκφατο λευγαλέην (an assonantal echo?). In Valerius' narrative, Hylas' dream appearance to Heracles (4.22ff.) is strongly reminiscent of Patroclus' appearance to Achilles (*Il.* 23.62ff., esp. 4.39–40 ~ 23.99–100). For Hylas as a 'Patroclus', with obvious consequences for the role of *eros*, cf. Margolies 1981.124, Palombi 1985.

[120] Cf. Palombi 1985.84–5. There is no certain pre-Apollonian attestion for this version, but Theocritus may provide some indirect confirmation. *Idylls* 11 and 13 form an obvious pair, both addressed to Nicias and both on the subject of *eros*; their respective central characters are Polyphemus the Cyclops and Heracles. So too Apollonius presents first his Polyphemus and then Heracles reacting to the loss of a beloved boy; both Socrates of Argos (*FGrHist* 310 F 18) and Euphorion (fr. 76 Powell) in fact made the Argonaut Polyphemus a son of Poseidon. Apollonius' Heracles indeed contains hints of the Homeric Polyphemus (e.g. 1.1193 ~ *Od.* 9.321–4), cf. Clauss 1983.149–50.

'wild animal' (1.1243–9) and then worries that Hylas may have fallen prey to wild animals suggests that Hylas is 'safer' with the nymph than with Polyphemus and Heracles.[121] The 'equation' through this simile of the loving nymph with the caring herdsmen confirms the ritual passage of Hylas. He moves from a life of 'wildness' to a new 'civilised', communal state; the same point is made by the fact that the bull to which Heracles is compared in his passion 'has no thought for the herdsmen or the herd'. Heracles' complete loss of control and his loss to the expedition is marked by the role of Polyphemus who acts as Heracles should have acted to protect the boy; instead Hylas cried out, but Heracles is left to 'shout' in futile rampage (1.1272). The transference to Polyphemus through the simile of the wild beast of what are obviously Heraclean motifs – cf. the corresponding lion simile in Theocritus 13 – must be seen within the whole pattern of 'imitation of Heracles' which we have been considering;[122] here, however, Polyphemus' vain search precedes, rather than follows, Heracles'.

Hylas' fate is characterised by many reversals. The nymphs are said constantly to perform ritual dances in honour of the virgin Artemis (1.1222–5), a context very familiar from many stories of the abduction of young girls.[123] Here it is one of the young girls who will do the abducting. The intrusion of Kypris into the rite (1.1233) marks the event as transitional for the nymph as well as for Hylas – it is her 'wedding' (cf. 1.1324–5). An elaborate and detailed set of parallelisms and contrasts between the story of the rape of Persephone in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the abduction of Hylas in both Theocritus[124] and Apollonius[125] confirms this reading.

[121] The irony would be weakened by Fränkel's transposition of 1250–2 before 1243; this intelligent suggestion remains unproved, cf. H. Erbse, *RhM* 106 (1963) 230–4.

[122] The simile has caused endless trouble to critics, cf., e.g., Dover 1971.179–80.

[123] Cf. my note on 3.897–9.

[124] Cf. Richardson 1974.19, Gutzwiller 1981.26–7.

[125] I give here a simple list of similarities which vary greatly in importance, but which, in my view, reveal an affinity going beyond the general influence exerted by the *Hymn* on virtually all subsequent rape narratives. (i) Zeus 'consents' to both rapes. (ii) Persephone is carried off when away from her mother, Hylas when away from his 'father'. (iii) Theocritus' flower list (13.40–2) corresponds to *h.Dem.* 6–8. (iv) Persphone bends to take a flower, Hylas to get water. (v) The victim weeps and cries out. (vi) The cry is at first heard by someone other than the parent (*h.Dem.* 24–6, 1.1240–1). (vii) Demeter's reaction of tearing her veil and throwing it off (v. 42) is perhaps echoed humorously in Heracles throwing away the tree (1.1263). (viii) Demeter is compared to a bird in hurried flight, Heracles to a bull (note 44 μαιομένη ~ 1270 μαιμώων). (ix) Polyphemus and Hecate play similar messenger – roles. (x) Demeter, Polyphemus and Heracles all react very swiftly (note 61 ~ 1243). (xi) The

The stories of Persephone and Hylas are both narratives of sexual transition, of the founding of cult, and of boundaries and margins. Unlike Demeter, however, Heracles himself acquired his 'child' by rape. The use of the *Homeric Hymn* brings the contradictions inherent in Heracles sharply into focus. In this episode we see the hero in his quintessence – club, bow and arrows, and lion-skin; like Polyphemus (1.1254), we recognise Heracles at once – who else could this be? Civiliser and glutton, educator and violent brute, weighed down[126] by continual labours and eventually elevated to heaven. Hylas passes from young boy to young man, parting company from his older protector, whose protection was deeply ambivalent; the Argonauts too lose their greatest hero and main exemplar, but Heracles undergoes a transition where no one may follow him.

(v) DEATH AND SOME DEATHS

The *Iliad* is full of death, both real and prospective. It is the reality of death which gives meaning to the hero's life. Although it is normally the great heroes who do the killing and the lesser who are killed, all are caught in the web of the same humanity, as Achilles eventually comes to learn. In the great variety of death and battle, some deaths are treated at great length, others occupy a mere half-line, but the recording of the name is a guarantee of *kleos*, a sign that the struggle was not entirely in vain. In the *Argonautica* there are only five 'battle-scenes', and two of those hardly count.

The clash with the Earthborn Giants (1.989–1011) pits the heroes not against ordinary opponents but against Hesiodic marvels, though unlike their Hesiodic models (*Theog.* 147–53), the Earthborn die nameless and as undifferentiated as a set of planks (1.1003–5, cited below). Moreover, their main destroyer is none other than Heracles with his pitiless bow, and the poet equates this deed with the hero's other labours. The other Argonauts who take part in the battle are

daughters of Keleos find Demeter sitting beside a well when they come 'to fetch fair – flowing water in order to carry it in bronze pitchers to the dear home of their father' (106–7). (xii) The girls do not recognise Demeter, whereas Polyphemus knows Heracles at once (111 ~ 1254). (xii) Demeter pretends to have been carried off, a fate which Polyphemus fears Hylas has suffered.

That both Theocritus and Apollonius use the *Hymn* is of course significant for their mutual relationship.

[126] Note the tree selected by Heracles, 'weighed down (ἀχθομένην) by not many branches' (1.1190–1); the verb only here in *Arg.*, and the literal use is very rare. Heracles' ἄχθη are notorious.

consigned to anonymity – they are 'the younger men' (992), 'the others' (998), 'warlike heroes' (1000), and there is no individual *kleos*. The Earthborn, however, are like many Homeric victims in that their appearance in death is described through simile:

> As when carpenters place long planks, which have recently been cut with the axe, in a line along the shore so that strong bolts may be driven into them when they have been soaked, so the Giants were stretched out in a line at the narrow point of the harbour which was white with foam. A group lay with their heads and chests in the salt sea and their lower limbs stretched out on the dry land; others had their heads on the sands of the shore and their feet out in the sea. Both were a prey for the birds and fish simultaneously. (1.1003–11)

The attention in this simile to the novel and the paradoxical, perhaps appropriate for such unusual victims and reminiscent of very many Hellenistic and imperial literary epitaphs, creates a weird pathos which is quite un-Homeric. Here it is not so much death which seems significant, but rather the intellectual contemplation of death.

Similar considerations apply to the final scene of the third book in which Jason, fortified by Medea's drugs and good advice, slays the warriors who rise up from the sowing of the dragon's teeth. An extraordinary concentration of similes of Homeric type assimilates the deaths of these creatures of the brutal Aietes to the terrible beauty of young death in the *Iliad*, but this is a marker of distance, rather than of closeness, between the archaic and the Hellenistic epic.[127]

On three occasions the Argonauts confront purely human adversaries, the Doliones (1.1018–52), the Bebrycians (2.98–136), and the Colchians who had been commanded by the now dead Apsyrtus (4.482–91). This last battle is the briefest – the Colchians are wiped out in five verses by three brief similes (hawks attacking doves, lions attacking sheep, fire), and no one on either side is named until Jason arrives after the killing is finished.[128] This anonymity contrasts pointedly with the death of their leader Apsyrtus, whose name will be perpetuated in that of the inhabitants of the area where he is buried. Like Cyzicus, Apsyrtus dies by night and in ignorance. Both die in silence; no words are exchanged between killer and

[127] Cf. Carspecken 1952.91–5; my notes on 3.1278–1407, 1374–6.

[128] Rose 1984.134 sees the anonymity as significant for the evaluation of the killing: 'The assault ... names no single warrior ... since there is nothing worthy of celebration in this gratuitous act of violence.'

killed. The battle between the Argonauts and the Doliones is a tragic case of mistaken identity at night, almost a paradigm of failure of communication. Warfare and killing are blind, unreasoned action, and there are only a few instances of this in a poem which rather stresses *logos* and *metis*. The point is reinforced by the description of the other deaths which occurred on that terrible night:

> Many of the king's helpers were also killed. Heracles slew Telekles and Megabrontes. Sphodris was slaughtered by Akastos; Peleus destroyed Zelys and the bold Gephyros, while Telamon of the strong spear killed Basileus. Promeus was Idas' victim, and Hyakinthos Klytios', while Megalossakes and Phlogios fell to the two sons of Tyndareus. Next to them the son of Oineus destroyed bold Itymoneus and Artakes, leader of men. All of these are still glorified by the inhabitants with the honours due to heroes. The Doliones who survived yielded their position and fled, as flocks of doves before swift hawks. In a disordered mass they rushed inside the city gates, and straightaway the city was full of lamentation because the men had returned in flight from this grievous war. (1.1039–52)

The basic technique is Iliadic: many brief deaths set off a more elaborate treatment of one death (here Cyzicus). The translation aims to reproduce the verbal variety of the Greek, itself a trick learned from Homer.[129] Such lists are, however, only a very small part of Iliadic fighting; Apollonius imitates the driest kind of Homeric catalogue to represent killing without meaning, a confused nocturnal slaughter possible only within the safe boundaries of martial epic. The names of the dead do live on – indeed are honoured as heroes –[130] but the Argonauts are killing names without substance. The 'biographies' which adorn the dead in the *Iliad* are important for the killers as well as the killed: they increase the killers' *kleos* by showing how their deed has ramifications far beyond the battlefield. A whole chain of social life is ended by the prowess of the victor.[131] The catalogue style is here used to subvert the whole ethos of Homeric fighting. Similar considerations apply to the battle with the Bebrycians which follows upon the elaborately described death of their king Amycus. The pattern of the battle description is again Homeric,[132] though some-

[129] Cf., e.g., *Il.* 6.29–36, 14.511–15; M. G. Ciani, 'Poesia come enigma', in *Scritti in onore di Carlo Diano* (Bologna 1975) 91–5.

[130] For the problem of these names cf. Goldhill 1991.317–19.

[131] Cf. Griffin 1980.140–3.

[132] I do not believe ἀνέρα in 2.102; Campbell's Ἀνέρα is better than Fränkel's lacuna, and 2.798 might then be brilliantly ambiguous, Τυνδαρίδη [which one?] ... ὅτ' ἀνέρα [?Ἀνέρα] κεῖνον ἔπεφνες.

what changed by the rustic weapons and the mixture of warfare and boxing in vv. 105–9.

No Argonaut is killed in battle. The expedition does lose eight members – four by death (Idmon, Tiphys, Mopsus and Canthus), two by something more than death (Hylas, Boutes) and two who 'miss the boat' (Heracles and Polyphemus). The four deaths occur in two groups of two, one in the 'infernal landscape'[133] of the voyage along the southern coast of the Black Sea in Book 2, and the other in the wastes of the Libyan desert.

The seer Idmon is killed by a savage boar as he walks along the river-bank (2.815–34). He had known that he would not return from the expedition (1.139–41, 436–47), but did not apparently know the hour or the means of his death.[134] The description of his tomb at 2.842–4 reworks motifs from the death of Elpenor (cf. *Od.* 11.75–8, 12.15), but unlike Elpenor who went to sleep 'apart from his comrades' (*Od.* 10.554) and who dies unremarked, Idmon dies in his comrades' arms, literally framed by them (vv. 833–4 ἕταροι ... ἑταίρων) as his life ebbs away.[135] In archaic epic, boars attack those who hunt them; thus Idmon's death both recalls and does not recall Homeric situations. His ignorance of unsought dangers is perfectly in keeping with the terrifying journey which the poem recounts. The boar is killed by Idas who had quarrelled drunkenly with Idmon in the first book (1.475–91); in death the Argonautic virtues of solidarity and mutual support are seen in their starkest colours. The death from snakebite in Libya of the other seer, Mopsus,[136] also uses a mode of death hinted at in Homer only in simile (cf. *Il.* 3.30–7); it must have been very familiar in third-century Alexandria.

The steersman Tiphys dies 'of a brief illness' during the same stop as accounts for Idmon. The familiar pathos of 'death far from home' (2.856) is here combined with a manner of death not associated with any Homeric hero.[137] Given the conditions of ancient travel, there is clearly a kind of realism here, a realism constructed out of its difference from death in the Homeric poems. Both μινυνθαδίη, 'brief', and εὕνασε, 'put to sleep' – the verb only here of death in *Arg.* – soften

[133] Beye 1982.113.

[134] The irony of his name ('the Knower') is obvious (cf. esp. 2.821–2).

[135] Contrast the Homeric warriors whose friends can merely watch them die at a distance: *Il.* 4.522–4, 13.548–9, 15.650–2, Griffin 1980.112–13.

[136] Cf. above pp. 31–2. For the parallelism between the deaths note 2.816–17 ~ 4.1503–4, 2.818 ~ 4.1505.

[137] Cf. Fränkel 1968.605. The elimination of sickness is part of the stylisation of Homer's world.

Tiphys' suffering and emphasise the contrast between his 'easy' death and the grief which attends it, a grief which recalls the grief of both Achilles and Priam.[138] Relevant also is the death of Phrontis, Menelaos' steersman, who is killed, rudder in hand, by 'Apollo's gentle arrows'(*Od.* 3.279–80). Like Virgil's Palinurus,[139] Phrontis dies on the job, but this satisfaction is denied to Tiphys; his death has no causal link or accidental connection to his special skill. This epic has no room for 'poetic justice'; such an organising harmony is one of many rejected by Apollonius.

[138] 2.861–2 ~ *Il.* 24.129–30, 163.
[139] Cf. below pp. 183–4.

CHAPTER 3

Images of love

In giving *eros* a central role in his epic, Apollonius was not innovating radically in perceptions of the epic tradition: Calypso and Nausicaa were for later antiquity 'classic' erotic paradigms, and the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus was after Homer regularly understood as an erotic one. Moreover, the portrayal in literature of those affected by erotic desire had a very long history.[1] Sappho had created a representation of female desire which was to be revalidated by echo throughout antiquity, and the vocabulary and imagery of erotic suffering was already fully developed in the poetry of the archaic period. Attic tragedy also was clearly an important forerunner: even from our small number of surviving plays we can see that Apollonius' Medea owes a debt not merely to her tragic namesake, but also to Euripides' Phaedra, who provided a crucial model of a woman seeking to fight against a desire which she knows to be wrong.[2] From New Comedy, to which it is often claimed Apollonius, in Book 3 particularly, owed much, less seems in fact to have been drawn. In the plays of Menander which survive at all extensively in Greek it is male desire and the effect of *eros* on men that is regularly cited and which has an important plot function; silence about female *eros* may be unsurprising in plays which tend to reflect and confirm the dominant male ideology of the *polis* – and where the women concerned are often the unmarried daughters of citizens – but the contrast between Menander and Hellenistic poetry and romance in this regard is not always properly appreciated.[3] It is indeed tempting to see changing social structures as an important factor in the greater

[1] Cf. (briefly) Hunter 1989.26–7.

[2] Cf. my notes on 3.766–9, 811–16.

[3] I regard Roman comedy as a very dangerous 'source' for information about how social *mores* were represented in Greek comedy; for this reason I have left it out of account. The prominence of female *eros* in some extant tragedies must, in part at least, be a function of tragedy's transgressive, questioning role.

freedom with which literature represents female *eros* in the Hellenistic period, for it is simply not true that '[the absence of] heterosexual love, romance, conjugal love, and tender sentiments ... clearly marks Greek culture prior [to the Hellenistic period]'.[4] As both *eros* and its representation in literature are highly culture-specific,[5] changes in the social order and in the nature of literary production might be expected to bring with them changes in the representation of *eros*. As also, however, with the subject of 'character' discussed in the last chapter, it is important to recognise that the highly literary nature of the *Argonautica*, the depth of its 'textuality', means that there can be no simple move from the representation of Medea's *eros* to the real erotic practices and experiences of the third century, any more than this is possible with the Simaitha of Theocritus' Second Idyll. In the prism of Medea's *eros* we see reflected many previous written experiences of desire, and it is against those earlier, written experiences that we must read her suffering.[6] Moreover, it must not be forgotten that, at least in the poetry which survives from the high Alexandrian period, it is women of 'marginal' status – Simaitha (what *is* her status?),[7] Medea (a barbarian princess) – whose suffering is fully explored. Cydippe experiences symptoms which the knowing reader can interpret (Callimachus fr. 75.12–19), but it is Akontios' voice we hear.[8]

(i) LEMNOS AND COLCHIS

Hypsipyle and Medea have much in common beyond their shared debt to the figure of Nausicaa: they resonate against each other, and we learn to read each scene in the light of the other, constantly looking both forward and back, creating meaning from similarity and difference. If, broadly speaking, Hypsipyle plays the role of Calypso,[9] while Medea has obvious affinities with her aunt Circe,

[4] Beye 1982.73. It is still not true even if Beye meant to write 'Greek (? Attic) *literature*'.

[5] For a good illustration cf. Goldhill in Pelling 1990.102–5 on Antigone.

[6] I am not, of course, asserting that any reader (ancient or modern, male or female) can really read the 'love story' of the *Argonautica* without reference to his or her own experience. A more interesting problem in fact is the extent to which our experience is indeed shaped by existing written descriptions of analogous events.

[7] Cf. Dover 1971.95–6.

[8] Cydippe's silence is particularly marked at fr. 75.38–9, where she is not named and her interview with her father is narrated in a verse and a half.

[9] For the related debt of Hypsipyle to Circe cf. Knight 1990.89–95.

the events on Lemnos act as a microcosmic foreshadowing of the much larger 'Medea plot', both as it is played out within the epic and in the catastrophic aftermath which is always in our minds. The murder of the entire male population (except Thoas) looks forward to Medea's murder of the children of herself and Jason; the Lemnian women killed their husbands ἀμφ' εὐνῇι (1.618), a phrase which may mean 'in bed' or 'on account of [the violation of their] beds' or both,[10] and thus looks to one of the reasons – adduced by both Medea (vv. 265–6, 1367–8) and Jason (vv. 568–73) – for Medea's anguish in Euripides' tragedy. Conversely, Medea's singular gentleness towards Jason and his comrades, when the rest of the Colchian population is against them, is foreshadowed by Hypsipyle's sparing of her father.

In preparing to meet both Hypsipyle and Medea Jason 'arms' himself with gleaming beauty (1.721–73, cloak and spear; 3.919–26, wondrous grace bestowed upon him by Hera), in an erotic rewriting of a Homeric warrior's preparations for a duel. The two approaches are also joined by matching star similes. At 1.774–81 Jason is compared to the bright evening star which portends marriage and which, like Jason himself, catches the eye of married and unmarried women alike. At 3.956–61, however, he is the burning Sirius, an explicitly dangerous star, an echo of Achilles about to wreak terrible vengeance upon Hector. The poet of the *Odyssey* had already done something similar with Iliadic conventions in describing Odysseus' approach to Nausicaa in *Odyssey* 6.[11] There a small branch is the hero's 'armour', and a lion-simile, very redolent of the *Iliad* (cf. esp. *Il.* 12.299–308), marks his approach to young ladies who, with the exception of Nausicaa, react very differently from the Lemnian women at the sight of Jason. There too the *Iliad* is rewritten in amatory mode to mark the changed circumstances of the hero.[12]

Jason's meeting with Medea at the temple of Hecate is particularly indebted to the climactic clash of Achilles and Hector.[13] That

[10] 'In bed' is the standard translation, but Seaton follows the scholiast in preferring the other sense.

[11] Cf., e.g., Beye 1982.122; P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos* (Cornell 1987) 157–61.

[12] Virgil re-inscribes the scene into a martial context in the description of Pallas at *Aen.* 8.587–93, while retaining the amatory flavour from Apollonius; this operates separately from the main verbal model, Diomedes at *Il.* 5.4–8. The terrified Latin matrons of vv. 592–3 recall both Hector's parents in *Iliad* 22 and the admiring Lemnian women of *Arg.* 1.783.

[13] Cf. my notes on 3.956–61, 964–5, 1105.

deadly fight becomes what Hector said it could not be (*Il.* 22.126–8), an exchange of words of love (ὀαρίζειν) between a young man and a girl. To reach this rendezvous Medea must leave behind the city with its 'well-built streets' (3.887) and ordered social conventions; the comparison of her to Artemis of the countryside (3.876–86) here marks in part the abandonment of those conventions. At Lemnos, however, Jason must move into a city of women, away from the world of men, to a place where the erotic and the domestic dominate. Here it is echoes of the Troy of *Iliad* 3 and 6 which resonate and give meaning.[14] In *Iliad* 6 Hector returns to Troy to arrange cult offerings and to see his family. When he appears at the gates, the women – married and unmarried – flock around him with anxious questions about their male relatives (*Il.* 6.237–41). In the *Argonautica* these worried cares become a different kind of interest in men. Jason willingly accepts Hypsipyle's hospitality, but refuses her offer of kingship; Hector refuses both Helen's hospitality (*Il.* 6.354–68) and the pleas of his wife to stay (*Il.* 6.429–39).

Jason and Hector are alike in the burdens they carry on behalf of others, but Jason comes to suggest also Paris who must be roused from the chamber he shares with Helen (*Il.* 6.321–41), just as Heracles' abuse of Jason leads to the departure from Lemnos.[15] It is indeed a sequence involving Paris in *Iliad* 3 which is uppermost in Apollonius' mind here.[16] At 3.421ff. Aphrodite leads the reluctant Helen to Paris' chamber and sets a chair for her opposite Paris; just so, Iphinoe leads Jason – his eyes coyly lowered like a young girl's (1.784)[17] – to Hypsipyle and sets a chair for him opposite her mistress.[18] The ultimate conclusion of both scenes is love-making, as indeed both scenes illustrate the power of Aphrodite, and on Lemnos the goddess 'had roused sweet desire in them, for the sake of Hephaistos, the god of many wiles, so that once again his island of Lemnos might be duly populated by men' (1.850–2); in the lan-

[14] Clauss 1983.105–13 stresses rather the role of Odysseus' visit to Circe (with Heracles playing the Eurylochus role); those scenes are indeed important, though secondary.

[15] Cf. above pp. 33–6.

[16] Cf. Margolies 1981.61–2 (with n. 74).

[17] For this gesture cf. my note on 3.22. Hypsipyle's coyness at 1.790 picks up Helen's gesture at *Il.* 3.427.

[18] It has often been noted in connection with this passage that Zenodotus athetised *Il.* 3.423–6 because – according to Σ^{A} – it was ἀπρεπές, 'unseemly', for Aphrodite to perform a menial task for a mortal; Apollonius may have half an eye on Zenodotus in giving this task to Iphinoe.

guage of Greek poetry and iconography, it would in fact be true to say that Jason was 'led' to his 'marriage' with Hypsipyle by Aphrodite or Eros.[19] There are, however, also striking reversals. Whereas it is the male Paris who is eager for love-making, Hypsipyle, in common with the other Lemnian women, has made what amounts to a public decision to sleep with Jason. Her opening words to him – 'Why do you wait so long without entering our city?' (1.793–4) – reverse the motif of the 'locked-out lover': here there is no need for the man to lament the lack of an invitation. Thus Jason's meetings with both Hypsipyle and Medea are set in a matrix of Iliadic associations, but in Book 1 these are domestic and erotic, in Book 3 full of the menace of imminent death.

The similarities and contrasts between the two episodes extend to many details.[20] Hypsipyle encourages Jason 'with winning words' (1.792) and takes the lead in the conversation, whereas in Book 3 it is Jason, ὑποσσαίνων, 'with flattering speech' (3.974), who speaks first and tries to take Medea's fear away. Both Hypsipyle and Jason begin with questions which gently reprove the hesitant behaviour of, respectively, Jason and Medea; both establish at once the 'sexual possibilities' inherent in the meeting – Hypsipyle by noting that there are no men in the city,[21] Jason by his repeated address to Medea as 'maiden', παρθενική, κούρη (3.975, 978), an address which, despite his reassuring words and pleas of dependence, marks the superiority of his (male) position. Medea finds herself in a position where rape is a frequent event.[22] Whereas Hypsipyle, with unmaidenly deceitfulness, offers to speak 'frankly' (νημερτές, 1.797), Jason must urge Medea to speak 'openly' (ἀμφαδίην, 3.982), when of course it is he, rather than she, who uses the language of concealment. Hypsipyle's 'frankness' centres around her suppression of the murder of all the males on the island. When Hypsipyle offers to tell Jason κακότητα ... πᾶσαν (1.796), 'the whole misery', we are warned of her suppression of 'the whole wickedness' (as the Greek phrase could equally

[19] Cf. the passage of Xenophon of Ephesus cited in n. 39 below.

[20] Cf. my note on 3.1061–2, adding the significantly varied πρόφρων at 1.898 and 3.1071.

[21] The usual observations (above pp. 13–15) apply to attempts to ask whether Hypsipyle 'intends' the sexual suggestions of her references to 'towers' and 'ploughing' (1.793–6).

[22] Cf. my note on 3.897–9 citing Campbell 1983.61. Note too the implications of Jason's plea at 3.982–3 that Medea 'not deceive [him] with sweet words'. The irony is apparent, but we may also wonder *what kind of* sweet words Medea might utter. The phrase clearly suggests a seduction scene such as that of Archilochus' *Cologne Epode* (*SLG* 478) or Theocritus 27 (note especially 27.12 καὶ πρίν με παρήπαφες ἁδέι μύθωι).

well mean); in fact neither their 'misery' nor their 'wickedness' will be told in full. 'Finally', she says, 'some god gave us the strength and courage' (ὑπέρβιον θάρσος, 1.820), and we are teased with the possibility that she will tell the truth; in fact, this act of boldness turns out to be turning their husbands away at the gates.[23] Whereas Hypsipyle, like Alcinous (*Od.* 7.311–15), offers the Greek stranger the chance to settle down with a royal marriage, in Book 3 it is Jason who exploits Medea's unformed thoughts of escape back to Greece; Hypsipyle's praise of Lemnos (1.830–1) matches that of Jason for his homeland (3.1085–93).

Blushes, the shyness of eyes, the appeal to Jason's grievous challenges, the touching of hands, the deceptive use of gifts and the regret of the one left behind are all common to both scenes. These parallels help us to read the second scene against the first to see what has changed. Particularly important is the motif of 'remembering' which Hypsipyle introduces in her final words:

> 'μνώεο μήν, ἀπεών περ ὁμῶς καὶ νόστιμος ἤδη,
> Ὑψιπύλης· λίπε δ' ἥμιν ἔπος, τό κεν ἐξανύσαιμι
> πρόφρων, ἢν ἄρα δή με θεοὶ δώωσι τεκέσθαι.'
>
> 'On your voyage and when you have returned, please remember Hypsipyle, and leave me now some instructions which I shall happily carry out, should the gods grant me a child'. (1.896–8)

So too Medea asks for mutual remembering:

> 'μνώεο δ', ἢν ἄρα δή ποθ' ὑπότροπος οἶκαδ' ἵκηαι,
> οὔνομα Μηδείης· ὡς δ' αὖτ' ἐγὼ ἀμφὶς ἐόντος
> μνήσομαι.'
>
> 'If ever you return home safely, remember the name of Medea, as I too shall remember you, though you are far away.' (3.1069–71)

The exemplum of Ariadne, however, has forewarned us that, in the end, Jason will not be sufficiently mindful of his debt.[24] The theme reverberates bitterly through Medea's distress in the fourth book. At 4.356 she accuses Jason of 'forgetfulness' now that he has achieved his ends, and she hopes that he will 'remember' her as he is 'wracked with troubles', hopes of a safe return gone for ever (4.383–4). Moreover, our memory of Hypsipyle, *our* 'remembering', means that her

[23] Cf. Levin 1971.77. For the style of Hypsipyle's narration cf. below pp. 111–12.
[24] Cf. my note on 3.1069.

request for advice in the event of having a child reverberates as Medea and Jason say their farewells in Book 3. The ultimate fate of their children is something known to every reader.

(ii) JASON'S CLOAK

For his journey to Hypsipyle's palace, Jason puts on a splendid purple cloak made by Athena and given to him at the time of the building of the *Argo*. The border of this brilliant garment – 'you would cast your eyes more easily at the rising sun than at its red gleam' (1.725–6) – is decorated with seven distinct (διακριδόν, 1.729) scenes: the Kyklopes making Zeus's thunderbolt,[25] Amphion and Zethus building Thebes, Aphrodite admiring herself in Ares' shield, the battle between the Teleboans and the sons of Electryon, the chariot race in which Pelops won the hand of Hippodameia and her father, Oinomaos, was killed, Apollo killing Tityos as the giant tried to rape Leto, and finally the scene which is explicitly part of the poem's story, Phrixos with the magic ram.[26] The whole description is framed by two addresses to the reader, 1.725–6 cited above and 1.765–7:

> κείνους κ' εἰσορόων ἀκέοις ψεύδοιό τε θυμόν,
> ἐλπόμενος πυκινήν τιν' ἀπὸ σφείων ἐσακοῦσαι
> βάξιν, ὅτευ καὶ δηρὸν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι θηήσαιο.
>
> As you looked on [Phrixos and the ram], you would be struck dumb with amazement and deceived, for you would expect to hear some wise utterance from them. With this hope you would gaze long upon them.

Although the scene as a whole is obviously a rewriting in amatory mode of an Iliadic arming-scene,[27] the main situational model is rather to be found in the *Odyssey*. In Book 19 the disguised hero tells

[25] Lemnos was identified as the place where weapons were first forged (Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 71), and it is thus tempting to place the scene of the Kyklopes on the island where Jason now finds himself; so too the Aphrodite scene on the cloak suggests Hephaistos lurking on Lemnos (cf. *Od.* 8.283). Nevertheless, the Kyklopes were normally placed either under Etna or the islands of the Lipari chain (cf. Roscher s.v. Kyklopen 1679, my note on 3.38–42). Some link between this passage and Call. *h.* 3.46ff. seems likely enough, but the detailed arguments of Eichgrün 1961.116 are unconvincing.

[26] For the potential importance of the final position in such *ekphraseis* cf. J. T. Kakridis, *Homer Revisited* (Lund 1971) Chap. 6, Hardie 1986.68. The first six scenes on the cloak are bounded by ring-composition: both the Kyklopes and Tityos are children of Gaia (cf. Hes. *Theog.* 139).

[27] Cf. above p. 48.

his wife about a meeting with her husband when the latter came to Crete on his way to Troy:

> 'King Odysseus wore a thick double mantle; it was crimson, and had a clasp of gold with two sheaths. In front was a cunning piece of work – a hound had a dappled fawn between its forepaws, holding it firm as it struggled. Everyone was amazed to see how the hound and the fawn both were gold, yet the one was gripping and throttling the fawn, and the other striving to break away and writhing with its feet. I noted also the shining tunic Odysseus wore about him; it gleamed like the skin of a dried onion – it had that softness and sunlike sheen. I tell you, this was a thing many women gazed at with admiration.' (*Od.* 19.225–35, trans. Shewring)

The stranger-hero, dressed in a cloak 'bright like the sun', has the same attraction for the Cretan women (and for the woman listening to the tale) as Jason has for the women of Lemnos; the Odyssean Penelope suggests how we too should react to this sensual garment – with recognition and longing (*Od.* 19.249–50). Like Penelope also, we are being challenged to read the signs displayed in an elaborate *ekphrasis*.

For the description of the cloak itself Apollonius has drawn on many sources beyond the cloak of *Odyssey* 19, in particular the Homeric Shield of Achilles and the Hesiodic *Scutum* (*Shield*).[28] While replacing archaic generality with specific scenes and named characters, Apollonius nevertheless directs our attention to the Homeric shield in both detail and broad conception. The repetitive introduction to each scene imitates Homer's structuring; the description of the cloak as δίπλακα πορφυρέην, 'a double cloak of purple', not only picks up Odysseus' cloak and the cloak into which Helen weaves scenes of the Trojan war (*Il.* 3.125–8), but also varies τρίπλακα μαρμαρέην, 'triple and brilliant', of the rim of Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18.480); δαίδαλα πολλά, 'many skilfully wrought designs' (1.729), echoes the same phrase at *Il.* 18.482. More broadly, both the Homeric shield and the cloak move from cosmological phenomena to the world of cities. A 'cosmological' interpretation of the Kyklopes' work[29] is confirmed by the fact that this scene begins at the next stage in world history after the point at which the cosmogonical song of

[28] Relevant also are the lovely veil and headband, the work of Athena and Hephaistos, worn by Pandora (Hes. *Theog.* 573–84); they too will help to inspire a dangerous desire.

[29] Note also the implications of ἀφθίτωι, 'eternal', in 1.730; formally there may be an echo of the description of Hephaistos' palace at *Il.* 18.370 or of ἀκάμαντα, 'unwearying', of the sun at the opening of the shield description (*Il.* 18.484).

Orpheus concluded (1.511), and thus continues that song. A cosmogonical interpretation of the Homeric shield was standard in later antiquity,[30] and is in fact imitated by the scholiast on Jason's cloak. After the creation of cosmological phenomena and the rule of Zeus comes the creation of cities and the civilising role of poets such as Amphion;[31] after that come love, war and deceit. The cloak is closely linked to Orpheus' song not only by the figures of Zeus and the Kyklopes, but also by juxtaposition on it of scenes of *philia* and *neikos* and by the depiction of scenes involving both (Aphrodite and Ares, Pelops and Oinomaos).[32] Moreover, the scene of Aphrodite admiring herself in Ares' shield looks to the song of Demodocus concerning the love of the two gods (*Od* 8.266–366); the opening image of the Kyklopes suggests that, as in Homer, Hephaistos is working at his forge while his wife enjoys herself, and this counterpoint is mediated through the image of Amphion and Zethos, who represent a similar opposition between hard work and sensual ease. Demodocus' song was in fact commonly allegorised as the opposition of *philia* and *neikos*.[33]

Other details of the cloak also recall and revise the Homeric shield. The 'cities of peace and war' are replaced by one particular city (Thebes) with two founders whose skills and interests were notoriously opposite; the cattle-raid of the Teleboans stains with blood a quiet bucolic scene of happy animals,[34] as does the attack on the unsuspecting rustics on the shield (*Il.* 18.523–9). Whereas the cloak is presented to us as a finished product, like Virgil's shield,[35] Homer describes the actual making of the shield. Apollonius points to this difference by having his first two scenes, the Kyklopes and the building of Thebes, represent 'work in progress'.[36] Amphion's music corresponds to the celebratory wedding music on the shield (*Il.* 18.491–5),

[30] Cf. P. R. Hardie, 'Imago mundi: cosmological and ideological aspects of the shield of Achilles', *JHS* 105 (1985) 11–31.

[31] Cf. Hor. *AP* 391ff. with Brink's commentary (pp. 384–6).

[32] Cf. Beye 1969.44, 53. For further discussion of the significance of these themes cf. below pp. 163–8.

[33] Cf. Hardie 1986.61–6.

[34] Cf. 2.1004. 'Dewy' in 1.751 need not be proleptic, despite Virg. *Aen.* 8.645 (Aeneas' shield) *sparsi rorabant sanguine uepres*.

[35] Virgil acknowledges the place of Apollonius in the ecphrastic tradition by reworking 3.291–8 at the opening of the passage describing the making of Aeneas' shield (*Aen.* 8.407–15).

[36] Formally, those scenes pick up the description of Hephaistos' unfinished tripods (*Il.* 18.373–9).

but the actual feasting and marriages and the admiring women whom Homer includes are moved by Apollonius out of the *ekphrasis* and into the narrative which follows it (1.782–4). Such a variation, which, like the links between Orpheus' song and the cloak,[37] serves to break down the apparent boundaries between *ekphrasis* and frame by denying discreteness to the description, is an important example of the narrative experimentation which we shall see is crucial in this scene. This particular example depends upon our expectation of a meaningful relationship between what is depicted on the cloak and the narrative which surrounds it.[38] Apollonius uses Homeric echo to suggest ways of reading his own text. Finally, Ares appears on the cloak as a lover, rather than as a warrior (contrast *Il.* 18.516),[39] but it is the image of Aphrodite in his shield which is the most telling detail in this respect. What is depicted is 'an exact representation in a shield' (1.745–6); as the goddess is reflected in the shield, so we examine the shield of Homer and find reflections in our text. How 'exact' our impressions are will be considered presently.

Direct echoes of the Hesiodic *Scutum* (*Shield*), a poem whose authenticity Apollonius discussed in his scholarly works,[40] are fewer. The history of the cloak (1.721–4) reworks the history of Heracles' breastplate (*Scutum* 124–7), and the battle description of 1.749–51 seems indebted to *Scutum* 239–42; more importantly, the *Scutum* (vv. 270–2) replaces Homer's 'city at peace' with a seven-gated city of strong towers (εὔπυργος) and the construction of seven-gated Thebes ('still without its towers', ἀπύργωτος ἔτι) on the cloak must reflect this.[41] On Hesiod's Shield Apollonius also found archaic authority for a chariot race in *ekphrasis* (*Scutum* 305–13). Most striking

[37] Cf. above p. 54.

[38] Cf. below pp. 56–7.

[39] An interesting parallel (cf. Fusillo 1989.84) is the description of the decoration on the marriage coverlet of Anthia and Habrokomes in the romance of Xenophon of Ephesus: 'Cupids were playing, some attending Aphrodite, who was also represented, some riding on... [text uncertain], some weaving garlands, others bringing flowers. These were on one half of the canopy; on the other was Ares, not in armour, but dressed in a cloak and wearing a garland, adorned for his lover Aphrodite. Eros was leading the way, with a lighted torch' (1.8, trans. Graham Anderson). K. Bürger, *Hermes* 27 (1892) 64, plausibly deduces that the excerptor has omitted a more detailed description of Aphrodite, and it is not difficult to guess that any such description would have featured (at least) partial nudity, as on Jason's cloak; indeed Anthia's efforts to catch Habrokomes' eye (1.3.2) strongly suggest that this was the case.

[40] Cf. Pfeiffer 1968.144.

[41] The Hesiodic scholiast notes 'perhaps, as a Boeotian, Hesiod means Thebes', and Thebes would certainly be relevant as Heracles' city.

of all, the scene of the Teleboan raid directs our attention not merely to the similar scene on the Homeric shield (*Il.* 18.520–9) but also to the *Scutum*, which begins with Amphitryon's duty to take vengeance on the Taphians and the Teleboans for having killed the brothers of his wife Alcmena, the daughter of Electryon.[42] The juxtaposition on the cloak of this scene, which recalls the circumstances of Heracles' conception, to the picture of Aphrodite anticipates Heracles' objections to the prolonged dalliance on Lemnos.[43]

The state of our evidence doubtless causes us to miss much that has gone into Apollonius' description of Jason's cloak: contemporary poetry,[44] aesthetics,[45] historical tradition. Editors refer to Demetrius Poliorcetes who was alleged to have worn cloaks decorated with stars and the signs of the zodiac.[46] More interesting perhaps are stories about Alcibiades, whose purple cloak, which he wore as *choregos*, was admired by both men and women, and who, when general, is said to have carried a shield of gold and ivory depicting Eros armed with the thunderbolt.[47] In Alcibiades, as in Jason, erotic and political power were fatefully combined.

Apollonius activates and manipulates our expectation of 'meaning' in the interpretation of the *ekphrasis*,[48] as is particularly clear from the final verses of the passage (cited above); this expectation has been fostered both by knowledge of other poetic *ekphraseis* and by familiarity with 'weaving' as a metaphor for poetry.[49] The implicit comparison between the cloak and the well-ordered sequence of the *Argo*'s timbers (1.721–4), both the work of Athena, suggests the

[42] It is a pity that we do not know more of Call. *SH* 257 (Molorchus) where Heracles seems to be telling Molorchus of his life and λητιαὶ Ταφιο[stands at the head of a hexameter. The phrase is, however, a common one, cf. *Od.* 15.427, Eur. *fr. incert.* p. 84 Austin.

[43] Cf. above pp. 33–6. Bulloch 1985.594–5 (and cf. Clauss 1983.103–4) argues that the sequence of scenes on the cloak is ominously modelled on the *Odyssey's* Catalogue of Heroines (*Od.* 11.225–330). There are certainly points of contact, but Bulloch overstates the case.

[44] Shapiro 1980.270 attractively suggests that Call. *Hecale* fr. 253.8–12 (= *SH* 285 = *Hecale* fr. 42 Hollis) was followed by a more detailed *ekphrasis* of the cloak Hecale's husband wore at their wedding, if indeed he was 'the man from Aphidna'; this suggestion made Peter Parsons wonder whether *SH* 949 belongs here (private communication).

[45] Cf. Shapiro 1980 *passim*.

[46] Duris, *FGrHist* 76 F 14; cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 41.4.

[47] Cf. Plut. *Alcib.* 16.1–2, Ath. 12.534c–e.

[48] Cf., e.g., Collins 1967.78; Newman 1986.80; Goldhill 1991.310–11. For a similar phenomenon in a related genre cf. S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel* (Princeton 1989), esp. 37–8. Bartsch is surprisingly silent about the poetic precedents of the novelists' technique.

[49] For poetic *ekphrasis* cf. S. D. Goldhill and R. G. Osborne (eds.), *Art and Text* (Cambridge, forthcoming); A.S. Becker, 'Reading poetry through a distant lens: ecphrasis, Greek rhetoricians, and the pseudo-Hesiodic "Shield of Herakles"', *AJP* 113 (1992) 5–24.

importance of order in the description, and this is reinforced both by the patterning, according to introductory phrase, of the scenes into groups of 2–3–2, and by the framing of the first six scenes by Zeus and Apollo. On the other hand, the opening address to the reader, 'you would more easily cast your eyes on the rising sun than look upon the cloak's redness' (1.725–6), suggests a blinding unity which defies close or clear analysis. The Kyklopes seem to offer a 'natural', chronological beginning,[50] but in the description and viewing of such a cloak one could presumably begin anywhere; descriptions of works of art in fiction always impose an order which dramatises this tension between 'static' material art and narrative, in which chronological sequence is crucial. So too the image of Aphrodite in Ares' shield invites our interpretation by calling up the whole notion of artistic mimesis. How can an *image* be ἀτρεκές, 'exact', let alone our readings of that image? Appeal to the actual practices of contemporary art[51] and to contemporary interest in the science of optics[52] makes clear that Apollonius is here interested in the nature of 'realism', in the 'representability' of the images on the cloak. Though the case has often been overstated, it is clear that the scenes are much more plausible as decorative images than are the elaborate narratives of the Homeric shield.[53] The apparent archaic unconcern with verisimilitude has been replaced by an apparent Hellenistic 'realism'. Appearances deceive, however, and this very 'realism' paradoxically clouds meaning by denying the detailed narratives which Homer offers. It is the very simplicity of the images which poses the major interpretative problem.

It is no surprise (or scandal) that modern critics are far from agreed on how to 'read' the cloak.[54] There is an obvious parallel between the image of Pelops escaping with Hippodameia and the

[50] Cf. above pp. 53–4.

[51] Cf., e.g., T. Gelzer, 'Mimus und Kunsttheorie bei Herondas, Mimiambus 4', in *Catalepton. Festschrift für Bernhard Wyss zum 80. Geburtstag* (Basel 1985) 96–116, Zanker 1987.47, 69–70, Fowler 1989. Chapter 1.

[52] Cf., e.g., Fowler 1989.113.

[53] For the ancient view cf. Σ^{bT} *Il.* 18.511. The genealogy of Tityos is always adduced as the 'unrepresentable' exception; the point is not to be pressed, however, as it can be argued that to represent 'a person' is to represent their genealogy – Tityos and 'the child of Elare, the nursling of Earth' are, in this sense, synonymous. The narrative of the chariot race and perhaps the details in ἱέμενοι and λιγαίνων (738, 740) may be thought to stretch the bounds of 'representability'. For 'dewy' cf. above n. 34.

[54] Cf., e.g., Lawall 1966. 154–8, Collins 1967.55–85. It will be clear that I have sympathy with the caution of Fusillo (n. on 1.725–9 and 1985.301), but not with the nihilism of Shapiro 1980.275.

subsequent history of Jason and Medea. Like Aietes, Oinomaos had a disturbing oracle – that he would be killed by a son-in-law – and, like Aietes, his evil plans are thwarted by his daughter's love for a stranger. The union of Pelops and Hippodameia led to grief in the next generation with the killing of Thyestes' children by their uncle Atreus; so too the children of Jason and Medea were to meet a grisly fate.[55] Oinomaos' charioteer, Myrtilos, was later thrown into the sea and killed by Pelops, a fate which suggests the usual version of the death of Apsyrtus, whom Apollonius makes Aietes' charioteer; both Jason and Pelops had to be purified for these crimes.[56] The scene of the building of Thebes suggests the power of music, prominent in Books 1 and 4 through the figure of Orpheus; many critics have also wanted to see in Zethos a paradigmatic illustration of the purposelessness of 'brawn' without 'brain', a theme most obvious elsewhere in the character of Idas. The image of Aphrodite has clear relevance both to events on Lemnos and to the later narrative of Medea's love; specifically, it looks forward to the goddess's toilet-scene at 3.43–50. The Teleboan raid, on the other hand, suggests bloody conflict of a type directly opposed to the subtlety of the love-goddess, conflict whose grim consequences are soon seen in the disastrous events at Cyzicus, where love and war are tragically intermingled. Sandwiched between Aphrodite and Pelops, this scene also points to the real differences between Heracles and Jason. Finally, Apollo (under whose protection the Argonauts sail) and Tityos introduce the clash of Olympian and chthonic powers which resonates through such major scenes as the boxing-match in Book 2 and the slaughter at the end of Book 3.[57]

The cloak thus presents scenes which are partial analogues of elements of the epic, with correspondences which are both oblique and polyvalent; we may in fact see here a genuine Hellenistic de-

[55] I do not know whether or not it is relevant that Atreus and Thyestes quarrelled over a golden lamb which served as a mark of a rightful claim to the kingship.

[56] For these myths cf. Apollodorus, *Epitome* 2.8–10 with Frazer's notes. Some ancient writers even made Myrtilos the son of Hermes and Phaethousa, a mother who inevitably suggests 'Phaethon', Apsyrtus' nickname (3.245–6), cf. Σ 1.752–8a.

[57] Virgil may have been influenced by this scene in his use of gigantomachic themes in the description of Actium on Aeneas' shield, cf. P. R. Hardie, *Hermes* 111 (1983) 320–4. The juxtaposition to Pelops makes noteworthy Tityos' later role as the *exemplum* of destructive erotic torments, cf. Lucretius 3.992–4 (with Kenney's note), Newman 1986.80. Rose 1985.35 suggests that Leto's veil links 'Medea's initial and tentative sensation of love with the abusive sexuality of Leto's attacker, a connection that prefigures the sinister development of Medea's passion in Book 4'.

velopment from archaic and classical technique in *ekphrasis*.[58] The scenes suggest doubt, conflict, deceit and the problematic of choice; the small number of the scenes emphasises how partial and unclarified a cosmos we are being offered, in contrast to the shield of Achilles which was thought to convey a complete and unified cosmos. Between the description of the cloak and the powerfully erotic simile which describes Jason's movement to the palace is the account of Jason's refusal to allow Atalante to join the expedition, 'because he feared the terrible strife which love causes'. The irony could not be more pointed.

(iii) SUFFERING FOR LOVE

At the opening of Book 3 Medea and *eros* enter the poem together.[59] A few lines later Hera suggests to Athena that they ask Aphrodite to ask her son 'to bewitch (θέλξαι) the daughter of Aietes, mistress of drugs (πολυφάρμακον), with *eros* for Jason'. *Eros*, bewitchment, powerful potions – here are the main themes of the Medea narrative. Subject to the magical power (θέλξις) of *eros*, Medea offers Jason the magical power of her drugs. Upon her in turn Jason exercises the magical power of *peitho*, persuasion and rhetoric (3.975–1145), and receives in return the *pharmaka* with which he may triumph in the tests imposed by Aietes.[60] The murder of Apsyrtus is blamed by the poet on the destructive power of *eros* (4.445), but its success depends upon the magical power of words (4.435–6) and drugs (4.442). In the future – which is both known and unknown – lies Euripides' *Medea*, in which the Colchian princess will use her powerful drugs to exact revenge for the spurning of her love by a husband who seeks refuge in the weapons of rhetoric.

When set against these narrative imperatives, the worries of modern critics about the 'consistency' and 'credibility' of Apollonius' Medea seem increasingly misguided.[61] It might be tempting simply to accept that Medea has two quite distinct aspects – the impressionable virgin and the dangerous handler of potions – and leave it at

[58] Cf. A. Perutelli, *La narrazione commentata. Studi sull'epillio latino* (Pisa 1979) 36–8; Fusillo 1983. 83–96.

[59] The word ἔρως does not occur in the first two books. This is, of course, not to say that the theme is absent; cf. the foregoing discussion of the scenes on Lemnos.

[60] For the general background cf. J. De Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass. 1975).

[61] Cf. above pp. 12–15; for a fuller account of Medea's 'character' cf. Hunter 1987.

that.[62] On the other hand, it is crucially important that the apparent paradoxes of Medea's character are determined by the narrative themes just described; Medea is very deliberately drawn as she is in order to explore the inter-relations between magic, *eros* and rhetoric. Here Helen acts as a powerful exemplum of the agent and victim of *eros*,[63] and the themes themselves are taken over by Apollonius from Pindar's narrative of the same events:

> After that
> they came to the Phasis, where
> they pitted their might against the grim Colchians in the presence of Aietes himself. But the mistress of the swiftest darts, Cyprogeneia,
> yoking the dappled wryneck, four-spoked,
> to an indissoluble wheel,
>
> brought for the first time the maddening bird from Olympus
> to men and thus taught the son of Aison to be skilled in supplications and incantations,
> so that he might take away from Medea her awe-filled reverence for her parents, and that Hellas, passionately longed for,
> might with the whip of Persuasion set her awhirl (δονέοι) as she was ablaze in her heart.
> And at once she revealed to him the outcome of her father's trials.
> Then she prepared (φαρμακώσαισ') with oil the sap of cut roots as a remedy against harsh pain
> and gave it to him for anointing himself, and thus they agreed
> to enter in common a sweet union between themselves.
>
> (Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.211–23, trans. B. K. Braswell)

In both poets there is an exchange of 'magic', though Apollonius omits the erotic magic of the iynx while preserving the divinely-aided power of *peitho*. After the exchange of Book 3, the grim events of Book 4 explore the bitterness of *eros*, in culmination of the theme which has dominated the text since Medea's heart first 'flooded with sweet pain' (3.290). With the grimmest of these events, the murder of Apsyrtus, I begin.

The trick which lures Apsyrtus to his death – deceitful words[64] and

[62] So, e.g., Dyck 1989.456.
[63] Cf. below p. 67.
[64] Cf. below pp. 144–5.

gifts of lovely robes – recalls the deceit which killed Creon and his daughter in Euripides' *Medea*, just as Medea's preceding speech of reproof to Jason (4.355–90) is clearly a reworking of the parallel speech in the tragedy (*Med.* 465–519). The tragic Medea does not dissemble what is likely to happen when a woman's bed is wronged (cf. 265–6, 1367–8), and the chorus of the play sing of the dangerous excesses to which love can lead (627–43); the curse on 'reckless Eros' (4.445–9)[65] which introduces the killing of Apsyrtus has often been compared to a choral song. Here then Medea takes the only way out of a desperate situation, but it is a solution predicated upon our knowledge of her terrible powers. What hangs over her is not merely the abandonment of an Ariadne, but also being handed over to her father whose taste for cruelty she well knows (cf. 3.378–9). Her desire to burn the *Argo* (4.392) in fact echoes an intention of Aietes himself (3.582, cf. 4.223); in her anger she is her father's daughter,[66] and Jason must resort to the same tactics with her as he used to calm Aietes.[67] The horror of the murder of Apsyrtus, even if epic legend knew more horrible versions,[68] is real enough – echoes of the murder of Agamemnon and the whole shaping of the scene as a terrible sacrifice before a shrine[69] are designed to shock – but it comes as a climax in a pattern of events and not as an isolated and inexplicable catastrophe. Moreover, the deception and killing of Apsyrtus is a sinister and perverted reprise of the meeting of Jason and Medea at the temple of Hecate; it is thus a particular instance of how the meaning of much of Book 4 is created out of a 'rewriting' of earlier events. Apsyrtus is told to come alone (4.418, cf. 3.908) to a temple

[65] Quoted below pp. 116–17.

[66] Note 3.368 ~ 4.391, 740.

[67] Note 3.386–8 ~ 4.395–8; 3.396 ~ 4.410.

[68] Apollonius avoids any butchery by Medea herself. The dismemberment (*maschalismos*) of Apsyrtus' corpse in part looks to the traditional version of the dismemberment of the child Apsyrtus, cf above p. 21.

[69] For echoes of the death of Agamemnon cf. 4.468 ~ *Od.* 4.535, 11.411, Vian III 22. Through Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 'the language of sacrifical ritual runs like a leitmotiv' (W. Burkert, *GRBS* 7 (1966) 119). It is tempting to seek some link between the purple tapestry of the tragedy by which Agamemnon is 'lured' to his death and the purple robe of Dionysus which was one of the treacherous gifts to Apsyrtus (4.423–34). Not only the position in front of the temple and the explicit comparison of 4.468 mark the killing as 'sacrificial', but the 'willingness' of the victim is also important (for the ancient sources cf. W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Eng. trans., Berkeley/Los Angeles 1983) 4 n. 10). The death of Clytemnestra in Euripides' *Electra* may be compared, cf. J. R. Porter, 'Tiptoeing through the corpses: Euripides' *Electra*, Apollonius, and the *Bouphonia*', *GRBS* 31 (1990) 255–80.

to secure the Fleece and eventually to return home with Medea; the talk of gifts with which Medea deceived her maids (3.909–10) becomes the bait with which Apsyrtus is lured (4.422–34). The dangers of deceit are here revealed in violence and death, and the promise of further deaths when agreements are broken again in Greece.

Thus Jason and Medea are bound together by killing, just as their final separation will also be marked by deceitful killing. Before this, however, it is the distance between them, the difference in their emotional investment in their relationship, which dominates. When they leave the temple after their first meeting, Jason goes back 'rejoicing' to his companions (3.1148) and tells them of Medea's help, which causes them in turn to rejoice (3.1171); the group-solidarity of the Argonauts is here stressed to mark the support which Jason enjoys (cf. 3.1163, 1165–6). Medea, on the other hand, goes back silent and aloof to fall into a gesture of lonely mourning and despair (3.1159–62). This is the last we see of her until the opening of the fourth book, where the terrified girl finds the heroes having an all-night party (4.69). When she begs them to rescue her, offers to secure the Fleece for them and reminds Jason of his promises, he 'rejoiced greatly' (4.92–3) and repeated his pledge to marry her in Greece. Jason's motivating impulse – so different from Medea's – is the need to complete the tasks imposed upon him by Pelias and Aietes and the desire to get home. In securing the Fleece he must be completely dependent upon her,[70] and when we are told that the dragon's roar causes mothers to fling their arms around their newborn babies (4.136–8), we understand that Medea seeks to protect Jason as a mother cares for her child.[71] This gives bitter point to Medea's exploitation of Andromache's famous plea to Hector (*Il.* 6.429–30) in her desperation on the journey away from Colchis:

> 'τῷ φημὶ τεὴ κούρη τε δάμαρ τε
> αὐτοκασιγνήτη τε μεθ' Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἕπεσθαι.'
>
> 'Therefore I say that it is as your daughter and wife and very sister[72] that I am travelling with you to Hellas.' (4.368–9)

These same Homeric verses had been echoed at 3.732–3 as Medea stressed her devotion to Chalciope; there the verses had been part of

[70] Note 4.149, 163.

[71] Cf. my note on 3.747–8; for a different interpretation cf. Hurst 1967. 105–6.

[72] This clearly foreshadows Medea's abandonment of her real brother to his fate, cf. Fränkel 1968.481, Paduano 1972.219. There is a similar effect at Eur. *Med.* 257 (cf. Page on 231).

a nuanced (self-) deception. Their reprise in Book 4 marks how the tables have been turned on Medea. In Colchis, moreover, Jason had been thus dependent upon her; now she is helpless.

Medea's speeches in Book 4 are full of bitter echoes of the previous book, just as the 'sharp pains' (4.351) which torment her are a perversion and consequence of the amatory pain of Book 3. A particularly important theme is that of 'agreements' and their betrayal. At 3.1105 Medea had remarked sadly that, although Greeks may keep agreements (συνημοσύναι) honourably, her father would not act like the Minos of the Ariadne–Theseus story which Jason had just related to her. We do not have to rely on our knowledge of events 'outside the poem' to appreciate the irony here. On Drepane, Arete, the Hellenophile queen, will circumvent an agreement by allowing the Argonauts to anticipate the king's binding decision: there is thus more than one way to 'honour' agreements. Moreover, in the fourth book Medea entreats Jason not to keep his agreement (συνθεσίη) about her with Apsyrtus (4.340, 378, 390), because this would entail the transgression of his agreement with her, an agreement made through gestures and promises both at the temple of Hecate and on the *Argo* itself. In fact, Apsyrtus is lured to his death by yet another deceitful arrangement, and Jason's agreement with him amounts to no more than *dolos* and *ate* (4.404). It was Medea herself who began the catalogue of deceit when she told her maids that she had agreed to meet Jason at the temple so that they could get the gifts he would bring and give him in return a drug that would destroy him (3.907–11); as we have seen, these motifs of deceptive agreements, gifts and drugs reverberate through the rest of the myth and culminate in the events of Euripides' *Medea*. In this speech to her maids Medea introduces the theme of 'error, transgression', which is closely bound to the theme of agreements:

> 'I have made a terrible mistake (παρήλιτον), dear friends, and I did not realise that I should not go out among the foreign men who roam our land.' (3.891–3)

Medea's words are, of course, truer than she knows; she is indeed making a terrible mistake, and the verb she uses will return to haunt her. Jason urges her to keep her agreement to help him, because to do otherwise would be 'to commit a sin', ἁλιτέσθαι, 'in a sacred place' (3.981). In the fourth book she must use this language again, but this time to accuse Jason of breaking his agreements, μάλα

γὰρ μέγαν ἤλιτες ὅρκον, 'grievously have you broken a mighty oath' (4.388).

In her accusations against Jason, the 'Nausicaa' figure of Book 3 gives way to darker and more sinister representations of the female. She presents herself as a Helen[73] and a Clytemnestra who has brought 'deadly shame upon women'.[74] In a position of complete dependence – cf. the echo of Andromache's words at 4.367–9 discussed above – Medea nevertheless carries the threat of a Clytemnestra. In her speeches on Drepane, however, the old themes of agreement and transgression return ever more desperately. To Arete Medea confesses her error in helping Jason (ἤλιτον, 4.1023), and she reminds the crew again of their agreements (συνθεσίας τε καὶ ὅρκια, 4.1042) in a reversal of Jason's plea to her at the temple of Hecate (cf. 3.985–9). Where Medea once had power, she is now powerless, exposed to the dangers of a 'sinful verdict', δίκη ἀλιτήμων (4.1057). This last phrase points to a key aspect of the moral language I have been tracing through these scenes. What would constitute a 'sinful' verdict would, of course, depend upon whether you were Colchian or Greek; there are no moral absolutes in this poem – moral language is always a function of the rhetoric of a particular situation, even when used by the poet's 'own voice'.[75] At one level the phrase may be explained as the 'actual' words of reassurance spoken by the Greeks to Medea and conveyed by the poet in indirect speech,[76] but the recurrent lexical pattern which I have traced allows us to sense other levels as well.[77]

The tragic ironies of Medea's position have thus been carefully laid out long before the poet's intervention at the moment of her defloration:

> ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὔ ποτε φῦλα δυηπαθέων ἀνθρώπων
> τερπωλῆς ἐπέβημεν ὅλωι ποδί· σὺν δέ τις αἰεὶ
> πικρὴ παρμέμβλωκεν ἐϋφροσύνηισιν ἀνίη.

[73] 4.361–2 ~ *Od.* 4.263–4; cf. below p. 67.

[74] 4.367–8 ~ *Od.* 11.433–5; Dufner 1988.185–8 notes that Jason and Medea reflect both of the contrasted pairs of the *Odyssey*: they are *both* Odysseus–Penelope *and* Agamemnon–Clytemnestra (or Aigisthos–Clytemnestra).

[75] Cf. below pp. 109–12.

[76] Cf. below p. 144 for the theoretical issues involved.

[77] For other views of the phrase cf. Wilamowitz 1924. II 203 n. 4, Fränkel 1968.560 (but 2.1028 does not really help here). As for the choice of singular or plural verb in 4.1057, Vian (*Note complémentaire* ad loc.) makes some fair points, but the singular is to be preferred: ἀρωγῆς distances the Greeks from Medea and the singular increases her psychological and physical isolation.

> Never do we tribes of suffering mortals tread with whole foot upon the path of delight; always there is some better grief to accompany our joys. (4.1165–7)

While she waits to hear Alcinous' decision, Medea's swirling emotions are compared to the spindle turned by a grieving widow as her children cry around her (4.1060–7). At the point where she is to marry Jason, the grim future is marked by the figure of the woman who has lost a husband. This simile picks up and completes the comparison of the onset of Medea's passion to a fire blazing up when a working woman puts on fresh sticks (3.291–7). The two similes mark the progress of her suffering; neither suggests imminent release.

At the hinge of Medea's suffering stands her departure from Colchis. The poet asks the Muse to take over the narrative because he is unable to decide whether to call the force which caused Medea to leave Colchis 'the wretched grief of destructive desire' (ἄτης πῆμα δυσίμερον) or a 'terrible panic' (φύζαν ἀεικελίην);[78] in fact, it soon becomes plain that this alleged dichotomy is illusory: love and fear cannot be so easily separated.

Hera's responsibility for Medea's abandonment of Colchis and its purpose – the punishment of Pelias – were foreshadowed by the poet at 3.1133–6 at the conclusion of her meeting with Jason. Here the theme is picked up as we see Medea for the first time since her return to the palace. As in Book 3 (cf. 3.818), Hera intervenes to cause Medea to reject suicide in favour of a movement towards Jason and the offering of help in the tasks he must confront. In both books the movement takes the form of a journey.[79] In Book 3 the journey is conducted in the light of day (3.823–4), whereas her flight requires the cover of night; to meet Jason, she drove a wagon and was accompanied by attendants through the broad road (3.872–4), but now she flees alone, on bare feet, by the narrow back-streets; in Book 3 the people looked away for fear of catching her eye, but in Book 4 she must cover her face for fear of being seen; in Book 3 she was compared to Artemis driving her deer-drawn chariot as the wild animals fawn around her in fear, whereas in Book 4 she is herself terrified and is successively compared to a deer, startled by the baying of hunting-dogs, and to a wretched slave-girl.

[78] Text and interpretation are problematic. Hutchinson 1988.122 adopts Maas' μέν for μιν, and explains that the poet cannot choose whether to tell of Medea's grief or her flight. Cf. further below pp. 105–6; Hunter 1987.134–9; Goldhill 1991.293.

[79] Cf. Briggs 1981.964, Rose 1985.36–7.

The simile of the deer (4.12–13) is of a type common in the *Iliad*, and thus suggests that Medea's struggle is like the rout of a soldier or an army in battle. Her groans (v. 19) are expressed by a verb (βρυχᾶσθαι) which Homer uses of the groans of dying soldiers; here again the *Iliad* is rewritten in a different mode. The comparison of young girls to deer is, however, also common both in poetry generally and, specifically, in erotic contexts,[80] and so the image here suits the ambivalence of Medea's emotions to which the poet's opening dilemma pointed. The over-determination of the simile, its layered literariness, is of a piece with the whole presentation of Medea's 'character' which I have been considering. A second simile (4.35–40)[81] compares her to a girl from a rich family who has recently been captured in war and entered slavery far from her home, but has not yet become accustomed to hardship and the demands of a cruel mistress. The simile again evokes the painful world of the *Iliad* – we think particularly of the fate which hangs over Andromache – in a domestic and private context. Medea is a 'prize of war', even if in Apollonius' poem the Greeks and the Colchians do not at this point come to blows. The Medea of Euripides too can assert that she was 'plundered from a barbarian land' (v.256). The slave-girl simile also looks forward to Medea's future. As she leaves for a life of exile and marriage, Apollonius exploits the similarities between Greek marriage and funerary ritual:[82] with gestures familiar from the prelude to the death of women in tragedy – kissing her bed, cutting her hair – Medea finally abandons the virginal chamber which had played such a crucial role in the previous book (3.645–64) and opts for a life with Jason. The simile, however, suggests not merely a grim view of marriage in general,[83] but offers little hope for Medea's future in Greece where, like the slave-girl, she will lose the grand status she enjoyed at home and become subordinate to a 'mistress' (ἄνασσα). Unlike the slave-girl, however, she will exact a terrible revenge.

The apparent uncertainty about her flight continues through the rest of the poem. At 4.355ff. she reproaches Jason bitterly: she has brought disgrace upon women through her 'wantonness' (μαργοσύνη), and left Colchis οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἀναιδήτωι ἰότητι,

[80] Cf. Anacreon, *PMG* 408; Sappho fr. 58.16 Voigt; Archilochus, *SLG* 478.47; Hor. *C.* 1.23; A. P. Burnett, *Three Archaic Poets* (London 1983) 93–4.

[81] Text and interpretation are again uncertain, cf. Hunter 1987.136.

[82] Cf., e.g., J. M. Redfield, *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 188–91; R. Seaford, *CQ* 35 (1985) 318–19.

[83] Cf. Hunter 1987.137 citing Soph. fr. 583 R.

'through shameless, improper desire' (4.360), because she trusted his promises of marriage. When she must plead before Arete, however, she blames the *ate* to which all mortals are prone, denies that she left Colchis willingly – contrast Jason's proud assertion at 4.194 'with her consent shall I take her home as my bride' –[84] but rather through the persuasion of hateful fear, and she denies 'wantonness'. These differences do not reflect merely the changing rhetorical needs of each situation, but also changing perceptions in the context of only partial knowledge. One of Apollonius' most innovative and influential concerns is the frailty of explanation for human action within an epic narrative: characters struggle to explain, while readers know more than the characters (e.g. that Hera is at work), but still not enough.

In these concerns Apollonius was particularly influenced by the figure of Helen, whose flight from Sparta with Paris provoked a war and whose motives had been much discussed by poets, philosophers and historians.[85] In Euripides' *Trojan Women* Helen blames her behaviour on Aphrodite (vv. 940–50), whereas Hecuba blames Helen's 'wantonness' (μαργοσύνη), and Gorgias' *Helen* too offers a range of explanations for Helen's departure from Sparta which are not unlike those canvassed for Medea's flight in the *Argonautica*. The power of Helen's beauty was as dangerous as Medea's magic,[86] and Helen too was a worker in drugs (*Od.* 4.219–34). In the *Odyssey* Helen claims to have been the victim of *ate* from Aphrodite which caused her to abandon her home and family (4.259–64, 23.218–24), and her bitter regrets in the *Iliad* clearly look forward to Medea's complaints in Euripides and Apollonius (cf. *Il.* 3.171–80, 6.343–58, 24.761–75). Helen and Penelope are, moreover, a very important structuring opposition in the description of Medea's suffering in Book 3.[87] Finally, the story of Helen embodies the clash of Europe and Asia, a theme with repeated echoes throughout the fourth book of the epic.[88] Helen's coming to Troy proved as disastrous to that city as Medea's arrival in Greece was to prove.

[84] This verse also reveals the dangerous elision of parental consent: it should be the bride's father who is 'willing'. This ambivalence is reinforced by an echo of *Od.* 3.272 (the adulterous liaison of Aigisthos and Clytemnestra !).

[85] Cf., e.g., N. Zagagi, 'Helen of Troy; encomium and apology', *WS* 98 (1985) 63–88.

[86] Cf. Eur. *Tr.* 892–3, 'she captures men's eyes, storms their cities, burns their homes: such are the spells she casts (κηλήματα)'.

[87] Cf. Hunter 1989.29, adding Shumaker 1969.96–125.

[88] Note that Herodotus makes the abduction of Medea the last in the series of actions which inspired Paris to abduct Helen (1.2–3).

Thus Medea embodies and exemplifies many of the central concerns of the epic, and her representation through the rewriting of Homeric characters illustrates one of Apollonius' primary strategies for the production of meaning. The critical tendency to treat her in isolation from the totality of the poem in which she appears is thus as ruinous as it is understandable.

(iv) DREPANE

For Odysseus the island of the Phaeacians, Scherie, was the last stop before Ithaca, a kind of half-way house between the fantasy world of his adventures and the realities of home. Homer so devises his narrative that, when Odysseus lands on the island, the worst is both behind and in front of him, as it is on Scherie that he tells the story of his adventures. For the Argonauts too, this island, called by Apollonius by its earlier name Drepane ('Sickle') and assimilated to the world outside myth by identification with Corcyra (Corfu), should have marked the closing of a chapter. The island is reached after the *Argo* has successfully negotiated the grim Planktai, an obstacle as great for the return journey as the Symplegades were for the outward trip; on the island Jason and Medea are married, though they would have preferred to wait until they had returned to Iolkos (4.1161–4), and the threat of the pursuing Colchians is finally ended. The Argonauts' happy arrival on the island is actually compared to a safe return home: the people of the island welcome them as though they were 'their own children' and the crew rejoices as though they had reached Thessaly (4.994–1000). In fact, however, the sufferings in Libya and the Cretan Sea lie in front of the Argonauts: they have followed in Odysseus' footsteps, only to be cheated of his consolations. As usual, the Homeric model is evoked to mark difference.

Homer's Phaeacians had colonised the island from Hypereia under the leadership of Nausithoos, Alcinous' father (*Od.* 6.4–12), but Apollonius makes them the autochthonous products of the blood spilled when Kronos castrated his father Ouranos. An etymological resonance between *haima*, 'blood' (4.992) and *Haimonia*, i.e. Thessaly (4.1000), suggests an affinity between the Phaeacians and the Argonauts, and seems to bode well for the help they will receive.[89] More

[89] For this 'etymology' cf. my note on 3.1086.

ominous, however, are the rival explanations for the name of the island given by the poet in a typically parenthetic style:

> Buried in the island there lies, according to the story – be merciful, Muses!, unwillingly do I relate the tale of earlier men – the sickle with which Kronos pitilessly cut off his father's genitals (μήδεα).[90] (Others say that it is the harvesting scythe of Demeter, the earth-goddess; for Deo once dwelled in that land, and taught the Titans to reap the nourishing grain, out of love for Macris). From that time the holy nurse of the Phaeacians has been called Drepane, and likewise the Phaeacians themselves are born from the blood of Ouranos. (4.984–92)

The castration myth is not told just for its own sake. There are here faint, but disturbing, echoes of the murder of Apsyrtus, whose body Jason mutilated on the island where he had killed him (4.477), striking, like Kronos (Hes. *Theog.* 174ff.), from ambush; the history of Drepane thus reinforces a direct link between that killing and the marriage of Jason and Medea. The alternative *aition* also suggests themes from the main narrative: 'Demeter the earth-goddess' recalls the importance of Hecate–Persephone; Medea and her family are Titans, and Medea taught Jason how to 'harvest a crop'; she too acted out of 'love', though Demeter's love for Macris was not sexual.[91] There is, of course, no exact correspondence between the main narrative and these myths; rather, as with the scenes on Jason's cloak,[92] oblique analogues of the story introduce the coming narrative and stand in tension with the apparently happy arrival – Drepane, unlike the Homeric Scherie, is implicated in the grim past of its Greek visitors. The 'digression' thus deepens the narrative in ways comparable to the use of similes and pictorial descriptions.

The turbulent past and future of Jason and Medea are contrasted not only with the 'normality' of the royal couple, Alcinous and Arete, but also with the potential pairing of Odysseus and Nausicaa with which Homer toys in *Odyssey* 6–8. Even the possibility that Medea will be handed over to the Colchians is expressed in language which

[90] This word is also used, in a different sense, in the corresponding passage of the *Odyssey* (6.12), and the Hesiodic version of the castration had already used its polyvalence to good effect (*Theog*, 166, 172, 180–1): Ouranos lost his *medea* because he *mesato*. Whether or not Apollonius is here indebted to Call. fr. 43.69–71 (Zancle) is not germane to the present discussion.

[91] For a similar equivocation with φιλεῖσθαι cf. 3.1002.

[92] Cf. above pp. 58–9. The Drepane myths are well discussed (though to a different conclusion) by Dufner 1988.106ff.; Dyck 1989.465 is on the right track, though his discussion does not point to detailed correspondences.

resonates with the vocabulary of a kind of 'perverted' marriage,[93] thus preparing for the solution which Alcinous imposes. The Colchian demand seeks to impose an unwelcome 'marriage' of death upon Medea, but paradoxically hastens her real marriage.

The Odyssean background is nowhere more striking than in the figure of Queen Arete. When Medea wishes the queen 'children' (4.1028) we reflect that Medea herself is cast in the role of an unhappy Nausicaa, Arete's daughter, and that her speech to the queen has an important model in Odysseus' plea to Nausicaa. That Medea is already implicated in the murder of her own brother and will go on to kill her own children is an irony that the poet does not need to belabour. Fränkel in fact emended this wish out of the text,[94] but it is, for a married woman, the equivalent of Odysseus' wish for marriage for Nausicaa; children are seen as the natural fulfilment of marriage,[95] just as marriage is the natural *telos* of a young girl's life. The fusion of Medea and Nausicaa invests the wish with both literary playfulness and sinister foreboding. For the purposes of this wish we are to imagine that Arete is still very young – the *Odyssey* lies a long way in the future – but within her marriage she exercises artful control (signalled by the epithet πολυπότνια, 'grand mistress', at 1069).[96] In the *Odyssey* Arete's role does not seem to correspond to the importance which Nausicaa and the disguised Athena initially ascribe to her,[97] but Apollonius corrects this by making her truly responsible for saving Medea by her speedy action in informing the Argonauts of what Alcinous' decision would be. These 'parallel' power structures on the island are marked by the contrast between 4.1111–13 and 4.1176–81: Arete, accompanied by her maidservants, operates in the secrecy of night and through the agency of a

[93] Cf. 4.1004–5, 1015. ἕξαιτον (1004) is most plausibly associated with ἐξαιτέω, a verb which can mean 'ask in marriage from' (cf. Soph. *Trach.* 10); cf. also LSJ s.v. ἄγω B2, and 4.441 where a similar play is in operation. Only ἐς splitting the genitive phrase prevents a complete 'misreading' of the verse. For ἐκδίδωμι (1015) cf. LSJ s.v. 2a.

[94] Fränkel 1968.556.

[95] Cf. βίοτον τελεσφόρον in 1027. The scholiast glosses this adjective as τὸν πάντα τελειοποιοῦντα, and Vian and Paduano see a simple reference to longevity; it is, however, attractive to take it closely with 'children'. Elsewhere, this word has connections with fertility and fruitfulness (cf. LSJ s.v. II 2) and the corresponding verb is used by doctors of bringing a baby 'to term'. Commentators rightly identify the epithet τελείη for Hera resonating in 4.382, as Medea reminds Jason of his obligations.

[96] Elsewhere only 1.1125, 1151 of the Asian mother-goddess. Livrea sees 'un pizzico di ironia' in the epithet. For the Ptolemaic significance of this scene cf. below pp. 161–2.

[97] Cf. *Od.* 6.303–15, 7.66–77; B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Wiesbaden 1974) 105–30.

go-between;[98] Alcinous is accompanied by the leading men of the state as he personally makes his public proclamation in the bright dawn. Arete's skill brings it about that Alcinous' decision is both respected and subverted.

The bedroom scene between Alcinous and Arete has a close parallel in Herodotus,[99] but probably takes its cue from the closing verses of *Odyssey* 7:

> There, then, patient Odysseus lay down to rest in the morticed bedstead inside the echoing portico, while Alcinous slept in an inner room of the lofty palace, and the queen his wife shared his bed. (*Od.* 7.344–7, trans. Shewring)

What more natural than that the Homeric king and queen should have discussed the remarkable stranger who had appeared miraculously at their court? Apollonius 'writes' this missing scene for us. Against Medea's tortured sleeplessness – a sleeplessness compared to that of a poor widow (4.1064) – is set the peaceful 'normality' of the marital bedroom where (at least in Greek epic) every night is like every other.[100] The speed with which Alcinous falls asleep as soon as he has told his wife of his plans (4.1110) not merely contrasts with the sleepless anguish of Medea, whose fate lies in his hands, but also comes as a surprise, as the poet has led us to expect a rather different conclusion to the conversation. Both the introduction to Arete's speech, 'as a wife she addressed her lawful husband with affectionate[101] words', and Medea's wish that the queen be blessed with children have prepared us for marital love-making (if of a delicate and epic kind). So too have faint echoes of the deception of Zeus by Hera in *Iliad* 14.[102] Alcinous and Arete are a kind of mortal substitute for the Zeus and Hera of traditional myth: like these gods they are both married to each other and, in some versions at least, brother and sister,[103] and they function in the *Argonautica* as the tools of their divine counterparts (cf. 4.1100, 1200).[104] Virgil, at any rate, seems to have picked up this hint for the scene in which Venus wheedles

[98] For the effective use of indirect speech here cf. below p. 145.
[99] 3.134 (Darius and Atossa).
[100] Note 'as before' (4.1068), and the formality of the titles in 1069–72.
[101] θαλεροῖσι; cf. my note on 3.656.
[102] Cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.1072, 1110.
[103] Cf. Hainsworth on *Od.* 7.54–5; below p. 161.
[104] Note that, in acting to forestall the consequences of her husband's intended action, Arete replays Hera's action at 4.576ff.

new armour for her son out of Vulcan (*Aen.* 8.370–406). Although the sexual bribery is there much more explicit,[105] the debt to Apollonius is clear, and the contrast between the conclusions to the two scenes pointedly amusing.

Arete's speech to her husband picks up many themes from Medea's speech to her, but adds a powerful rhetoric of her own.[106] She calls Aietes ὑπερφίαλος, 'excessive (in pride, violence etc.)' (4.1083). How does she know? Has she extracted it from between the lines of Medea's speech, or is it merely a rhetorical flourish? Ancient critics were certainly aware that Homeric characters sometimes appear to have more knowledge than they really 'should' have,[107] but Apollonius' concerns are here rather more than just imitation of a Homeric technique. When Arete tells Alcinous that Jason is bound by oath 'as I hear' (4.1084), we may wonder whether she has had her own spies out. Perhaps, but we should recall again the inappropriateness of a simple concept of 'realism' in the discussion of 'character' in an epic poem.[108] Arete's speech picks up familiar themes from the earlier part of the epic without too much concern for modern standards of strict 'consistency'; 'as I hear' (? from a reading of the *Argonautica*) may in part be an acknowledgement by the poet of a familiar technique of narrative poetry. Arete's comparison of Medea's possible fate to those of Antiope, Danae and the daughter of the infamous Echetos (*Od.* 18.84–7) is particularly nuanced. It picks up Medea's own outburst to Jason at an earlier crisis:

> 'τίνα δ' οὐ τίσιν ἠὲ βαρεῖαν
> ἄτην οὐ σμυγερῶς δεινῶν ὕπερ οἷα ἔοργα
> ὀτλήσω, σὺ δέ κεν θυμηδέα νόστον ἕλοιο;'
>
> 'What punishment or grim and awful fate will not be mine for the terrible things I have done! You, however, will get the return you desire.' (4.379–81)

[105] Cf. especially vv. 387–8, verses which are themselves Apollonian (cf. 3.146–7). The conceit of *Aen.* 8.388ff. (the god of fire on fire with love) may take its cue from ἰαίνοντο, 'warmed', at 4.1096.

[106] Note the scornful repetition of 'Aietes' at the head of vv. 1076–7. In v. 1077 Apollonius may be suggesting a link between Αἰήτης and ἀίω, 'I hear'; this is not (as far as I know) an attested ancient etymology, but the opposition in these verses between 'knowing' and 'hearing' would bring it readily to mind. There may also be something pointed in the language of 4.1090, Ἀντιόπην εὐώπιδα.

[107] For the so-called σχῆμα κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον see the bibliography cited by E. Robbins, *EMC* 9 (1990) 3–6.

[108] Cf. above pp. 12–15.

Antiope and Danae were both seduced by Zeus – not a very close parallel! – but Danae did, like Medea, 'suffer hardships on the sea'; here again Arete's words seem to pick up Medea's own complaints:

> 'τηλόθι δ' οἴη
> λυγρῇσιν κατὰ πόντον ἅμ' ἀλκυόνεσσι φορεῦμαι'
>
> 'Bereft, I am tossed over the sea, far from my home, with the sad halcyons for companions ...' (4.362–3)

Antiope, like Medea, fled from her father, but her father died before he could do much to punish her (cf. 4.1090 'Nukteus *devised* [terrible things] against her'), although his name, with its suggestion of nocturnal gloom, is suitably sinister.[109] The grim details of the fate of Echetos' daughter, whose eyes were jabbed out with spikes, are presumably not Apollonius' invention,[110] but they do form a splendid contrast to Arete's earlier 'soft words'. This young wife understands much of the nastier side of life, and her rhetorical 'victory' over her husband is a triumph of mature persuasion.

The 'two-part' wedding of Jason and Medea – the first witnessed only by the Argonauts and the local nymphs (4.1143–52), the second a much more public occasion –[111] allows Alcinous to preserve his dignity while he is presented with a *fait accompli* (4.1202–5). The wedding itself blends familiar wedding-ritual with poetic fantasy,[112] and probably owes more than a little to poetic accounts of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in the cave of Cheiron on Pelion.[113] The

[109] This is accentuated by juxtaposition to εὐώπιδα, 'fair-faced'. At 1.735 Apollonius had used the other version which made Antiope the daughter of Asopus, cf. F.Vian, *Les Origines de Thèbes* (Paris 1963) 194–201. The variation calls attention to the selectivity of Arete's persuasive rhetoric.

[110] This is suggested by the fact that later sources know of details not found in *Arg.* It is tempting to guess that 'recently' (4.1092) is not merely chronological – Echetos was still going strong in the time of Odysseus' return – but refers also to a recent (from Apollonius' point of view) poem on this subject: it certainly has many features which would have attracted Hellenistic poets.

[111] Fränkel's transposition of 4.1182–1200 to follow 4.1169 destroys this pointed effect. The 'double' wedding is an important model for the union of Aeneas and Dido in *Aeneid* 4. In Virgil the sequence of 'cave – announced *coniugium* – *Fama*' (*Aen.* 4.160–97) partly replicates the Apollonian sequence of marriage in the cave followed by a 'true report' spread by Hera and then the validation of the marriage by Alcinous. Here, as elsewhere, we would give much to know more of Antimachus' version (cf. fr. 64 Wyss).

[112] The attempt of C. Vatin, *Recherches sur le mariage et la condition de la femme mariée à l'époque hellénistique* (Paris 1970) 78–81, to use this scene as evidence for Ptolemaic court weddings is attractive but highly uncertain.

[113] Cf. Vian III 49–50. Hera was behind both weddings, or at least claims to have been (cf. 4.807–8, below p. 97). Catullus freely used the Apollonian scene for his version of the wedding on Pelion.

most famous thing about that wedding was the result, namely the birth of Achilles, and the implied contrast between Thetis' glorious child and the fate of Medea's children is bitterly ironical.[114] Even the Dionysiac associations of the cave on Drepane foreshadow misery ahead, given the known fates of Ariadne and Hypsipyle, the god's granddaughter. We do not, however, have to rely on such hints to capture the tone of foreboding. Alcinous' declaration to his wife concludes as follows:

> 'λέκτρον δὲ σὺν ἀνέρι πορσαίνουσαν,
> οὔ μιν ἐοῦ πόσιος νοσφίσσομαι, οὐδὲ γενέθλην
> εἴ τιν' ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοισι φέρει δηίοισιν ὀπάσσω.'
>
> 'If [Medea] is sharing a man's bed, I will not separate her from her husband, and if she is carrying a child in her womb I will not hand it over to its enemies.' (4.1107–9)

Who were the enemies of Medea's children? Our knowledge of the future makes this question particularly insistent.

[114] For Thetis' children cf. further below p. 98.

CHAPTER 4

The gods and the divine

The authority of Homer secured for the Homeric gods a central place in subsequent epic; epic poetry without these gods was almost unthinkable (at any rate before Lucan).[1] Already in the *Odyssey* itself 'the doings of men and gods' is almost a definition of epic song (*Od.* 1.338). Despite this, the nature and interpretative strategies demanded by the gods of epic remain hotly disputed critical areas; this is hardly surprising, as by their very nature such gods raise (and are used by post-Homeric poets to raise) fundamental methodological problems about writing and reading 'epic'.

In an influential discussion of Homer's gods, Jasper Griffin insisted that they are (or often are) 'numinous' and 'to be taken seriously'; they are not in the poems merely for light relief or as narrative 'devices' or weapons of psychological explanation. Moreover, he argues, Homeric characters react to their gods in ways which can be paralleled from 'true' religious experience and which betray the representation of 'a world which contains real gods'.[2] At one (fairly banal) level, this is obviously true of the *Argonautica*, regardless of the Homeric situation. The common motifs of the foundation of cult after divine epiphany or intervention[3] and the building of altars and

[1] Cf. the (admittedly hardly impartial) description of Homeric poetry at Pl. *Ion* 531c '[He writes] concerning war and the intercourse of men with each other . . . and of the gods with each other and with men, and what happens (*pathemata*) in heaven and in Hades and of the descent of gods and heroes.' Theophrastus may be responsible for the later definition of epic as concerned with 'divine, heroic and mortal affairs', cf. Koster 1970.86–92. Koster 89 notes that Aristotle stands out from the mainstream of ancient tradition for his comparative neglect of the divine element in epic (but cf. *Poetics* 1460b35).

The present chapter was largely written before the appearance of Feeney 1991, though I had seen an early version of his chapter on Apollonius. I have pruned where possible in order to avoid duplication. I hope that the two accounts will be read together as contributions to a discussion which is really only beginning.

[2] Griffin 1980.Chapter 5.

[3] Cf. 1.1087ff., 2.686–719, 921–9, 4.650–7, 1713–20.

shrines at stops along the way[4] are not merely the actions of pious heroes in a world full of gods, but also correspond to the real practice of Greek religion, which was indeed centred around the observance and propagation of cult. On the other hand, the world in which these gods operate is very much a 'literary' world in which evocation of other texts, particularly Homer, plays a crucial role it would not play – at any rate, to this extent – outside the poem. The gods of Apollonius are figured in the text in the same way as all characters – through the rewriting of other texts and through the creative reassembly and dismantling of earlier literary culture. Thus, to take a very simple example, Apollo's epiphany to the Argonauts at the island of Thynias (2.669–719), an epiphany which stresses the god as a figure of light and harmony,[5] must be read against his terrible appearance at the opening of *Iliad* 1 where he comes 'like night' (1.47) to wreak havoc on the Greek camp.[6] The texture of the text thus thwarts any simplistic enquiry into the 'seriousness' of these gods[7] or into their possible relation with the belief-systems of Apollonius' readers.

The real danger in 'Can the gods be taken seriously?' as a critical point of departure lies in the ease with which this slips into being a question about belief or cult in the world outside the poem. The relationship between the 'religion' of an ancient epic and the 'religion' of its contemporary audience is an interesting and important question – particularly when epic represents cult and ceremony which we know to have taken place in analogous forms in the real world of the audience – but in many respects it is separate from a consideration of how a poet uses the gods and the divine in his poem. *Mutatis mutandis*, the 'gods' of the *Argonautica* are no more or less 'real' than are the human characters.[8] We are, for example, concerned in the first instance not with whether Apollonius or his readers actually believed that Eros was a little boy who shot arrows at people, but

[4] Cf. 1.402–4, 966, 1186, 4.1620–2.

[5] Cf. Hunter 1986.

[6] Cf. Feeney 1991.75. Both scenes feature the god's weapons; the Homeric god's movement (*Il.* 1.47) is varied by the movement of the whole island at Apollo's appearance (2.680). The Homeric emphasis on the noise of Apollo's attack (*Il.* 1.46, 49) is replaced by the god's silent remoteness.

[7] Cf. Hainsworth 1991.74 'no one takes these gods seriously'. What he means by this is never explained, though he is presumably operating with some version of Griffin's model.

[8] For such problems cf. above pp. 13–14, and Feeney 1991.45–8 for the importance of the epic context.

rather with how the poet presents this incident within the epic world he has created: does he, for example, signal in various ways that we are dealing with an extended metaphor for psychological and emotional disturbance? Is it presented so that our appreciation of it in fact depends in part upon our understanding that it can be 'true' only in epic, not in the world outside epic?[9] The mistake which too many critics have made is to move from the fact that the Apollonian gods are presented in very similar ways to all other Apollonian characters – with wit, ironic juxtaposition, pathos and so on – i.e. that they are no less Apollonian than any other part of the epic, to a view that they cannot, or cannot sometimes, be 'serious', in any of the senses of that term. Moreover, Apollonius' audience was experienced and skilled in understanding epic and its traditions. Hard as it is to quantify, we must not underestimate the effect which familiarity with 'the divine in epic' will have had on the third-century audience. Their expectation of 'divine machinery' is exploited by the poet in making what is distinctive about his poem stand out. The poem has gods because it is epic; part of Apollonius' project is to renew the tradition precisely by highlighting what is difficult in what had long since settled into this 'natural' state of affairs. In general terms, our knowledge of the poem as a whole would in any event have led us to expect a series of quite various self-conscious experiments with the divine in narrative.

(i) GODS AS CHARACTERS

Two related differences from Homer's presentation of the divine may be mentioned at once. First, the element of the miraculous and the magical is far more important than in Homer generally, although Odysseus' adventures form a partial exception; the austere Iliadic presentation of the supernatural may in fact have already been out of step with archaic epic in general.[10] Be that as it may, these features were present in the Argonautic legend long before Apollonius and are firmly bound both to the whole structure of the myth, as a journey towards 'the other', and to the exotic character

[9] On the relation between gods in epic and 'real religion' cf. Feeney 1991.3–4, 46–7, 176–80. It is fundamental that we must not assume that the ancients made any simple, or even necessary, connection between the gods of epic and the gods of cult and 'belief'. This is, of course, very different from denying any such connection.

[10] Cf. Griffin 1977.40–3.

of Medea and her family. The concluding sections of Book 3 and much of Book 4 stress the Argonauts' dependence upon and vulnerability to the supernatural and the uncanny. Again, however, this feature of the poem must not be seen as determined merely by the facts of the story as taken over by the poet. In the rewriting of Homeric scenes and Homeric values the strange and the supernatural function as markers of change, as ways of distorting the model texts so as to lay bare the suppressions upon which they are based.

Secondly, Apollonius greatly reduces the prominence of the divine. Gone are the easy appearances of gods to mortals and the conversations between them. Gone too are divine assemblies; the admiring audience of 'all the gods looking down from heaven' (1.547) as the *Argo* sets sail is to this extent both unique and (deliberately) misleading. Apollo (or his radiance) is seen twice (2.669–719, 4.1706–13), and divine voices may be heard (4.580–5, 640), but otherwise the Argonauts' only direct contact is with minor divinities – Glaukos, Thetis and the Nereids,[11] the Libyan 'heroines', the Hesperides, Triton.[12] Iris' intervention to prevent the Boreads from killing the Harpies forms a partial exception.[13] The Olympian world is also present in the aetiological stories with which the poem abounds, and in similes which compare Jason to Apollo (1.307–9), Medea to Artemis (3.876–85) and Aietes to Poseidon (3.1240–5).[14] The Argonauts' protecting deity, Hera, works through silent action or suggestion (3.250, 818, 4.11, 1184–5, 1199–1200), through signs (3.931 a talking crow, 4.294 a shooting star,[15] 510 lightning, 640–2 a scream) and through the words and actions of characters.[16] Her

[11] It is a reasonable conclusion from 4.862 and 4.935 that the Nereids are visible to the Argonauts, cf. Feeney 1991.86 for a rather different emphasis. Vian, however, rightly notes (*Note complémentaire* to 4.955) the poet's almost total silence about the sailors in this scene. In narratological terms, the simile of 4.933–8 is 'focalised' by the crew, and the narrative of 4.938–60 is in the voice of the primary narrator, with an additional specific divine audience at 956–60; καί in 956 will mean 'even'. The situation is mistakenly simplified by D. M. Schenkeveld, *Mnem.* 42 (1989) 201. The two similes are verbally linked (ἐλίσσωται ~ εἱλίξασαι), but the second must be 'viewed' from outside the ship. We are momentarily tempted to refer καὶ αὐτὸς ἄναξ in 956 to Zeus, and ὀρθός in 957 is a puzzle until we realise that this is the lame Hephaistos, cf. Faerber 1932.80.

[12] For the minor divinities of the Libyan scenes cf. Livrea 1987. 184–6, N. E. Andrews, 'The poetics of the Argonautica of Apollonius of Rhodes: a process of reorientation. The Libyan Maidens', (diss. Harvard 1989).

[13] For this scene cf. below pp. 81–2.

[14] Cf. Carspecken 1952.79; *Od.* 6.102–9 is the starting-point for all these similes.

[15] The identity of the goddess here is, however, disputed, cf. Feeney 1991.88.

[16] Cf. Hunter 1989.25.

only 'personal appearances' in the poem are the scene on Olympus which opens Book 3 and her appeal to Thetis in Book 4.[17]

The 'theology' of the *Argonautica* – i.e. the relation between human action and divine motivation – does not differ substantially from that of the Homeric poems, but the balance of the presentation has altered to give a greater prominence to human decision-making. A familiar and striking example is the account of how Medea overcomes the temptation of suicide during her long night of suffering:

> She longed to choose fatal drugs and to swallow them. Now she was undoing the straps of the casket in her desire to take them out, unhappy girl, but suddenly a deadly fear of hateful Hades came into her mind, and for a long time she sat unmoving and speechless. All the delightful pleasures of life danced before her eyes; she remembered all the joys which the living have, she remembered her happy friends, as a young girl would, and the sun was a sweeter sight than before, now that she really began to ponder everything in her mind. She put the casket away from her knees; Hera caused her to change her mind, and she now had no doubts as to how to act. (3.806–19)

The passage emphasises Medea's 'natural' hesitation about suicide for the most 'human' of motives, a fear of death and a delight in the pleasures that life offers a young girl. We know, however, that Hera is working through those 'natural' emotions, and the mention of the goddess at the end of the passage neither undermines its logic, nor is it to be dismissed as a cynical wave to epic tradition.[18] What the changed balance of presentation does mean is that, for the most part, Apollonius' characters struggle in a cloud of ignorance and doubt, broken only by occasional signs of divine favour or displeasure. The total effect is quite different from Homer, even if the 'theology' is not, and in some ways resembles the position in which the characters of Attic tragedy often find themselves. The Argonauts are not always allowed the consolation of knowing that what they do is of concern to the gods. This diminution in the prominence of the divine was an Apollonian experiment with significant consequences for the subsequent epic tradition.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of this phenomenon is the Apollonian Zeus. Zeus is the ultimate instigator of the voyage, as Pelias has despatched Jason (at least allegedly) in order to appease Zeus's anger for the attempted sacrifice of Phrixos at the god's altar

[17] For this scene cf. below pp. 96–100.

[18] Cf. Campbell 1983.50–6 and my note on 3.818.

(2.1194–5, 3.336–9). All of this, however, remains obscure, and Zeus's motives seem threateningly inscrutable.[19] His name is constantly invoked in the meeting of the Argonauts and Phrixos' sons on the island of Ares; he is clearly of prime importance in the Phineus episode, and we should probably see him working through the blind prophet when the latter foretells that help will come to the Argonauts 'from the grim sea' (2.388, cf. 2.1135); finally, his anger at the death of Apsyrtus (4.557–91) is the motive force of a central part of the action in the final book. This last episode is the closest Apollonius comes to the motif of 'the hostile god', so familiar from Homer's Poseidon and Virgil's Juno; it is indeed the anger of Poseidon in the *Odyssey* which Apollonius has in mind here.[20] Nevertheless, though Zeus watches and preserves the moral order, he only rarely displays his hand. Nowhere is this remarkable indeterminacy more potently on show than in Hera's revelation to the Argonauts of Zeus's anger about which she has – in some unspecified way – 'learned' (ἐφράσατο, 4.577). Does Hera forestall Zeus or, in her opposition, is she in fact his instrument? Apollonius denies Homeric clarity both to us and to the Argonauts. Here again we may be tempted to see the influence of the tragic mode.

Apollonius was also heir to a long tradition of interpretation of the Homeric gods.[21] Whether or not Homer's gods were 'real' or were 'metaphors' to be allegorised away had been an issue which surfaced in various forms throughout the preceding two centuries, and Apollonius' text makes use of these uncertainties in an overt way which, as often, shows his self-conscious concern with the problems of writing epic. So, for example, Apollo's epiphany at Thynias *may* (but need not) be interpreted as a poetic version of sunrise,[22] the appearance of the heroine nymphs to Jason may be seen as a version of the familiar epic epiphany or as a poetic account of a mirage,[23]

[19] Cf. Feeney 1991.58–69 for an excellent study of Zeus in the *Argonautica*.

[20] At 4.559–61 we learn that Zeus has decided that the Argonauts must be purified by Circe and suffer 'countless troubles' (μυρία πημανθέντας) before returning home (cf. below pp. 145–6). This is a version of Polyphemus' prayer to Poseidon that, if Odysseus is fated to return safely, he do so only 'late and in a miserable condition, having lost all his companions, on a foreign ship, and may he find troubles (πήματα) at home' (*Od.* 9.534–5). This echo gives point to 'none of the heroes knew this' (4.561); in the *Odyssey* the crew hear Poseidon's prayer and Odysseus comments that Poseidon heard it (*Od.* 9.536).

[21] Helpful survey in Feeney 1991.Chapter 1.

[22] Cf. Hunter 1986.52–3, adding ἐξεφάνη (2.676), a verb most appropriate to the sun (LSJ s.v. II). See also Feeney 1991.76.

[23] Cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.1314.

and the application of the same language to the boy-god Eros and to the *eros* in Medea's heart (3.281, 296) calls attention to the ambivalent status of a divinity who can be (and was) read in more than one way.[24] A similar concern may be traced at greater length through the presentation of the Harpies who plague Phineus.

Harpies were traditionally depicted in literature and art either as winds or as birds.[25] In Homer ἅρπυιαι are gusts of wind which snatch mortals away, causing them to disappear without trace. Apollonius adopts the wind image for his Harpies – explicitly at 2.267 ἠύτ' ἄελλαι, 'like storm-gusts'[26] – to structure the race between them and the sons of Boreas as a 'battle of the winds'; this structuring allows us to see, without being forced to accept, the possibility of a 'rationalising' reading of the passage. Virgil in his turn pointedly emphasises the bird-nature of his Harpies to differentiate them from the Apollonian model (*Aen.* 3.210–58).[27] Like winds, Apollonius' Harpies 'rush down' from the clouds (2.224,[28] 268); after the Boreads' successful pursuit, the same verb is used of them (2.427) to mark how the tables have been turned.[29] The fact that Apollonius does not specify the number of the Harpies or assign names to them – 'failures' which have surprised a number of critics – may be ascribed to the desire to depict them as a natural force, and their eventual destination, a cave in Crete, recalls the Thracian cave-dwelling of Boreas himself.[30] So too, the islands where the Boreads almost catch up with the Harpies (2.285) are 'the Floating Islands' (νῆσοι Πλωταί), a name which takes us back to *Odyssey* 10 where Aeolus, the steward of the winds, lives in a floating island (Πλωτῇι ἐνὶ νήσωι).

The association of Iris with winds was long established in Greek poetry,[31] and so it is not really surprising that she is here substituted for the Hesiodic Hermes as the divine agent who prevents

[24] Cf. Feeney 1991.83. For Virgil's development of this idea cf. *Aen.* 9.184–5.

[25] Note Hes. *Theog.* 268–9, 'on their swift wings they travel with the breath of winds and the birds'.

[26] This in fact alludes to Aello, the name of one of the Harpies.

[27] Behind Virgil's bird-harpies resonate also the birds of Ares with which the Argonauts do battle at 2.1030–89 (cf. below p. 134).

[28] Any consideration of the text of this verse must involve the Virgilian adaptation at *Aen.* 3.232 *ex diuerso caeli caecisque latebris.*

[29] A similar example is 2.305–6 – Phineus ate ἁρπαλέως, once the Ἅρπυιαι had been chased off.

[30] Soph. *Ant.* 983, Call. *h.* 4.65, J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962) 93–6; for Virgil's cave of the winds cf. Hardie 1986.90–7.

[31] Cf. *Il.* 15.170–2, 23.198–211, Roscher s.v. Iris 323–5, West on Hes. *Theog.* 266.

the Boreads from killing the Harpies.[32] More surprising perhaps is Apollonius' failure to mention that Iris is in fact the Harpies' sister (Hes. *Theog.* 265–9), but this information would dilute the stark simplicity of her message. The Boreads are not to kill the Harpies because it is 'not right' (οὐ θέμις) and against Zeus's will (2.288–90); Iris speaks as Zeus's agent, not out of sisterly concern.

Related to these scenes of 'near-allegory' are the epiphany scenes of the outward voyage, that of the Great Mother (Rheia, Kybele) on Mt Dindymon (1.1078–1152) and of Apollo at the island of Thynias (2.669–719). In the former scene Mopsus deduces from the appearance of a halcyon that the institution of cult honours to the Great Mother will lead to the disappearance of the adverse winds which were delaying the crew, as indeed it does.[33] The goddess does not herself appear, but she sends ἐοικότα σήματα, 'plausible signs', from which it may be deduced (που) that she was well disposed towards the sacrifices (1.1140–1); these signs are the abundance of nature,[34] the taming of wild animals and the appearance of water (the Spring of Jason) on Dindymon.[35] We witness the divine reaction as the Argonauts do, and we know no more than they. Similarly in Book 3 the Argonauts see birds whose behaviour is obviously an omen, but we are told only that it comes from 'gods who wish them well' (3.540); thus, in a manner of speaking, we know that the omen is favourable before the Argonauts do, as they must wait for Mopsus' interpretation, but we are not given the full account of the sending of the omen that we might have expected in Homer.[36] The scene

[32] For an elaborate attempt to associate Hermes with winds cf. W. H. Roscher, *Hermes der Windgott* (Leipzig 1878).

[33] Fränkel 1968.137–9 rightly rejects the popular view that Rheia requires ritual atonement for the death of Cyzicus (or, according to Clauss 1983.138, of the Earthborn); ἱλάξασθαι (1.1093) does not necessarily imply that the god is angry, although, of course, all prayers implicitly recognise the potential for divine anger.

[34] Cf. Theocr. 7.143–6, also after a 'divine epiphany'. Both passages go back to the torments of Tantalos at *Od.* 11.586–90.

[35] This is one of a number of motifs shared between this scene and the account of Zeus's birth in Call. *h.* 1 (cf. Clauss 1983.134–9): in the hymn, the birth from Rheia is marked by the coming of water to Arcadia. In both poems there is an armed dance to drown out other sounds (1.1134–9 ~ *h.* 1.52–4) which becomes an *aition* of cult; there are of course very close links between the Couretes and the Corybantes, and between the Phrygian and Cretan cults. N. Hopkinson, *JHS* 104 (1984) 176–7, suggests not only that Callimachus plays with an etymology of Rheia from ῥέω, but also that v. 29 of the hymn suggests a derivation of the name from ἔρα and v. 32 one from χέω. Is it fanciful to see the same etymologies in *Arg.* 1.1142–3? If not, then ἐοικότα σήματα offers us a clue: these are very meaningful 'signs' indeed.

[36] Cf. Feeney 1991.88 on Apollonius' 'Odyssean' technique here.

on Dindymon as a whole is structured as a hymn transposed to narrative:[37] Mopsus' speech has very clear elements of hymnal style (1.1093–4, 1098–1102), the Argonauts play instruments and sing around an altar, and the narrative of their song (vv. 1125–31) adopts the style of hymns.[38] Thus this scene, no less than the epiphany at Thynias, shows Apollonius' concern to experiment with different modes of religious discourse – the hymn and the epiphany narrative – as part of his exploration of how to 'write the divine' in epic poetry. It has been argued that a primary motive for the scene on Dindymon was the fact that the Ptolemies actively favoured the cult of Kybele and so Apollonius seized the chance to promote one of his patron's causes.[39] Be that as it may – and there seems in fact no good reason to believe that the Ptolemies took a particular interest in Kybele's widespread cult –[40] this scene has further links with an important theme of the poem, namely the presentation of the Argonauts as a group of young men undergoing a kind of initiation. The armed dance they perform strongly suggests the ephebic *pyrrhiche:*[41] they perform as a group what Jason will later enact by himself. The foundation of the cult, therefore, need not be explained by historical circumstances outside the epic.

The epiphany of Apollo is very deliberately set in counterpoint to that of the Great Mother. The prayers to the goddess were instituted by Mopsus after a divine sign and followed by indications of the goddess's favour but not by the appearance of the goddess herself. That scene came after a period of enforced idleness and is followed by fierce rowing. Apollo, on the other hand, is seen by men already exhausted by rowing, comes unannounced and his appearance is followed by prayers and cult initiated by Orpheus. Whereas we saw the goddess's favour from the point of view of the Argonauts themselves, on Thynias the narrative experiment is different: the narrator blends his voice with the hymn-singer so that the experience and the narrative of it become indistinguishable (2.701–12).[42]

Variety is also a keynote of the deities who play the leading roles in protecting the Argonauts. In Books 1 and 2 the primary role is

[37] We may be specifically reminded of the extant hymn of the Cretan Couretes (*CA* 160–1).
[38] For this technique in general cf. below p. 140.
[39] D. A. van Krevelen, 'Der Kybelekult in den Argonautika des Apollonios von Rhodos 1 1078–1153', *RhM* 97 (1954) 75–82, approved by Vian 1 38.
[40] Cf. Fraser 1972. 1 227–9, II 432 n. 721.
[41] Cf. above p. 16.
[42] Cf. below pp. 150–1.

played by Apollo. The poem literally begins with him (1.1) and the oracle which he gave to Pelias to beware of the man with one sandal. We learn from Jason's speech at 1.359–62 and his inaugurating prayer at 1.411–14[43] that the pious hero consulted Apollo's oracle before setting out (cf. 4.530–2, 1747–8) and that Apollo promised help or guidance along the way. Just as the very opening of the poem 'begins from Apollo', so Jason reports Apollo as having promised guidance if Jason should 'begin with inaugurating sacrifices to [Apollo]' (1.360–2); this echo reinforces the idea of the poem as itself co-extensive with the voyage, establishes the piety of both Jason and the narrator,[44] and points to a special dependence of Jason upon Apollo and perhaps also a 'sympathy' between hero and god. Two similes at the start of the voyage (1.307–11, 536–41) seem in fact to identify hero and god, so that Carspecken even concluded that 'throughout the rest of the poem it is impossible to think of the one without being in some measure reminded of the other'.[45] At one level, of course, there *is* something importantly Apolline about the ephebic Jason. Pindar had already exploited the likeness (*Pyth.* 4.87), and the stress on the youth of the chorus in the simile of the young men dancing in Apollo's honour at 1.536 certainly points towards Apollo's role as archetypal *kouros*. Nevertheless, the nuanced complexity of Apollonius' tone must not be missed. The first simile stresses Jason's youth by being framed on one side by his parents' misery at his departure, a misery which treats that departure as a kind of death,[46] and on the other by his encounter with Iphias, the aged priestess of Artemis:

> τῶι δὲ ξύμβλητο γεραιὴ
> Ἰφιὰς Ἀρτέμιδος πολιηόχου ἀρήτειρα,
> καί μιν δεξιτερῆς χειρὸς κύσεν· οὐδέ τι φάσθαι
> ἔμπης ἰεμένη δύνατο προθέοντος ὁμίλου,
> ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν λίπετ' αὖθι παρακλιδόν, οἷα γεραιὴ
> ὁπλοτέρων, ὁ δὲ πολλὸν ἀποπλαγχθεὶς ἐλιάσθη.

[43] I suspect that the reference to Apollo inhabiting 'the Aisonian city named for [Jason's] parent' (1.411–12) in the first prayer of the epic reflects Chryses' opening prayer in the *Iliad* to Apollo, 'ruler of Chryse' (*Il.* 1.37).

[44] Cf., e.g., Dem. *Epist.* 1.1 'I take it that a man beginning any important speech or deed should first begin from the gods'; Mikalson 1983.13–17. The echo of 1.1 and 1.360–2 is discussed at length by Margolies 1981.82ff.

[45] Carspecken 1952.96–7, accepted by (e.g.) Paduano–Fusillo on 1.307–10, 536–41.

[46] This works both through generalised echoes of the language of epitaphs for dead children (1.278–9), and through specific echoes of the lamentation for Hector.

> Iphias, the priestess of Artemis, protectress of the city, came up to him, and kissed his right hand. Despite her strong desire she could say nothing as the crowd pressed round him, but she was left behind at the side of the path, as an old woman is left by the young, and he moved off far into the distance. (1.311–16)

This vignette suggests both Jason's regal splendour – it is not unlike Apollo's apparent ignoring of the Argonauts at Thynias[47] – and also the sense of loss and desolation which his departure causes: Jason leaves his family, Apollo leaves Artemis.[48] So too, the simile of the rowers compared to a chorus in honour of Apollo follows immediately upon a passage which suggests a clear contrast between Jason and the other Argonauts:

> εἵλκετο δ' ἤδη
> πείσματα καὶ μέθυ λεῖβον ὕπερθ' ἁλός· αὐτὰρ Ἰήσων
> δακρυόεις γαίης ἀπὸ πατρίδος ὄμματ' ἔνεικεν.
>
> The ropes were now being drawn in and they were pouring libations of wine into the sea; but Jason wept as he turned his eyes away from his homeland. (1.533–5)

No simple equation between Jason and Apollo will account for the stress here on Jason's difference, and on the grief which surrounds him.

Apollo is celebrated with cult at various places on the outward journey[49] and appears at Thynias, but then largely disappears from the poem until the final scenes. At 4.1547–9 Orpheus realises that the Argonauts have to offer one of the tripods of Apollo which they are carrying to the gods of Lake Triton in order to secure a safe exit, and in the final danger of the voyage the crew is saved from an impenetrable darkness by the gleam of Apollo who reveals to them the island of Anaphe ('The Revealed'); on this island they found the cult of Apollo Aigletes ('the Gleamer'). Thus the poem and the voyage both begin and end with Apollo.[50]

The other deity who plays a major role on the outward voyage is

[47] Note 1.316 ~ 2.683–4.

[48] For an interesting discussion of this episode cf. D. P. Nelis, 'Iphias: Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.311–16', *CQ* 41 (1991) 96–105. Nelis sees the priestess of Artemis as marking Jason's departure from the city as a crucial point on a *rite de passage*, parallel to Medea's departure from her city in Book 3.

[49] At 1.966, 1186, 2.686–719, 927–8.

[50] Note 1.418–19 ~ 4.1704–5 (Jason's promises to the god).

Athena, who directed the building of the *Argo*.[51] As the ship approaches the Symplegades, Athena moves to a position where she can help them:

> They untied the double cables from the land, and their departure did not go unnoticed by Athena. Without delay she quickly placed her feet on a light cloud which could bear her swiftly, heavy though she was, and she hastened to the Pontus with kindly intentions towards the rowers. As when a man[52] roves far from his own land – as indeed we wretched men often do wander, and no land seems distant, but all paths are visible before us – and he can imagine his own home, and he sees in a flash the path over land and sea, as his thoughts dart quickly his eyes grasp one place after another, just so did the daughter of Zeus swiftly leap down and place her feet on the Thynian coast of the Inhospitable Sea. (2.536–48)

Athena has apparently been watching their progress; in the parallel scene in Book 4, by way of contrast,[53] Iris informs Hera of the crew's movements. Athena's mode of transport is, at one level, a rewriting of *Iliad* 5.838–9 where a chariot groans under the combined weight of Athena and Diomedes. The contrast between the goddess's weight and the insubstantial cloud which carries her as quickly as the flashing thoughts of a homesick man establishes '[a] shifting tension between the physicality and the immateriality of the goddess ... Apollonius is now engaging directly with the practical narrative problems of meshing a divinity into the action'.[54] The problems and opportunities which the divine machinery of epic provides are thus laid out in full view: is Athena a 'real', anthropomorphic god, or a metaphor? To demand a simple answer, Apollonius suggests, may be to misunderstand epic. Moreover, the very length of the simile, which is much expanded from its Homeric model,[55] and the interpolated parenthesis whose form both mimics the changing gaze of the subject and demands from us a 'slow' unpacking of the syntax reinforce this literary concern: the 'flashing speed' of the simile actually delays the narrative.[56]

[51] Cf. 1.19, 526–7, 2.612–14, 1187–9, 3.340, 4.582–3.

[52] Text and interpretation of this simile are very uncertain; my translation is therefore tentative, but the main point is not, I hope, affected. Cf. further below pp. 137–8.

[53] Cf. below p. 96.

[54] Feeney 1991.73.

[55] *Il.* 15.80–3: Hera's speed in travelling to Olympus compared to the shifting thoughts of a well-travelled man.

[56] For similar effects in other similes cf. below pp. 130–2.

It is important that Athena secures safe passage for the Argonauts only after we have seen their own heroic efforts to get through. This is quite in keeping with the theology of Phineus' advice to the crew:

'If [the dove] passes safely through the rocks and reaches the Pontus, then hold back no longer from making the journey yourselves. Hold the oars in the strong grip of your hands and cut through the narrow channel of the sea, since success will depend not so much on your prayers as on the strength of your arms. Therefore abandon all other concerns and exert yourselves to the utmost, and with confidence. Up until this point I do not forbid you from calling upon the gods.' (2.329–36)

'God helps those who help themselves' was an idea as familiar to the Greeks as it is to us.[57] Apollonius rejects the Homeric structure by which gods intervene as soon as they arrive on earth,[58] in favour of allowing the mortal struggle to be fully displayed before a saving intervention. The contrast between human struggle and divine ease need not undercut the effect of that struggle, but it rather deepens the pathos of it.[59] Athena's intervention rewards the Argonauts for their efforts, but in epic of all periods human struggle is always conducted against a background of other, easier, possibilities.

The second half of the poem is dominated by Hera. Pelias' neglect of her stands prominently in the proem (1.14), Phineus recalls her protection of the Argonauts (2.216–17) and she intervenes crucially after the death of Tiphys (2.865); otherwise she seems notably absent from the outward voyage. Her prominence in the second half is closely linked to the role of Medea, who is to be Hera's weapon of vengeance against Pelias. When Athena resigns to Hera the leading role in their negotiations with Aphrodite (3.32–5), she is also resigning her role in the poem. Thus, when the sacred beam which Athena placed in the *Argo* calls out to the Argonauts in Book 4, it does so as the servant of Hera (4.580–3). It might therefore seem strange that Hera apparently disappears from the poem after Medea is safely married to Jason on Drepane and the threat from the pursuing Colchians is at an end. In part this may be ascribed to Apollonius' resistance to patterns which would impose obvious unity and consistency; in part too, it reinforces the sense of the landing on Drepane

[57] Cf. Fränkel 1968.173–4, Mikalson 1983.17. The Greeks did not, of course, believe that the gods *always* help those who help themselves.

[58] Cf. Klein 1931.217–19, though his explanation for Apollonius' variation is inadequate.

[59] For a rather different view cf. Feeney 1991.74 ('climactic anti-climax').

as a homecoming, a false end to the troubles.[60] More significantly, Hera's desire – that Medea should come to Greece to destroy Pelias – now looks like being fulfilled.[61] In the *Argonautica*, however, such plans are rarely straightforward, and the expedition nearly comes to grief in Africa. The African adventures are in fact linked into the narrative in an apparently casual way:

> ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὔ πω
> αἶσιμον ἦν ἐπιβῆναι Ἀχαιίδος ἡρώεσσιν,
> ὄφρ' ἔτι καὶ Λιβύης ἐπὶ πείρασιν ὀτλήσειαν.
>
> Not yet was it fated (*aisimon*) for the heroes to step upon the Achaean land, until they had suffered further in the boundaries of Libya. (4.1225–7)

This unique example of αἶσιμον, 'fated',[62] may be referred to Zeus's angry plans for the Argonauts,[63] but it also suggests 'fate' as a narrative device for joining two separate parts of the Argonautic legend. The controlling intelligence is that of the poet rather than of Zeus.

In Africa the main saving role is taken by minor deities – the 'heroines', the Hesperides, Triton. Vian makes a brave attempt to see Athena, Hera and Apollo as working through these agencies,[64] but the attempt rests upon a misguided search for a consistent divine presence through the poem. Rather, the presentation of the divine is subject to the same Hellenistic aesthetic of fracture and difference as all other parts of the poem. Just as the contrast between Heracles and the other Argonauts was set off by an apparent similarity, so too a very careful set of oppositions between the 'heroines' who save the crew in the Syrtis and the Hesperides is pointed by a similarity: three Hesperides pity the Argonauts, just as the three 'heroines' did. There, however, the similarity ends,[65] and Apollonius' concern for variation is seen in all its force. Whereas the heroines appeared only

[60] Cf. above p. 68.

[61] Cf. Feeney 1991.63.

[62] But cf. μόρσιμον at 2.294 and 2.605–6, both in contexts of divine dispensation.

[63] 4.560–1, cf. above p. 80; this is the view of Fränkel 1968.587.

[64] Vian III 56–7.

[65] Unless οἰοπόλοι (4.1322) suggests 'guardians of μῆλα' at 4.1413. For the rationalisation of the apples as sheep cf. Diod. Sic. 4.26.2, *RE* Suppl. 3.1068. Herodorus offered a very interesting moralistic allegorisation of Heracles winning the apples (*FGrHist* 31 F 14), but Apollonius does not seem to have made use of it. Virgil used the appearance of the 'heroines' in his account of the Penates appearing to Aeneas at *Aen.* 3.147ff. (note esp. 4.1282 ~ *Aen.* 3.137–9).

to Jason, the Hesperides appear to all the Argonauts; the heroines appeared 'voluntarily', whereas the Hesperides disappear at the Argonauts' approach and have to be won back by Orpheus; the heroines identified themselves to Jason, but the identity of the Hesperides remains a mystery (4.1411–14) and the poet refuses to tell us anything about them, in contrast to his account of the history of the heroines (4.1309–11). Most striking of all is the contrast between the knowledge of the heroines (4.1319–21) and the ignorance of the Hesperides.[66]

The Argonauts' subsequent encounter with Triton reworks closely two 'encounter' scenes of the *Odyssey*. The first is the scene at the start of *Odyssey* 7 where Athena, disguised as a young girl, shows Odysseus the way to Alcinous' palace (an important step on the hero's return home).[67] The second is Athena's meeting with the hero on the shore of Ithaca (*Od.* 13.221ff.). In that scene, Athena, like Triton, at first disguised herself as a young man, and then appeared, again like Triton, in her true form.[68] In both cases the divine appearance is prompted by a beautiful tripod (4.1547–50, *Od.* 13.217), and in both cases it takes place in a spot connected with one of the sea-gods, Phorkys in the *Odyssey* (13.345), and Triton in the *Argonautica*.[69] Triton rescues the Argonauts from snake-infested territory, and Apollonius instantiates the Argonauts' plight in the simile of the winding[70] snake which introduces the meeting with Triton (4.1541–7). The god's saving role is also reflected in the names of the episode. Libyan snakes arose from the Gorgon's blood which dripped onto the earth as Perseus flew over the land. Apollonius provides Perseus' original name, Eurymedon (4.1514),[71] to link it to Eurypylos, the name which Triton gives himself when he meets the Argonauts (4.1561). To reinforce the point, Triton is given his Hesiodic epithet

[66] Cf. above p. 30 for Heracles and the Hesperides.

[67] 4.1551 ~ *Od.* 7.19–20, 4.1564–5 ~ *Od.* 7.22–3, 4.1566–70 ~ *Od.* 7.24–5. In making Triton announce himself as a son of Poseidon (4.1558–9), Apollonius combines two of the elements of Athena's speech, her 'father' and Poseidon (*Od.* 7.29, 35).

[68] In *Od.* 13.222 the 'young man' looks like a shepherd, and Triton, according to Pindar (*Pyth.*4.28), is an οἰοπόλος δαίμων (cf. above p. 30). Note also 4.1551 ~ *Od.* 13.229, 4.1559 ~ *Od.* 13.223, 4.1560–1 ~ *Od.* 13.237, 248–9, 4.1565 ~ *Od.* 13.232, 4.1566–7 ~ *Od.* 13.276–8.

[69] It may be worth noting that one tradition made Phorkys the father of the serpent of the Hesperides (Hes. *Theog.* 333–6), and one of his brothers is called Εὐρυβίης (Hes. *Theog.* 239), cf. 4.1552 Τρίτων εὐρυβίης.

[70] εἱλιγμένος (4.1541) picks up ἑλιχθείς (4.1520) of the snake which killed Mopsus.

[71] There is no earlier evidence for this name, but Apollonius is most unlikely to have invented it, cf. Livrea ad loc.

of εὐρυβίης (4.1552).[72] In contrast to the encounters with the heroines and the Hesperides, the meeting with Triton is marked by a light humour, which centres around the uncertainty concerning the young man's status. Triton speaks with an irony which is lost on the Argonauts: he is ἐπιίστωρ πόντου, 'one who knows about the sea' (4.1558, with τοῦδ' delayed for surprise effect) and an ἄναξ, 'lord' (4.1559), both of which leave unclear whether he is god or man.[73] He offers a clod as though this is all that he has to give, and Euphemos, another son of Poseidon, receives it πρόφρων, 'in kindly manner' (4.1562). This word is often used of a god's saving intervention or of the party with the advantage or superiority in any situation;[74] here, like his address to the god as ἥρως, 'hero' (4.1564), it rather marks Euphemos' misunderstanding of the situation.[75] Such play with Triton's divine status is reinforced by uncertainties about his physical form – just what *does* he look like (4.1610–12)?[76]

The final scenes of Book 4 also give a prominent place to Poseidon, as befits his traditional role in the foundation myths of Cyrene.[77] It is Poseidon's horse which guides the Argonauts away from Syrtis (4.1325ff.), his son Triton who receives the tripod of Apollo from them, grants them the miraculous clod, which is received by another son of Poseidon, Euphemos, and guides them out of the lake, and Poseidon and Triton to whom they erect altars (4.1621–2). Although some of the Argonauts are descended from this god, he has otherwise figured in the epic largely in association with the heroes' opponents, Pelias (1.13), Amycus (2.3), and Aietes (3.1240–5).[78] His apparent benevolence is therefore a mark of closure as the Argonauts approach their destination.

(ii) PHINEUS AND PROPHECY

Gods speak to men through omens, signs and oracles, and men speak to gods through prayer and cult. With the notable exception of the

[72] Cf. Hes. *Theog.* 931. A further reinforcement will be given if θηροτρόφωι in 4.1561 refers to snakes, as Σ 4.1515a seems to take it (followed by Vian).

[73] The former phrase looks like a playful rewriting of an epithet for a sea-god, perhaps ποντομέδων (cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 744 of Nereus or Triton).

[74] Cf. 1.771, 2.257, 3.131 (humorously), 1071, 4.121, 370, 919.

[75] There is a reversal of Pind. *Pyth.* 4.36 where Euphemus is *heros* as he receives the clod.

[76] Cf. Feeney 1991.79.

[77] Cf. Calame 1990.

[78] Cf. my note ad loc.

blasphemous Idas,[79] the Argonauts are punctilious in their obedience to divine signs and pious in the performance and propagation of cult. Their piety is matched by that of the narrator himself who, adopting the conventional piety of the hymnal voice, ostentatiously refuses to divulge secret rites (1.915–21, 4.248–9)[80] and apologises to the Muses for an indecorous tale (4.984–5). The tone of such utterances strongly recalls the familiar Callimachean persona of cynical tease crossed with pious simpleton; like the gods themselves, piety is subject to the typical devices of the Apollonian voice.

Piety of a more conventional kind seems to be on show in the encounter with Phineus in Book 2. The stories of Paraibios and Aristaios which follow Phineus' prophecy stress the rewards that can arise from the pious observance of cult; they mark both the beneficence and potential destructiveness of deity. Phineus himself serves as an awful warning against the infringement of divine prerogatives and as an example of divine kindness in the prophecy which he utters to guide the Argonauts on their way.

Phineus combines the roles of Circe and Teiresias from *Odyssey* 10–12. Just as in death Teiresias retains unimpaired *noos* and *phrenes* (*Od.* 10.493–5), so Phineus' mind retains its powers (2.212–13, 311–16) though he has been reduced physically to a state of 'living death' (2.197–205).[81] His opening words (2.209–11),

> 'κλῦτε, Πανελλήνων προφερέστατοι, εἰ ἐτεὸν δὴ
> οἷδ' ὑμεῖς οὓς δὴ κρυερῆι βασιλῆος ἐφετμῆι
> Ἀργώιης ἐπὶ νηὸς ἄγει μετὰ κῶας Ἰήσων ...'
>
> 'Hear me, most glorious of the Panhellenes, if indeed you are the ones who, at the chilling command of a king, are led by Jason on the ship *Argo* in search of a fleece ...'

rework the proem of the epic (1.3–4) to establish the prophet's omniscience: he knows the poem and what has happened in it. The contrast between the strength of his intellect and the weakness of his body is marked by the mannered rhetoric of his plea to the Ar-

[79] Cf. my note on 3.515–20.

[80] For an archaic precedent cf. *h.Dem.* 478–9.

[81] Cf. Erbse 1953. 186–7 who notes that his condition is what the doctors called *kataphora*, in which the patient slipped in and out of consciousness; here this condition has been caused by lack of food. The description of Phineus recalls the language of death in the *Iliad* (cf. *Il.* 20.417–18), the description of Odysseus disguised as a beggar (*Od.* 17.336–41), and Hes. *Theog.* 795–8 (the disgraced god who has taken no nourishment). Note also Call. *h.* 6.93 (Margolies 1981.142).

gonauts: in a state of near collapse his verbal power is in no way diminished.[82] The total effect has something in common with the song of Proteus in Virgil's Fourth Georgic, a beautifully mannered Hellenistic narrative delivered by an inspired *uates* whose appearance suggests surrender of rational control. Virgil may indeed have had *Argonautica* 2 in mind in composing the 'Aristaeus epyllion'.[83]

Phineus was blinded as a punishment for 'misuse' of his mantic skill, whereas in many versions of the Teiresias story the prophet is given his skill as a recompense for blindness.[84] Nevertheless, the differences between the two ought not be exaggerated; the links between mantic skill and blindness remain, however these links are expressed in narrative.[85] Whereas Teiresias' blindness marks his inner sight, that of Phineus is a perpetual reminder of man's inability *fully* to understand. In his wretchedness Phineus is deprived even of the chance to starve himself to death (2.232–3).[86]

Phineus' knowledge is apparently limitless, but it remains unclear whether we are to assume that he knew (at any level of consciousness) the punishment which awaited him for giving men too full an account of Zeus's purposes: ἀφραδίαι, 'lack of prudence' (2.246, 313), leaves the matter open.[87] His repeated insistence that the Argonauts first test the passage through the Rocks with a dove, despite

[82] Note χάριν ... ἀνάπτομαι (2.213–14, cf. my note on 3.5), the prepositional variation in 2.215–16, and the rising dicolon of 2.218.

[83] Aristaeus is common to both poems (cf. Thomas on *Georg.* 4.425–6), but there are many other shared motifs. The story of Paraibios seems to illustrate much the same moral as that of Aristaeus': 'successful recovery through pious observance'. As speculations, I suggest that *Georg.* 4.418–21, *est specus ingens etc.*, is indebted to *Arg.* 2.360–3 (note περισχίζονται ~ *scindit sese*), and that *Georg.* 4.438–9, *uix defessa senem passus componere membra | cum clamore ruit magno etc.*, amusingly suggests that Aristaeus attacked Proteus as the Harpies attacked Phineus.

[84] For a version of the Teiresias legend very close to that of Apollonius' Phineus cf. Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.6.7.

[85] Cf. R. G. A. Buxton, 'Blindness and limits: Sophokles and the logic of myth', *JHS* 100 (1980) 22–37, esp. 28–30.

[86] Such an interpretation, i.e. it is part of the divine plan that he stay alive until the Boreads liberate him, seems more forceful than referring the verses merely to the old *topos* of the belly's tyranny; Phineus' words reuse, but do not just repeat, those of Odysseus at *Od.* 7.216–21. κακῇ (v. 233) suggests not just 'cursèd', but also 'wretched', 'unlucky' (? because of what it has to endure).

[87] In Valerius, Phineus overstepped the mark out of pity for mankind (4.481). Contrast Virgil's Helenus, who is obviously indebted to Phineus and who can neither know nor say everything (*Aen.* 3.379–80, where interpretation is difficult). Whether Zetes' words at 2.246–7 should be statements (Vian) or questions (most editors) is an interesting problem. (Paduano has it both ways by printing statements but translating ἦ ρα as 'forse'). If the former, is it just a reasonable guess (cf. 2.250–1), or an imitation of related phenomena in Homer (cf. above p. 72), or does it depend upon Zetes' special position as son of a god?

our very clear impression that he knows that they will succeed in passing the obstacle, manifests his concern to do nothing which infringes the divine will or prerogatives.[88] Men should seek and act upon signs of divine favour or disfavour. If his statement of Zeus's strategy in giving men only incomplete information about the future (2.314–16, cf. below) – a statement which ironically reveals what ought perhaps to be concealed, the very thing he is striving to avoid – stresses the disadvantages under which men labour, the episode of the dove and the story of Paraibios exemplify the positive side. The ideas that Zeus does not want men to know all of his *noos* and that divine signs should be unclear and require interpretation are old – they are of great importance, for example, in Attic tragedy – and so there is no actual need to postulate here influence from contemporary speculative theology. Nevertheless, despite the menacing obscurity of the Apollonian Zeus's motives, we may be reminded of the later Stoic view that god sends men signs of some of what is to come out of his love for them,[89] and we should be alive to the possibility that what Phineus has to say reflects contemporary discussion about signs and divination. It would be very much in Apollonius' manner to have his blind seer speak the language of Hellenistic speculation.[90] The verses in question are not, however, unproblematic:

> 'ὥδε γὰρ αὐτὸς
> βούλεται ἀνθρώποις ἐπιδευέα θέσφατα φαίνειν
> μαντοσύνης,[91] ἵνα καί τε θεῶν χατέωσι νόοιο.'
>
> 'For so Zeus himself wishes to reveal to men incomplete utterances of prophecy,[92] so that men lack knowledge of some part of the gods' intentions.' (2.314–16).

Translators have largely followed the scholiast in taking θεῶν ... νόοιο in 316 as 'the support/help of the gods', as though *noos* was here used for *eunoia*. On this interpretation, the idea would be that if men

[88] Good remarks in Lawall 1966. 144–6.

[89] Cic. *De Div.* 1.82–3, 127; cf. N. C. Denyer, 'The case against divination: an examination of Cicero's *De Divinatione*', *PCPS* 31 (1985) 1–10. There is some evidence for visits to Alexandria by mid-third-century Stoics (Fraser 1972. 1 481), but the case for seeing reflections of theological speculation in Phineus' words does not depend on establishing any specific links.

[90] Thus Phineus' speech also bears familiar hallmarks of Hellenistic poetry – an interest in etymology (2.381) and an emotional aposiopesis (2.390–1).

[91] There is a strong case for μαντοσύναις; θέσφατα does not require the dependent genitive (which could also hardly depend upon ἐπιδευέα).

[92] Or, better, 'to reveal by prophecy incomplete oracles'.

knew all of what was to come, they would no longer seek divine help (through sacrifices, temple building etc.) as they would know that all such activity was useless. The phrase ought, however, to mean 'the will/intention of heaven', and Phineus is more probably saying, somewhat redundantly, that oracles and prophecies must be incomplete so that men do not know everything.[93] In practice, of course, the two interpretations do not present wildly different views of the divine strategy. Complete knowledge of the divine *noos* is reserved for the gods themselves, who occasionaly bestow it upon a lucky mortal such as Phineus; for a man to infringe this preserve by spreading it further risks a terrible vengeance. As the Boreads put it, 'reproofs delivered by the immortals are obvious to men' (2.250–1).

Phineus' long account of Pontic geography and ethnography has puzzled many critics.[94] Every place and people which he mentions is subsequently mentioned again as the crew confronts the voyage itself.[95] His information is far from complete, however, and Apollonius is clearly at pains to create variety between the speech and the subsequent narrative. The instruments of that variation are the addition in the narrative of new geographical and ethnographical information, the breaking-up of the narrative by 'static' episodes not mentioned by the prophet – Jason's testing (the *peira*), the lengthy stay with Lykos, the deaths of Idmon and Tiphys, the appearance of Sthenelos – and much fuller treatment of peoples and places merely mentioned by Phineus. Phineus begins by acknowledging his speech's incompleteness (2.311–12), and our expectation of this incompleteness contributes importantly to the momentum of the subsequent narrative. In this, as in much else, the figure of Phineus is indebted to the Homeric Circe who refuses to give Odysseus explicit instructions for getting past Scylla and Charybdis (*Od.* 12.55–8). Phineus' speech also contrasts sharply with the corresponding speech of Argos in Book 4 as the Argonauts begin the return journey; where Argos is of necessity short on detail, as he recalls a quasi-mythical journey from the mists of time,[96] much of Phineus' speech resembles a poetic *periegesis*, a geographic and ethnographic text.[97] The

[93] So, e.g., De La Ville de Mirmont 1894.206–7, Feeney 1991.60.

[94] Cf. Fränkel 1968.179–80, who contrasts the brief reference to Cyzicus' advice at 1.982–3.

[95] For tables of correspondences cf. Blumberg 1931.36–7, Levin 1971.157–9, Vian I 120–1. Blumberg offers perhaps the fullest discussion.

[96] Cf. below p. 164.

[97] Cf. esp. Dionysius Perieg. 762–97 (the Pontic tribes); Müller ad loc. sees Apollonius as Dionysius' main source.

Apollonian Phineus may be indebted to his Hesiodic counterpart who 'gave Phrixos information about the journey' (fr. 157 MW) and was blinded for his trouble, or to the geographical catalogue with which Hesiod described the pursuit of the Harpies by the Boreads (frr. 150–6 MW);[98] thus Apollonius carefully *avoids* any geographical catalogue in his account of the pursuit (2.273ff.). Be that as it may, once his advice about the Symplegades is out of the way, Phineus speaks not in the riddling language of prophecy but in the dry style of periegesis and Ionian ethnography;[99] in reading both his speech and the subsequent narrative we are constantly reminded of Herodotus.[100] In part this is a sophisticated literary joke: the expected Apolline language of prophecy is replaced by another genre under that god's control, the catalogue-style didactic poem, which, like prophecy and oracles, claimed to be both true and useful. We may perhaps compare the oracle of Apollo in Callimachus' tale of *Acontius and Cydippe* which speaks with the voice of learned Hellenistic poetry (fr. 75.22–37).

Just as an Alexandrian catalogue-poem in the mouth of a mythic seer shatters the temporal distinctions of the poem,[101] so too the intrusion of the present time[102] into the description of the Chalybes, Tibareni and Mossynoikoi at 2.1000–29 is an important mode of variation between Phineus' speech and the subsequent narrative. The customs of these peoples are described as contemporary with the poet and by reference to their difference from the customs of the poet himself; those customs which will most starkly represent the strange (from a Greek point of view) world which the Argonauts are entering are clearly specially selected. Just as Circe gives Odysseus information about a land of fantasy and adventure, so Phineus provides the Alexandrian equivalent: lands and peoples known from books and ethnographic theory.

[98] Cf. M. L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Oxford 1985) 84–5.

[99] Cf. Pearson 1938.

[100] There is even what looks like a good 'Herodotean' joke at 2.974–5: the Thermodon breaks into ninety-six channels (cf. Fränkel 1968.256–61) 'if one were to count them', cf., e.g., Hdt. 2.127.1 (on the pyramids). Fränkel's denial that πεμπάζειν here means 'count' is unconvincing; at 4.350 and 1748 the addition of νόωι or θυμῶι is decisive. There is also play with τετράκις (or τετράδος) ~ πεμπάζοι (from πέντε); cf. 2.373–4 (Phineus' speech) Δοίαντος ~ τρισσαί.

[101] Cf. Fusillo 1985.101.

[102] Cf. Fränkel 1968.263. The qualifications suggested by Fusillo 1985.165 are unconvincing; we *do* in fact have 'un'esplicita proiezione verso il tempo attuale del poeta'. Fusillo does, however, have interesting observations on the influence of the Amazon myth on the Pontic ethnographies.

(iii) HERA AND THETIS

I have left until last the two passages which appear most closely to evoke the divine world of Homer, namely the scenes of Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, of Eros and Ganymede, and of Eros and Aphrodite which open Book 3, and the meeting of Hera and Thetis and the latter's assistance to the Argonauts in Book 4. Of these, the opening of Book 3 is perhaps the best-known episode of the entire poem. The latent malice of Aphrodite's greeting, the virtuoso reworking of famous Homeric scenes,[103] the awfulness of Aphrodite's son, her cunning in dealing with him and the contrast between his 'character' and the cosmic power he wields have all been widely discussed and admired. Many of the same qualities and concerns are found in the less familiar scenes of Book 4, with which I shall conclude this chapter.

The Argonauts' departure from Circe's territory is noted by Iris, who has been set to watch by Hera (4.753–6). This is an extension of the Homeric situation where gods do their own watching of events on earth,[104] and is part of an amusing systematisation of the domesticity of the Olympians. Why should they bother to watch when they have servants to work for them? There is an interesting parallel in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*. In that poem Hera sets Ares and Iris to keep watch over the whole world so that Leto should find no haven in which to bear her child (*h.* 4.61–9). When the island Asterie takes Leto in, Iris, still panting from running and fearful of Hera's reaction, reports to her mistress in a grovelling and provocative style suited to a flatterer or a pet slave, and then settles down beside Hera's throne to wait for her next instructions (*h.* 4.215–36). That passage makes use of motifs associated with the messengers of drama – breathlessness and fear –[105] and is invested with a broad humour. Thetis, like Asterie, had spurned Zeus's advances, and there is an effect reminiscent of Callimachus in 4.757–69, where Hera despatches poor Iris on a long, triple mission (to Thetis, Hephaistos and Aeolus) which would be enough to make any messenger grumble.[106] Here the spirit of the two Alexandrian poets is very close.

[103] Cf. Lennox 1980; my note on 3.36–110; Feeney 1991.77–8.
[104] Cf., e.g., *Il.* 14.135, 153–6; Griffin 1980. Chapter 6.
[105] Cf. esp. Soph. *Ant.* 223ff.
[106] The Homeric model is Iris' multiple mission at *Il.* 24.74ff. (to Thetis and Priam); Apollonius goes one better.

When Thetis arrives on Olympus Hera begins by 'filling in the background':[107]

> 'οἶσθα μὲν ὅσσον ἐμῆισιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ τίεται ἥρως
> Αἰσονίδης ἠδ' ἄλλοι ἀοσσητῆρες ἀέθλου . . .'
>
> 'You know how honoured in my heart is the hero, son of Aison, and all of those who help him in his task . . .' (4.784–5)

How does Thetis know this? We will soon learn that her interest in her 'husband' Peleus and his comrades is virtually non-existent. Has Thetis read *Odyssey* 12 with its reference to Ἀργὼ πασιμέλουσα, 'the *Argo* known to all' (*Od.* 12.70), or has she read the *Argonautica*? Or is the point precisely that she does *not* know, but Hera treats her as a special confidante as part of a *captatio beneuolentiae*? We will see that this is by no means the only example of Hera's shifting rhetoric and of an ambivalent uncertainty which lingers over the whole speech. Hera then recalls her past services to Thetis: she nursed her and arranged her marriage to 'the best of mortals' after Thetis had spurned Zeus and Zeus dropped his suit on learning that Thetis was fated to bear a son greater than his father.[108] Hera borrows from the speech of her Homeric counterpart in which she pleads for special treatment for Achilles:

'But Achilleus is child of a goddess, whom I myself brought up and reared and gave as wife to a man, Peleus, who of all men was dearest to the hearts of the immortals. All of you gods were there at the wedding: and you [Apollo] were among them too with your lyre at the feast – you coward-lover, you were always a traitor!' (*Il.* 24.59–63, trans. Hammond)

This is, however, not the only Homeric account of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. In *Iliad* 18 Thetis, having come to ask Hephaistos for new armour for her son, begins with a tale of woe:

'Hephaistos, is there any one of all the goddesses on Olympos who has endured such misery in her heart as all the sorrows that Zeus, son of Kronos, has given me beyond all others? Out of all the sea-goddesses he made me subject to a man, Peleus son of Aiakos, and I had to (ἔτλην) serve a mortal's

[107] To the horrendous textual problem of 4.786–91 I have nothing to contribute, except a conviction that something *is* wrong with the text; Giangrande's solution, adopted by Vian, of treating ἐσάωσα as 'un irréel sans particule modale' is unconvincing. Fränkel's lacuna is as happy a solution as any. It would be nice to believe that Hera is being deliberately deceitful, but this seems a cheap way out of the problem.

[108] On Apollonius' sources here cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.809.

bed, though much against my will. Now he lies in his house broken by painful old age, but there is more misery for me now.' (*Il.* 18.429–35, trans. Hammond)

These verses resonate in Hera's appeal to Thetis:

> ἀλλά – σὲ γὰρ δὴ
> ἐξέτι νηπυτίης αὐτὴ τρέφον ἠδ' ἀγάπησα
> ἔξοχον ἀλλάων αἵ τ' εἰν ἁλὶ ναιετάουσιν,
> οὕνεκεν οὐκ ἔτλης εὐνῇ Διὸς ἱεμένοιο
> λέξασθαι . . .'
>
> 'Ever since you were a baby I have nursed you and cherished you above all other goddesses who live in the sea, because you were not reckless enough (ἔτλης) to sleep in Zeus's bed, though he wanted it . . .' (4.790–4)

Thus while Hera presents one view of the past, we sense another view and another text and we wonder about Thetis' feelings. Would *she* describe her marriage as θυμηδής, 'pleasing to the heart' (4.806)? Hera claims that part of her plan was that Thetis could have children. The one child of whom much is known, Achilles, brought Thetis nothing but grief – as she is soon to be reminded – and we are to recall a version of the myth[109] in which Thetis killed a number of children born before Achilles by putting them in fire or boiling water to test their mortality. The plural τέκνα, 'children' (4.807), in fact carries deep sadness for Thetis. Such a reading of the speech depends upon the fact that we are here concerned not with the product of a consistent psychology organised solely for the purposes of persuading Thetis,[110] but with a complex and multi-layered text.

There is a further Homeric model which flickers over the Apollonian surface. In vv. 794–5 Hera bitterly refers to Zeus's constant amours with both goddesses and mortal women. These verses key us in to the 'Deception of Zeus' by Hera in *Iliad* 14, in the course of which Zeus himself lists his amatory conquests, both mortal and immortal (*Il.* 14.315–28), in order to prove to Hera the strength of his present desire. In the prelude to that deception, Hera had tricked Aphrodite into giving her erotic power by inventing a bogus mission

[109] Hes. fr. 300 MW (quoted by Σ 4.816, cf. Livrea ad loc.), Lycophron, *Alex.* 178–9. The discussion by S. Jackson, 'Apollonius of Rhodes and the corn-goddess: a note on *Arg.* 4.869–76', *LCM* 15 (1990) 53–6, mistakenly alleges that Hera's speech 'omits' this element of the myth; the omission he ascribes to 'a fear of offending Hellenistic society'.

[110] Cf. above pp. 13–15. This is the basic flaw in the discussion of Herter 1959.

upon which she was embarked, (later repeated in part to Zeus in a speech designed to turn his mind towards *eros*, vv. 301–6):

'I am going to the ends of the nourishing earth, to visit Ocean, the source of the gods' creating, and mother Tethys. They took me from Rhea and brought me up and reared me in kindness in their house, when wide-seeing Zeus banished Kronos under the earth and the harvestless sea. So I am going to visit them and settle their endless quarrelling. It is a long time now that they have kept from sleeping together in love, after anger entered their hearts. If I can win over their hearts with my persuasion, and bring them to return to love's union in their bed, they will call me their honoured friend for ever.' (*Il.* 14.200–10, trans. Hammond)

This speech shares a number of motifs with the Apollonian scene we have been considering. Hera wishes to reconcile those who nursed her – reversed in Apollonius – who have not slept together for a long time because of anger. The suggestion of deception and stratagem which this Homeric passage casts over Hera's speech to Thetis reinforces the shifting ambivalence which we have already detected. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the people whom the Homeric Hera claims to wish to reconcile are Thetis' grandparents, Okeanos and Tethys.

After the past, Hera turns to the future. After death Achilles, who now feels the absence of his mother's milk,[111] will go to the Elysian plain and marry Medea, who, as Thetis' future daughter-in-law, deserves her help; Thetis should therefore put aside her anger against Peleus (4.810–17); this anger is a characteristic of the Homeric Achilles which Apollonius has transferred to his mother in the previous generation.[112] Again we wonder about Thetis' feelings as she hears about the baby she has 'abandoned' and how he will marry the much older Medea whom we have already seen take part in a rather nasty killing; presumably the promise of the Elysian plain softens the blow.[113]

When Hera has finished, Thetis makes no response to the details

[111] Hera alludes to an etymology of Achilles' name from α-χεῖλος, cf. Richardson on *h. Dem.* 236; vv. 866–8 seem to allude to the more common derivation from ἄχος. For Catullus' use of these verses cf. Hunter 1991a.

[112] Cf. 4.864–5, 868, 879.

[113] The ambivalence of περ in 815 is rightly recognised by Hutchinson 1988.130 n. 75; such ambivalence is, of course, in keeping with the style of the whole speech. My reading of Hera's speech finds an interesting parallel, and perhaps some confirmation, in Juno's speech to Iuturna at *Aen.* 12.134ff. which is clearly indebted to the Apollonian scene (cf. Conington on 12.142). Iuturna was a water-nymph (cf. Thetis) who lost her virginity to Jupiter (contrast Thetis) and was recompensed with immortality; she is destined to lose her

of her account of the past, but merely expresses assent to the request and says that she must be on her way. Her own feelings about both Peleus and Hera are suppressed. It is, however, probably not fanciful to see bitterness or sarcasm in her description of the journey in front of her as δολιχή τε καὶ ἄσπετος, 'unspeakably long' (4.838).[114] This is the same journey which Iris made without any word of complaint. The first destination is the sea-floor, probably between Samothrace and Imbros, from where Iris had fetched Thetis in the *Iliad*.[115] From there she travels west like the rays of the rising sun (4.847–8) all the way to the west coast of Italy. Unlike Iris, however, Thetis travels 'through the water' (4.849), and we are specifically to think of her travelling round the bottom of the Peloponnese and across to Italy. Here again Apollonius adds 'realistic', physical detail to the Homeric divine machinery. Her subsequent appearance to Peleus evokes her appearances to Achilles through the *Iliad*, but the Argonaut is grief-stricken and silent; even his subsequent report to his comrades (4.880–1) is not given in direct speech.[116] The scene is a powerful manifestation of the gulf between man and god, between frightening anger and unspeaking suffering. The narrative of what happened between them in the past (4.869–79)[117] is sandwiched within the description of Peleus' grief to suggest that Peleus recalls this now in flashback. After his foolish action Thetis had left 'like a dream', and indeed he had been woken from sleep to 'save' his child. Was the whole thing a dream?[118] Thetis' threatening reappearance merely deepens his *amechanie*, leaving them further apart than ever.

beloved brother, as Thetis will lose her son. Note: (i) *animo gratissima nostro* 12.142 (cf. *Arg.* 4.791–2) is part of a *captatio benewolentiae* – Juno's interest is far from altruistic. (ii) *scis ut te etc.* v. 143, cf. *Arg.* 4.784ff. (iii) The sarcasm of *magnanimi* in v. 144, picked up by Iuturna herself at 12.878. (iv) Verses 144–5 hint at Zeus's catalogue of his amours (cf. Knauer 1964.426). (v) *ingratum* v. 144 is not in one sense true (Jupiter made her immortal), but Iuturna discovers it to be, in another sense, very true indeed (cf. vv. 878–9). Juno's speech might suggest that Virgil too realised the ambivalence of the Apollonian Hera's rhetoric.

[114] ἄσπετος is a favourite Apollonian word (Livrea on 4.1001), but ἄσπετος οἶμος is at least odd.

[115] *Il.* 24.78; thus 4.842–3 reworks *Il.* 24.79. The same Homeric verses lie behind the description of Iris at 4.770–2, thus helping to focus the contrast in the reactions of the two goddesses to Hera's request.

[116] For Apollonius' innovative use of indirect speech cf. below pp. 143–51.

[117] For the debt to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.879; Richardson 1974.238.

[118] Cf. Fränkel 1968.540.

CHAPTER 5

The poet and his poem

No feature of Alexandrian poetry has attracted more attention in recent years than the self-conscious literariness of its presentation, the constant demand of poet-narrators to be recognised as the controlling force behind the words of the text.[1] Here Apollonius has much in common with Callimachus, perhaps most obviously in his invocations to the Muse and his loudly pious silences (1.919–21, 4.247–50). More interestingly, the tension between the scheme of the epic which parades the telling of *all* the Argonautic adventures – note the 'naive' confidence of 4.1776–7, 'no other challenge confronted you as you sailed up from Aegina' – and the open selectivity and imbalance of the narrative[2] makes the process of narration itself an object of interest: Apollonius wants the stitches in his *rhapsodia*, and who controls them, to show. The whole epic puts on display what is problematic in the Aristotelian demand for 'oneness';[3] at one level, the *Argonautica* is a demonstration (an *epideixis*) of the techniques and challenges of epic narration. The subjects with which I shall be concerned in this chapter are thus to some extent arbitrary, as it will become clear that many themes recur from earlier chapters; 'poetic voice' is not a separable part of this epic (at least) – it pervades every aspect.

(i) THE EPIC VOICE

'Epic objectivity' is a standard phrase of Homeric criticism.[4] Homer does not, so the argument goes, constantly tell us what his characters are feeling and thinking; rather, the characters reveal themselves

[1] The bibliography is large; for Apollonius see esp. Beye 1982. Chapter 1, Fusillo 1985.360–96, Goldhill 1991. Chapter 5.

[2] For these as features of Alexandrian narrative cf., e.g., Cairns 1979.112–20, Lyne 1987.218–20.

[3] Cf. Appendix, below pp. 190–5.

[4] For a useful summary of views and a statement of the standard position cf. Effe 1983. For important modifications to the standard view cf. Frontisi – Ducroux 1986, De Jong 1987,

in speech and in actions ranging from wholesale slaughter to the smallest of gestures. The poet acts 'behind' his characters; he does not overtly feel and suffer with them. An important corollary of this is that it is largely the characters in their speeches, rather than the poet in third-person narrative, who use the language of emotion and moral judgement.[5] Moreover, the poet rarely intrudes explicitly into the world of his poem; we are presented with a complete 'epic' picture and left to make of it what we can.[6] At the other end of the scale, in the traditional account, stands Virgil's *Aeneid* where, on one influential view, the involvement of the poet with his characters' actions and emotions is overt and 'the narrative proper achieves a psychological continuity which is really a blend of author's [better would be "narrator's"] and character's feelings'[7], or, in another reading, the epic is 'polycentric' and presents a fractured image contrasting with Homer's 'one and only point of view', which 'is a relation of objective truth toward the world it displays'.[8] Moreover, there is an absolute contrast between the 'sealed' world of Homer and the 'open' world of the *Aeneid*, constructed of the constant interplay of mythic time and Augustan time.

That such an account of Homeric poetry is overly simplistic does not require lengthy demonstration. For one thing, criticism of this kind traditionally operates largely at the lexical level, and must therefore do scant justice to non-lexical factors such as arrangement, juxtaposition, displacement, echo and reversal, i.e. all the features productive of meaning which operate above the level of individual words. Many readers will feel that in selection and silence Homer reveals himself and the process of narration quite as much as in what he actually says. Moreover, 'epic objectivity' is clearly too vague a phrase for the work it has often been asked to do. More recent criticism, therefore, has turned to narratology, particularly the work of Gérard Genette, to analyse the texts with the concept of 'focalisation'.[9] Here the critic asks through whose eyes events are witnessed

Lynn – George 1988, R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes. Speech and Performance in the Iliad* (Ithaca/London 1989), Goldhill 1991.

[5] See esp. Griffin 1986; below pp. 109–12.

[6] Here the views of Bakhtin have been influential; see Bakhtin 1981.13–18.

[7] B. Otis, *Studies in Philology* 73 (1976) 9. For further bibliography of such criticism cf. G. K. Galinsky, *ANRW* II 31.2, 988–9.

[8] Conte 1986.152–3.

[9] Cf. De Jong 1987; helpful discussion and bibliography in Rimmon-Kenan 1983.71–85, Bal 1985.100–15, and D. Fowler, 'Deviant focalisation in Virgil's *Aeneid*', *PCPS* 36 (1990) 42–63.

and expressed, regardless of whether the narrator-poet or one of the characters is speaking. At the purely lexical level, such research has in fact been used to confirm the prevailing view of Homeric 'objectivity'.[10] It is, however, important not to allow terminology to blind us to the ways in which Homer overtly shapes the material of his narrative,[11] some of which are briefly summarised in what follows. Moreover, in the context of a study of how Hellenistic epic differs from Homer, it may also be fair to ignore possible differences – which we could, in any case, hardly recover – between how an original Homeric audience might have perceived 'the epic voice' and what a Hellenistic scholar-poet (or even a modern critic) might find or construct in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The 'literary criticism' which poets in their poems practise upon their predecessors is not necessarily intended to display truths about those predecessors. Rather, a particular image of previous poetry is constructed in accordance with the needs of the later poem, and such constructions may not be true to the contours and nuances of the original.

Homeric characters are 'heroes' belonging to a different and grander 'past'; the narrator's own day is important only in comparison to and through association with that epic past.[12] On one occasion at least, however, the poet looks beyond his poem in a way which is highly suggestive for later epic. At the opening of *Iliad* 12 we are told of the destruction of the Greek wall by Poseidon and Apollo after the fall of Troy. Not only does this passage, uniquely for Homer, label those who died at Troy 'a race of semi-divine men (ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν, 12.23)',[13] but it explains why it is no longer possible to see the wall; the passage is thus an *aition*, but one explaining the absence of traces, whereas we are most familiar, from Homer onwards,[14] with aetiological poetry that explains (real or alleged) visible material remains. In a later poet we would have identified the opening of *Iliad* 12 as a deliberate reversal of the aetiological motif.[15] Here, then, the

[10] Cf. I. J. F. De Jong, 'Homeric words and speakers: an addendum', *JHS* 108 (1988) 188–9.

[11] The Homeric position is overstated by, for example, Fusillo 1985.

[12] Cf. *Il.* 5.302–4, 12.380–3, 447–50, 20.285–7; Frontisi-Ducroux 1986.29–32; Bakhtin 1981.13–18.

[13] Cf. G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 160. For further discussion cf. R. Scodel, 'The Achaean wall and the myth of destruction', *HSCP* 86 (1982) 33–50.

[14] Cf. *Il.* 7.81–91, *Od.* 11.74–8, 24.80–4; Fusillo 1985.137–8.

[15] Note esp. how vv. 34–5 which conclude the passage, 'this was what Poseidon and Apollo were to do in later times', look forward to *Arg.* 1.1309 (cf. Call. fr. 12.6), 'these things then would be brought to accomplishment in later time', which follows upon an *aition* for a modern marvel. Cf. further 4.1216, 1764.

epic poet does seem openly to display a reflective consciousness of his song and its characters; the passage is, at any rate, a very illuminating example of Homer as the legitimising model of all poetic technique. Moreover, a number of references to the fame which song confers[16] and to the preservation of memory within song[17] reveal an already developed poetic consciousness upon which later epic was to build.

Beyond this more general aspect there are familiar phenomena of Homeric style which might be considered limits on 'pure objectivity'. These include the poet's invocations or requests for information to the Muse, questions or pathetic apostrophes of a character (e.g. *Il.* 16.692–3 'Whom then did you kill first, whom last, Patroclus, when the gods summoned you to death?'),[18] and foreshadowing of future events. Explicit authorial judgement on the actions or beliefs of a character is largely limited to statements introduced by νήπιος, 'poor fool', such as *Il.* 2.37–8 '[Agamemnon] thought that he would capture Priam's city on that day; poor fool (νήπιος), he did not know what Zeus was planning.' Occasionally such statements are expanded into generalising observations on the human condition:

> But Patroklos called to his horses and Automedon and went in pursuit of the Trojans and Lycians, and this was a fatal error, poor fool – if he had kept to the instruction of the son of Peleus, he would have escaped the vile doom of black death. But Zeus' mind is always stronger than the mind of men – he can bring terror on even the brave man and easily rob him of victory: and then again he himself will spur a man to fight. And it was Zeus then who put the urge in Patroklos' heart. (*Il.* 16.684–91, trans. Hammond)

> The son of Peleus held the shield away from him with his massive hand – he was frightened, thinking that the long-shadowed spear of great-hearted Aineias would easily force through it: the fool, he did not realise in his heart and mind that the glorious gifts of the gods are not easily overcome by mortal men and will not fail before them. (*Il.* 20.261–6, trans. Hammond)

[16] Cf. *Il.* 2.119, 3.287, 353–5, 22.305; *Od.* 1.302, 11.433–4, 21.255, 24.433.

[17] Cf. *Il.* 6.357–8, *Od.* 3.203–4, 8.579–80.

[18] On apostrophe in Homer cf. G. W. Nitzsch, 'Die Apostrophe in Ilias und Odyssee', *Philologus* 16 (1860) 151–4; A. Parry, 'Language and characterization in Homer', *HSCP* 76 (1972) 1–22 (= *The Language of Achilles and Other Papers*, Oxford 1989, 301–26); E. Block, 'The narrator speaks: apostrophe in Homer and Vergil', *TAPA* 112 (1982) 7–22; Frontisi-Ducroux 1986.17–27; N. Yamagata, 'The apostrophe in Homer as part of the oral technique', *BICS* 36 (1989) 91–103; Richardson 1990.170–4. Grillo 1988.9–67 offers little more than a collection of relevant passages in Homer and Apollonius.

Such *gnomai* about the world of gods and battle, however, are imparted by the Muse to the poet along with everything else, and they speak of and define the poetic world of the *Iliad*, as much as the present world of the poet and his audience. It is also important, in the context of later epic, that the poet does not use the first person in these observations, preferring to speak more generally of 'mortal men', and that the majority of generalising *gnomai* in Homer are in the mouth of characters, not the poet himself.

In the *Argonautica*, pervasive hymnal and aetiological concerns and the fact that both proem and epilogue refer explicitly to the power of song to preserve heroic deeds (1.18–19, 4.1773–5) stress the distance between the world of the heroes and the world of the poet's performance.[19] This distance, and the sense of loss which accompanies it, become part of our constant awareness that we are reading or listening to a poetic recreation of events controlled by an ever-present narrator. This is a story of the heroic past, but the barriers between us and that past may be erected or dismantled as the poet chooses. The terrain and the time of voyage may be that of the heroic past, of contemporary experience or scientific theory, or a mixture of these: the giant waves which the crew confronts in the Bosporus are still there for us to face (2.169–74).[20] Not only is the epic past no longer 'walled off absolutely from all subsequent times, and above all from those times in which the singer and his listeners are located',[21] but the poet clearly delights in mixing the temporal levels. The past and the present are inextricably interwoven. The present, as we shall come to see,[22] in fact constructs the past.

Books 1, 3 and 4 open with addresses to the Muses or a Muse, and the role assigned to them by the poet grows larger as the poem goes on;[23] whereas at the head of Book 3 the poet asks the Muse to stand beside him, at the head of Book 4 he professes that he has lost control of his narrative which must therefore be handed over completely to the Muse. The brash, 'modern' self-confidence of the opening proem now retreats for safety to an archaic dependence upon the Muse.

[19] Contrast 1.1, 'famous deeds of men of old', with the Homeric proems: *Il.* 1.4 places us in a 'heroic' past, and *Od.* 1.2 fixes the time as after the fall of Troy, but neither is as explicit as the *Argonautica* proem.

[20] Cf. Beye 1982.26 and, for a related phenomenon, my note on 3.927–31.

[21] Bakhtin 1981.15.

[22] Cf. below pp. 162–9.

[23] For the progression in the Muses' role through these three invocations cf. Hunter 1987.134; Feeney 1991.90–1.

The emphasis on the poet's mental effort, however, as he ponders, ὁρμαίνοντι (4.3), shows how far we have come from the Homeric conception of inspiration. Elsewhere too Apollonius follows Homeric precedent in the use of invocations and questions within the narrative, but goes well beyond Homer in the tone and style of these authorial utterances.[24] There is in these passages – the majority of which occur in the final book – a far greater prominence for the poet's person, the narrating *ego*, than is found in Homer, and this is true also for passages other than invocations. The first person is used in the Catalogue to suggest the poet's reliance on other sources,[25] to halt a digression ('But why should I tell at length stories about Aithalides?', 1.648–9),[26] and for statements about the progress of the poem and what prevents (or does not prevent) the poet from giving a full account.[27] None of these have real parallels in Homer. Different too is the poet's explicit inclusion of himself in general statements and *gnomai* in the first person.[28] Most famous is his wistful observation at the marriage of Jason and Medea:

> ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὔ ποτε φῦλα δυηπαθέων ἀνθρώπων
> τερπωλῆς ἐπέβημεν ὅλωι ποδί· σὺν δέ τις αἰεὶ
> πικρὴ παρμέμβλωκεν ἐϋφροσύνηισιν ἀνίη.
>
> Never do we tribes of suffering mortals tread with whole foot upon the path of delight; always there is some bitter grief to accompany our joys. (4.1165–7)

More amusing perhaps is the way the poet – in his ethnographic voice – aligns himself with his male readers in the account of the Mossynoikoi:

The customs and ordinances which rule their lives are quite at variance with the normal. Everything that it is proper to do openly, whether in

[24] Cf. 2.851–4 (Hutchinson 1988.94), 1090–2 (a question about Phineus' intention is un-Homeric), 4.445–9 (cf. below pp. 116–17), 450–1, 552–6, 984–5, 1673–5.

[25] For 'we learn, we know etc.' cf. 1.123, 135. The latter looks like a learned joke; the confident 'we know that ...' conceals genealogical fiddling, cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 1.138. A related phenomenon is the use of 'as the story is', ὡς φάτις, ἐνέπουσι etc.; these markers may indicate choice between mythic variants, but they make clear also the narrated status of the text, cf. below p. 127. Homer uses φασί in the body of the narrative only of two mythic locations (*Il.* 2.783, *Od.* 6.42) and of the sharp sight of the eagle (*Il.* 17.674), cf. De Jong 1987.238.

[26] On this passage cf. Goldhill 1991.291–2; cf. 1.1220 'but these things would lead me far from the path of my song'.

[27] Cf. 1.919–21, 2.844–5, 4.248–9, 451, 1381, 1511.

[28] On 2.542–6 cf. below pp. 137–8.

public assembly or in the market-place, all of this they carry out at home; everything that we do in our houses, this they do outside in the middle of the streets and incur no censure for it. There is no public shame about love-making, but like grazing pigs, they enjoy general promiscuity and mate with their women on the bare earth, paying not the slightest attention to anyone nearby. (2.1018–25)

Third-person generalisation of the Homeric kind, for example on the inevitability of death (1.1035–6, 4.1504), does occur in the *Argonautica*, but the action of characters is also often assimilated to 'what is normal' or 'expected', although it remains delicately ambiguous whether this is intended to be a normality within or without the world of heroic poetry.[29] In the case of Medea's decision not to kill herself, there may be little doubt:

μνήσατ' ὁμηλικίης περιγηθέος, οἵά τε κούρη·

... She remembered her happy friends, as a young girl would (3.814)

More complex effects with similar wording are also possible. When Aphrodite finds her son he is playing with Ganymede:

ἀμφ' ἀστραγάλοισι δὲ τώ γε
χρυσείοις, ἅ τε κοῦροι ὁμήθεες, ἐψιόωντο.

The two of them were amusing themselves with golden knucklebones, in the way that young playmates do. (3.117–18)

Even if 'as young playmates do' goes primarily with the verbal idea of 'playing knucklebones', juxtaposition to 'golden' draws our attention to the difference of this scene from 'ordinary life'. The phrase is not a naive encouragement to visualise the scene, but an invitation to admire the audacity of the poet's recreation; it advertises the artificiality, the crucial unreality, of this 'realistic' scene.

Like Homer, Apollonius uses 'poor fool' statements with νήπιος or σχέτλιος to comment upon a character's actions; whereas νήπιος seems to carry an imputation of foolish ignorance, σχέτλιος suggests rather the poet's pity.[30] Here again variation can produce the complex effect which signals the controlling voice of the poet. In the

[29] Cf. 1.315–16, 458–9, 2.541–3 (in a simile), 3.618, 4.52–3, 1071–2, 1189.

[30] νήπιος: 2.66, 137–8, 4.875; σχέτλιος: 1.1302 (the most marginal case), 2.1028, 3.1133, 4.916, 1524. Griffin 1986.40 notes that in the Homeric poems σχέτλιος is used by the narrator in this way only at *Od.* 21.28. A related instance is δυσάμμορος at 3.808–9, where we are not far from familiar aspects of Virgilian technique.

account of the Mossynoikoi, the verses which immediately follow those quoted above deal with the life of the king:

> αὐτὰρ ἐν ὑψίστωι βασιλεὺς μόσσυνι θαάσσων
> ἰθείας πολέεσσι δίκας λαοῖσι δικάζει·
> σχέτλιος, ἢν γάρ πού τι θεμιστεύων ἀλίτηται,
> λιμῶι μιν κεῖν' ἦμαρ ἐνικλείσαντες ἔχουσι.
>
> The king sits in the highest 'mossune' and administers fair justice over the large population. Poor chap (σχέτλιος)! If he makes a mistake in his judgements, they lock him up and keep him hungry for that day. (2.1026–9)

We are indeed invited to feel sorry for the poor king who goes hungry for a day, but this is sorrow of a quite different order from that which attends the imminent death of an epic warrior. Here we are close to a kind of parody of epic style. At the very least, the poet draws on our knowledge of standard epic contexts for this complex effect, thus advertising his epic's literariness.

A particularly nuanced device is the narrator's use of the particle που, 'no doubt', 'I suppose', to modify the actions or beliefs of a character:

> δὴ γάρ που κἀκεῖνα θεὰ τρέφεν αἰνὰ πέλωρα
> Ἥρη, Ζηνὸς ἄκοιτις, ἀέθλιον Ἡρακλῆι
>
> No doubt (που) those terrible monsters also had been reared by the goddess Hera as a challenge for Heracles. (1.996–7)

> ἐγήθησεν δὲ κελεύθωι
> Ἀμπυκίδης, ἤδη που ὀισσάμενος τὰ ἕκαστα
>
> The son of Ampykos rejoiced in the journey, no doubt (που) already guessing every detail of what would happen. (3.925–6)

At one level[31] this seems to be a device for a kind of documentary verisimilitude: the poet is not inventing the facts of his story, but interpreting material for which he is not responsible, with the implication that 'this really happened'. In an extended poetic fiction of this kind, however, such explicit refusal to take responsibility for what is reported merely advertises the poet's own role. It is a marker of highly literary poetry, and as such may be used where

[31] Cf. also 1.636, 1023, 1037, 1140, 2.607, 4.557 (of divine action), 1457. Other possible cases are 1.972, 1222, 4.1397; Fränkel 1968.124 labels this use 'impressionistisch', but it is unclear quite what he means by that. For related phenomena in Heliodorus cf. J. Morgan, *CA* 1 (1982) 227–32.

the poet actually has more responsibility than usual, i.e. where he has changed received tradition.[32] Homer restricts this use of που to the speech of characters, where it is common in descriptions of the actions or motives of gods;[33] the overt uncertainties which it introduces are not part of the Homeric authorial voice. A very striking example of the device occurs at 3.1399 where που τοίως, 'in a similar way, I imagine', introduces a simile; there the phrase calls attention to the whole problematic of similarity and difference which the epic simile uncovers.[34]

The phenomena considered so far are very unevenly distributed through the poem, and the sum total of such occurrences might be thought relatively small for an Alexandrian poem of this length. Such an uneven texture was, however, fundamental to Apollonius' conception of how epic should be written in the shadow of Homer; it is after all the extraordinary continuity of voice and atmosphere which is perhaps the most astonishing thing about the Homeric poems. Apollonius has shattered this continuity, but refuses (unlike Virgil) to put a new one in its place.

Homer's tendency to avoid the explicit language of emotion and moral judgement except in the direct speech of his characters has recently been studied by Jasper Griffin.[35] Griffin's starting-point was the earlier observation[36] of Per Krarup that 'abstract' nouns of all kinds are significantly more frequent in Homeric speeches[37] than in the narrative portions of the text, some five times as frequent in fact. Here, for example, are Krarup's figures for some nouns of interest for *Arg.*, with the number of Homeric occurrences in speech first and those in narrative second: ἀφραδίη, 'thoughtlessness' (8,3), φιλότης, 'love', 'affection' (41,12), κακότης, 'wickedness', 'cowardice' (21,4), αἰδώς, 'shame', 'coyness' (24,1), ὄνειδος, 'blame', 'reproach' (8,1), ἄτη, 'folly', 'error' (20,4), νεῖκος, 'strife' (16,3), τιμή, 'honour' (33,4), αἶσχος, 'disgrace', 'shame' (8,0), πόθος/ποθή, 'longing', 'desire'

[32] Cf. Fränkel 1968.602.

[33] Cf. Ebeling s.v. 2b. The authorial που in *Arg.* differs from the 'indices of focalisation' such as 'perhaps', 'undoubtedly' and so on, which are discussed by Genette 1980.202–3, because the poet is not focusing on the event through one of his characters.

[34] Cf. below pp. 130–1.

[35] Griffin 1986.

[36] P. Krarup, 'Verwendung von Abstrakta in der direkten Rede bei Homer', *C&M* 10 (1948) 1–17.

[37] Roughly 55% of Homer is direct speech, as opposed to 29% of *Arg.*; cf. further below pp. 138–9.

(14,1). Griffin extended this observation to other classes of emotive or judgemental words, such as adjectives and adverbs. Krarup had already noted that the *Homeric Hymns* no longer seemed to observe the strictness of the Homeric division and that, as far as abstract nouns went, the system had completely broken down in the *Argonautica*. The following examples should therefore be treated merely as indicative of a general trend and are intended to suggest what could be illustrated at much greater length.

αἰδώς, 'shame', overwhelmingly a speech-word in Homer, occurs twelve times in the *Argonautica*,[38] of which ten are in the poet's narrative.[39] Apollonius, like Homer, keeps λίην, 'too much', as a speech-word,[40] but also allows affective ἦ, 'indeed', in narrative, even if it is still much more common in speech (32,17); μάλα, 'very', 'rather', on the other hand, which Homer very strictly limits in narrative,[41] is in the *Argonautica* much more common in narrative than in speech (26,41). Another 'judgemental' category, the superlative adjective, which Griffin identified as predominantly a speech-form in Homer, is twice as common in the narrative of the *Argonautica* as in speech (17,34, on a rough count). Given the relative proportions of speech and narrative in the poem, these figures strongly suggest that very strict stylistic distinctions between the two modes are no longer valid, and this will have important consequences for considering 'the poet's voice'. A particularly clear case is that of emotive adjectives.[42] Whereas, for example, Homer uses ὀλοός, 'deadly', predominantly and οὐλόμενος exclusively in speech, Apollonius uses both indiscriminately and frequently (19,29).[43] While retaining στυγερός, 'hateful', as predominantly a speech-word, he nevertheless uses it quite frequently in narrative (13,11, whereas Homer has 33,10), as he does also αἰνός, 'terrible', and pejorative adjectives of excess, such as ὑπέρβιος and ὑπερφίαλος, 'haughty', 'overbearing'. A similar trend is observable with nouns which carry an overt moral weight. Thus δόλος, 'guile', and its cognates are very much speech-words in

[38] Nine of the 12 are in Book 3.

[39] ἀναιδής and ἀναίδητος, however, both appear only in speeches (both 2,0). The related verbs are also predominantly speech – words in Homer (34,8), but the Apollonian sample is too small (1,2) to be significant.

[40] The one exception, 2.669, seems to carry no emotional colour.

[41] Cf. Griffin 1986.45.

[42] In what follows I make no attempt to distinguish between adjectives in the narrative which are 'focalised' by a character and those which are not.

[43] Cf. Fränkel 1968.107–8.

Homer (35,7 for the simple noun), but are used freely in Apollonius' narrative.

By themselves, of course, such statistics tell us little about how Apollonius uses the different modes of narrative and speech. Nevertheless, a couple of general observations are already possible. It is clear that the Homeric division between the lexicon of speech and that of narrative is blurred and weakened, but not entirely abandoned. The much smaller percentage of direct speech in the *Argonautica* – itself an important indicator of the poet's narrative choices – makes decisions in particular cases often problematic.[44] Secondly, these features are again distributed unevenly through the poem. Nevertheless, the real shift towards an overt engagement by the poet with the material of his song is unmistakable; in this, as often when reading Alexandrian narrative poetry, we are right to be reminded of Pindar.[45] Homer's avoidance of 'moral judgement' is not, of course, absolute. The proem to the *Odyssey* tells us that Odysseus' crew perished 'by their own foolishness' (1.7); that, however, is an exceptional case, and it is noteworthy that the narrator's 'judgement' in the proem is almost immediately confirmed by the authority of Zeus himself (*Od.* 1.34). Apollonius' practice extends far beyond this, and three instances deserve particular notice. The poet in his own voice makes very plain what kind of characters Amycus and his people are;[46] the murder of Apsyrtus – a 'great treachery' (4.421) – is condemned outright;[47] and the narrator's highly judgemental account of events at Lemnos is set in counterpoint to Hypsipyle's account to Jason of the same events.[48] This last instance deserves closer examination as emblematic of many of the phenomena under discussion here.

The narrator's opening is an emphatic statement (1.609–10),

> ἔνθ' ἄμυδις πᾶς δῆμος ὑπερβασίῃσι γυναικῶν
> νηλειῶς δέδμητο παροιχομένωι λυκάβαντι.

[44] Cf. below pp. 138–51.

[45] Here again we must be wary of assuming that Apollonius and his contemporaries read Homer in just the way we do; for more positive views in later antiquity about Homer's 'engagement' with his material cf. M.-L. von Franz, *Die aesthetischen Anschauungen der Iliasscholien* (diss. Zurich 1943) 35–6, De Jong 1987.12–13.

[46] Cf. 2.2–9, 19, 54, 129.

[47] Cf. 4.445–50, 456. For the descriptions of this killing by the *Argo* and by Circe cf. below p. 146.

[48] Cf., e.g., Blumberg 1931.15–16, Fränkel 1968.111–12, George 1972.58–9, Margolies 1981.43–4.

> There, in the preceding year, the whole *demos* had been cruelly killed by the crimes of the women,

a conception of the story reinforced by an emotional exclamation within the narrative:

> ὦ μέλεαι ζήλοιό τ' ἐπισμυγερῶς ἀκόρητοι
>
> O wretched women, whose terrible jealousy knew no bounds (1.616)[49]

Far, however, from increasing the horror of the deed, this arch cry creates an ironic distance between the narrator and his tale, as also does a parenthetic 'footnote' telling the history of King Thoas after his escape from Lemnos (1.623–6); the irony is produced by a highly mannered syntax and an elaborate aetiology which work in opposition to the poet's professed outrage.[50] The procreation of the Lemnian line now takes place outside Lemnos, and the union of the nymph Oinoie and Thoas looks forward with a smile to the union of Hypsipyle and Jason. In contrast to the poet's version, Hypsipyle's account to Jason is emotive and empathetic:

> 'δὴ γὰρ κουριδίας μὲν ἀπέστυγον ἔκ τε μελάθρων
> ἦι ματίηι εἴξαντες ἀπεσσεύοντο γυναῖκας,
> αὐτὰρ ληιάδεσσι δορικτήταις παρίαυον,
> σχέτλιοι.'
>
> 'They rejected in loathing their lawful wives and, giving way to their lust, chased them from their homes, preferring – poor fools! – to sleep with slaves acquired in war.' (1.804–7)

ἀπηνήναντο, 'they shunned' (1.611), in the poet's narrative is here replaced by ἀπέστυγον, 'they rejected in loathing', and the 'lustful folly' (ματίη) of the men is set against the women's tolerance while all social and familial cohesion broke down (1.807–17). In the differences between the two accounts we can see how the avoidance of the Homeric, formulaic style is not merely a matter of literary stance, but is importantly productive of meaning. One part of Hypsipyle's tale we know to be false; the rest of it seems emotionally true.[51] The reverse is the case with the narrator's account.

[49] ἀκόρητοι, 'insatiate', suggests ἀ-κόρη, 'whose behaviour was not like that of girls'. This 'pun' reinforces the gender stereotyping which structures the narrative.

[50] Cf. Fränkel 1968.91. In using ἐπακτῆρες for 'fishermen' Apollonius must be etymologising as οἱ ἐπ' ἀκτῆι.

[51] The narrator's version of events at Lemnos seems to have influenced Virgil's description of the crime of the Danaids as depicted on Pallas' belt: *rapiens immania pondera baltei | impressumque nefas: una sub nocte iugali | caesa manus iuuenum foede thalamique cruenti* (*Aen.* 10.496–8). The

The cases of Hypsipyle, Amycus, and Apsyrtus stand out for the intensity of the authorial voice, but it is again the unevenness of the epic – the lack of consistent 'voice' – which is striking. This very unevenness, however, is an invitation to read the poet's silences; our knowledge of the 'freedom' which he enjoys means that we observe both when he exercises that licence and when he does not. Again, very nuanced effects are possible. One such instance is the poet's apology for having to tell the story of Kronos' castration of his father:

> νῆσος
> ἣι ὕπο δὴ κεῖσθαι δρέπανον φάτις – ἵλατε, Μοῦσαι,
> οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐνέπω προτέρων ἔπος – ὧι ἀπὸ πατρὸς
> μήδεα νηλειῶς ἔταμε Κρόνος·
>
> The story is that buried in this island lies the sickle – forgive me, Muses, against my will I report the tale of earlier men – with which Kronos pitilessly cut off his father's genitals ... (4.983–6)

The poet may well be 'unwilling' to tell this tale, but 'pitilessly' is very much his own gloss on the tradition which he is 'forced' to tell; the constraints upon him are not *that* tight. Moreover, he proceeds, by way of parenthesis, to offer an alternative explanation for the name of the island,[52] which avoids the 'shocking' story of castration. The structure of the passage, however, privileges the castration explanation, whereas a truly reluctant poet might have reversed the prominence given to the respective versions. This poet allows himself to enjoy the object of his distaste.

Any attempt to place Apollonius within a general scheme of change over time in the authorial voice of ancient epic is naturally hindered by the lack of comparative material from the Hellenistic period, to say nothing of our ignorance of non-Homeric, archaic epic. On the other hand, we may take some comfort from the obvious importance of the *Argonautica* to subsequent epic poetry – an importance which suggests that it would have a major place in this investigation even if the ancient epic corpus had survived intact. Moreover, we do have a few other scraps from the Hellenistic period. A passage of twenty-one hexameters of the Cretan poet Rhianus (? contem-

crimes of the Danaids and the Lemnian women – and the heroisms of Hypermestra and Hypsipyle – are obviously similar. The Apollonian model is overlooked by Conte 1986.185–95.

[52] Cf. above p. 69.

porary with Apollonius) on the follies of mankind[53] begins with a first-person *gnome* on the human condition:

> ἦ ἄρα δὴ μάλα πάντες ἀμαρτίνοοι πελόμεσθα
> ἄνθρωποι, φέρομεν δὲ θεῶν ἑτερόρροπα δῶρα
> ἀφραδέι κραδίηι·
>
> Very foolish indeed are all we mortals, and we take the ambiguous gifts of the gods with unthinking heart ...

The context is unknown, and we do not know who is speaking.[54] The passage is far longer than any gnomic utterance in the *Argonautica*, but the tone is not unlike that of 4.1165–7 (quoted above p. 106). From the shorter hexameter poems – the so-called 'epyllia' – the harvest is equally small.[55] A fragment of Euphorion (late third century B.C.) perhaps belongs here:

> πορφυρέη ὑάκινθε, σὲ μὲν μία φῆμις ἀοιδῶν
> Ῥοιτείηις ἀμάθοισι δεδουπότος Αἰακίδαο
> εἴαρος ἀντέλλειν γεγραμμένα κωκύουσαν.
>
> Dark hyacinth, one report of poets says that, after the son of Aiakos fell on the Rhoitean sands, you send up your painted letters in lamentation in the springtime.[56] (Euphorion fr. 40 Powell)

The empathetic address and the reference to 'poets' make the verses highly suggestive in the present context, but both provenance and speaker are unknown. More important, however, than guesses about isolated fragments is the almost total absence of the overt voice of the ironic, insistent narrator from the hexameter narratives of [Theocritus] 25, Moschus' *Europa*, and the *Megara*. Much in the marvellous *Europa*, for example, reveals its period – 'small-scale, Homeric in diction, unhomeric in treatment, ecphrastic, pictorial,

[53] Fr. 1 Powell, cf. Hopkinson 1988.226–9.

[54] This passage has often been assumed to be from a speech, but the arguments are inconclusive; certainly ἦ ἄρα δή is not decisive, when viewed in the light of Apollonius' usage. For discussion cf. the reviews of Kokolakis' edition by A. H. Griffiths, *JHS* 89 (1969) 135 and G. Giangrande, *CR* 19 (1969) 373–4.

[55] Possibly important are Rhianus fr. 25 Powell (a name aetiology), Philetas fr. 8 Powell (a *gnome* about necessity, but most likely spoken by Odysseus or Aeolus) and Euphorion fr. 80 Powell ('we hear' of a myth, cf. above n. 25). The hexameter verses from a 'Foundation of Lesbos' which appear as Apollonius fr. 12 Powell (cf. Hunter 1989. 11 n. 54) also have little of interest to offer in this regard, except for the 'empathetic' δυσάμμορος in v. 20; this may or may not be significant for the question of authorship.

[56] Cf. van Groningen ad loc. for this interpretation.

pseudo-naive'[57] – but it also lacks the intrusive presence of the poet-narrator, as we are familiar with this from Callimachus, Apollonius and (later) Catullus 64. This absence must be given due weight when considering the significance of the 'Callimachean' spirit within Hellenistic Greek poetry as a whole.

It is, of course, Callimachus who is the crucial figure. The highly individual and persistent voice of his poems requires no elaborate exemplification, but two points should be noted. First, the voice is, again, an uneven one through the extant corpus, in which – as is not the case with Apollonius – generic differences play their part. Thus, a comparison of the elegiac narratives of *Acontius and Cydippe* (fr. 75)[58] and the *Victoria Berenices* (*SH* 254–69) reveals that, within the *Aitia*, Callimachus very clearly used more than one mode of authorial presentation (hardly surprising in so multifarious a poem). Secondly, the hexameter narrative of the *Hecale* must occupy a special place in the discussion. In his consideration of the origins of Ovid's elegiac narrative style, Richard Heinze stated that 'Callimachus' elegiac narrative never allows the reader to forget the presence of the narrator' and noted that such a narrative mode would be 'monstrous' in epic and that there is no sign of it in the *Hecale*.[59] We now know more than Heinze did about this poem,[60] but his position remains basically unrefuted, as the most tantalising of the fragments – as far as 'voice' is concerned – cannot be positively assigned to the poet rather than to one of the characters, although scholars have tended simply to assume that they are spoken by someone other than the narrator.[61] This poem was manifestly shot through with humour, surprise, pointed juxtaposition and learning. In one sense Callimachus as narrator is omnipresent, but within the limited range of phenomena under consideration here, the possibility that he observed some kind of generic distinction in the handling of the authorial voice remains a real one, and must be important for the continuing debate about the differences between the epic and elegiac voice in Latin poetry.[62]

[57] Hopkinson 1988.202.

[58] On the 'poetic voice' in this fragment see now Harder 1990.

[59] *Vom Geist des Römertums*[3] (Stuttgart 1960) 375–6.

[60] See esp. the edition by A. Hollis (Oxford 1990).

[61] Cf. frr. 263 = 80 Hollis (epitaphic farewell to Hecale), 267 = 75 Hollis (a prayer), 278 = 99 Hollis (an *aition*), 298 = 115 Hollis (a *gnome* about the human condition), 299 = 116 Hollis (an invocation to Nemesis).

[62] For a recent re-consideration cf. S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone. Ovid and the Self-conscious Muse* (Cambridge 1987) 99–134.

Such a result would be in keeping with the observation that, in linguistic style also, 'the *Hecale* approaches Homer much more closely than do the hexameter *Hymns*'.[63] Be that as it may, it is clear that the Callimachean hymnal voice is of particular importance for the *Argonautica*, which begins and concludes with hymnal formulae.[64] The personal, authorial conclusion to Theocritus 24, the *Herakliskos*, also seems to have taken the form of a hymnal invocation to the deified hero,[65] and it is likely that there is a close connection between the poet's direct address to the god in a hymn – a literary form in which changes of mode and person are common – and the narrative phenomena we have been considering.[66] This is in any case already observable in the *Homeric Hymns*. It is moreover clear that both Callimachus and Apollonius are indebted to the personal voice of archaic lyric, and particularly to Pindar, in whose poetry all of the devices we have been examining may be readily identified.

If the poetic voice of the *Argonautica* is different from Homer's, it differs also from what came afterwards in Rome. The style of Roman neoteric poetry – 'subjective', emotional and empathetic – is standardly viewed as a specifically Roman development, Alexandrian narrative being 'learned' and 'ironic'.[67] The primary Latin texts for this discussion – beyond the fragments of the lost neoterics – are Catullus' longer poems, the *Eclogues*, the 'Aristaeus-epyllion' in *Georgic* 4, and the *Aeneid*, particularly the story of Dido. The difference in style between these poems and Hellenistic narrative is indeed palpable, but one instructive example might serve to show that neither must the case be overstated nor precisely what is at issue in the difference be blurred.

Perhaps the most famous of Apollonius' 'intrusions' into his narrative is the apotropaic[68] denuniation of *eros* before the murder of Apsyrtus:

> σχέτλι' Ἔρως, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν,
> ἐκ σέθεν οὐλόμεναί τ' ἔριδες στοναχαί τε πόνοι τε,

[63] A. S. Hollis, *Callimachus, Hecale* (Oxford 1990) 12.

[64] Cf. below pp. 119–29.

[65] According to the scholium preserved on the papyrus text. For hymnal elements in the body of the narrative cf. Gutzwiller 1981.14–16.

[66] Noteworthy also are the hymnal verses of Antagoras on Eros (fr. 1 Powell).

[67] Cf., e.g., Heinze 1915.371–2, Otis 1964.41–96, Effe 1983.

[68] For the *apopompe* or *apotrope* cf. Fraenkel on Aesch. *Ag.* 1573. The hymnal flavour of the verses is enhanced by an echo and reversal (*pace* Livrea) of the hymnal proem of Aratus' *Phainomena*.

ἄλγεά τ' ἄλλ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπείρονα τετρήχασι·
δυσμενέων ἐπὶ παισὶ κορύσσεο, δαῖμον, ἀερθείς,
οἷος Μηδείῃι στυγερὴν φρεσὶν ἔμβαλες ἄτην.

Reckless Eros, great bane, greatly loathed by men, from you come deadly strifes and grieving and troubles, and countless other pains on top of these swirl up. Against my enemies' children, divine spirit, rear up as you were when you threw hateful folly (*ate*) into Medea's heart. (4.445–9)

Both τετρήχασι, 'swirl up', and κορύσσεο ... ἀερθείς, 'rear up', are images from storm-waves,[69] and πόνοι, 'troubles', leads into this metaphor, as ἔμβαλες, 'threw', continues it.[70] Such images have a general appropriateness for Medea, wandering over the sea in hasty flight (cf. esp. 4.362–3). When Catullus (64.94–8) imitates this passage in his account of Ariadne's infatuation,

heu misere exagitans[71] immiti corde furores
sancte puer, curis hominum qui gaudia misces,
quaeque regis Golgos quaeque Idalium frondosum,
qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam
fluctibus, in flauo saepe hospite suspirantem,

the wave image is part of a recurrent pattern through the Ariadne story in which the real waves on which Theseus departs and the 'waves of grief and love' (cf. v. 62) are constantly mingled.[72] The metaphor in Catullus is thus more clearly 'empathised', and the Roman poet imposes a kind of 'unity' of imagery which Hellenistic

[69] Cf. Livrea on 4.215, 447. Fränkel, Vian and Paduano all take κορύσσεο as 'arm yourself', despite *Il.* 21.306–7. At 4.215 the two basic senses of the verb (cf. LSJ s.v.) are both felt: the context, ἐνὶ τεύχεσι, allows this linguistic depth. An intriguing parallel for 4.448 is Aristainetos 1.10.47–8 (Acontius and Cydippe) οὔτε θαλάττης τρικυμίας οὔτε πόθου κορυφούμενον σάλον εὐμαρὲς ἀφηγεῖσθαι, which *may* go back to Callimachus, cf. 'Callimachean echoes in Catullus 65', *ZPE* forthcoming.

[70] Cf. Hdt. 7.190 (πόνος of a storm), *OLD* s.v. *laboro* 3c. πόνοι is the reading of a papyrus, γόοι that of all the MSS. The latter would be an obvious pair with στοναχαί and foreshadow the coming death of Apsyrtus, but the former takes us back to κάματον in 4.1; γόοι may have arisen as a memory of *Od.* 16.144. πόνοι looks forward to 4.586 (cf. below p. 146), and need not mean 'épreuves [qui attendent Médée et les Argonautes]' as Vian, citing Hes. *Theog.* 226–7, takes it. I prefer 'emotional sufferings' (μελεδῶναι), cf. Theognis 1323, Ar. *Eccl.* 975, Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *C.* 1.17.19 (*labor*), and πόνον transmitted at Theocr. 2.164. It *may* be that the emphasis on *curae* in Catullus 64 (cf. vv. 62, 69, 95) indicates that he knew the reading πόνοι, and cf. also Theocr. 13.66 (Heracles the lover).

[71] This perhaps picks up τετρήχασι (from ταράσσω).

[72] When Virgil came in turn to use the Apollonius passage (*Aen.* 4.412), he studiously avoided the wave-image, but placed the verses where Dido, recalling Ariadne, looks out at the Trojan fleet *upon the sea.*

poetry – very broadly speaking, of course – avoids, but it is also clear that the difference between the two styles should not be exaggerated. Relevant here is a fragment of Philetas' *Hermes* which told the story of Odysseus' stay with Aeolus and his affair with one of the king's daughters:

> 'ἦ μὲν γὰρ πολέεσσι πεφύρησαι χαλεποῖσι,
> θυμέ, γαληναίηι δ' ἐπιμίσγεαι οὐδ' ὅσον ὅσσον,
> ἀμφὶ δέ τοι νέαι αἰὲν ἀνῖαι τετρήχασιν.'
>
> 'Ah, my heart (*thumos*), you have been tossed amid many hardships, and never have you found the tiniest bit of calm, but ever around you swirl fresh griefs.' (Philetas fr. 7 Powell)

Here the wave and storm imagery is very clearly signalled by the metaphor of 'calm weather'. The speaker is almost certainly Odysseus, and the metaphors are perfectly matched to his sea-tossed fate.[73] But for the identity of the speaker, we are very close to Catullus. The Roman narrator suffers as does the Greek 'character'.

There is, unsurprisingly, no real sign in the amused amatory narratives of Theocritus 13 and Moschus' *Europa* of this familiar Roman 'empathy'. Apollonius, however, can use emotive adjectives in ways which do look forward to Catullus and Virgil. I have already noted δυσάμμορος at 3.809, and there is a similar example in the sad story of Kleite:

> τὴν δὲ καὶ αὐταὶ
> νύμφαι ἀποφθιμένην ἀλσηίδες ὠδύραντο·
> καί οἱ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ὅσα δάκρυα χεῦαν ἔραζε,
> πάντα τά γε κρήνην τεῦξαν θεαί, ἣν καλέουσι
> Κλείτην, δυστήνοιο περικλεὲς οὔνομα νύμφης.
>
> The very nymphs of the groves mourned her death, and from the tears which dropped to the earth from their eyes the goddesses fashioned the spring which men call Kleite, the ever-renowned name of the unhappy (δυστήνοιο) bride. (1.1065–9)

Thus Callimachus and Apollonius offered their Roman successors a variety of potential voices, from which the neoterics chose one in particular and elaborated features already associated with that voice. In a different aspect of poetic technique, we may compare how the elaborate structure of Catullus 64 and 68 and Virgil's 'Aristaeus-

[73] The anagrammatic and assonantal pattern of νέαι αἰὲν ἀνῖαι perhaps enacts the swirling of the verse's meaning; for such a technique cf. my note on 3.146–8.

epyllion' intensifies and carries further some structural patterns merely adumbrated in Hellenistic narrative. These differences between Hellenistic Greek and neoteric Roman poetry must not be minimised, however much the two poetic forms also share. What the neoterics chose not to exploit fully in the voices of Alexandrian poetry, Ovid did.

(ii) FRAMING THE EPIC

Like the *Iliad*, the *Argonautica* begins with Apollo. In both poems the opening verses foreshadow later major events – what the epic is *about* (1.1–4, *Il.* 1.1–7) – and then a transitional passage fills in some of the background up to the point at which the narrative proper begins (1.5–17, *Il.* 1.12–42). In adopting this structure, Apollonius imitates features of Homeric technique which were much praised in some branches of ancient literary scholarship,[74] and from the first he directs our attention to the Homeric poems as the touchstone against which to measure his epic. So too, the 'formulaic' style but non-Homeric 'formulae' of the opening four verses announce a non-Homeric work which is, nevertheless, like Homer.[75] The opening verses both give the Argonautic story as a whole as the subject of the poem and, in particular, look forward to the successful completion of the outward voyage; the opening invocation to Book 3, which marks the central division of the epic, then looks forward in particular to the successful arrival of the fleece in Colchis.

The proem is framed not only by Apollo and the Muses (1.1, 1.22), but also by the *Iliad* (Apollo) and the *Odyssey* (1.22 πλαζόμενοι, cf. *Od.* 1.2 πλάγχθη).[76] So too is the poem as a whole. The final verse of the *Argonautica*, ἀσπασίως ἀκτὰς Παγασηίδας εἰσαπέβητε, 'gladly you stepped onto the shores of Pagasae', seems to rework *Od.* 23.238, ἀσπάσιοι δ' ἐπέβαν γαίης, κακότητα φυγόντες, 'gladly they stepped upon the land, having escaped from disaster'. That verse comes in a simile comparing Penelope's joy at seeing her husband to the joy of survivors of shipwreck when they finally reach the safety of dry land. This Homeric context has an obvious relevance to the end of the

[74] Cf. Σ^{bT} *Il.* 1.1, Σ^{b} *Il.* 1.8–9, [Plut.] *De vita et poesi Hom.* 162, Brink on Hor. *AP* 148. For what is 'un-Aristotelian' about Apollonius' arrangement cf. below pp. 192–5.

[75] Cf. Fantuzzi 1988.22–3 for the greater number of 'variazioni para-omeriche' in these verses as opposed to 'riprese puntuali' of Homer.

[76] Verse 21 begins ἡρώων, a verse-beginning found at *Il.* 1.4.

Argonautica, and of particular importance is the correction which Odysseus' following speech makes to the implication of the simile that potential disaster is now in the past:

> 'ὦ γύναι, οὐ γάρ πω πάντων ἐπὶ πείρατ' ἀέθλων
> ἤλθομεν, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ὄπισθεν ἀμέτρητος πόνος ἔσται,
> πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπὸς, τὸν ἐμὲ χρὴ πάντα τελέσσαι.'
>
> 'O wife, we have not yet reached the conclusion of all our trials, but measureless struggle awaits in the future, great and difficult, which I must accomplish to the end.' (*Od.* 23.248–50)

In his *envoi* to the heroes Apollonius asserts that he has reached the 'famed conclusion' (κλυτὰ πείρατα) of their struggles (4.1775–6), but the echo of these Odyssean verses casts a dark shadow over the end of the poem – 'measureless struggle' and grief is indeed what awaits Jason and Medea. Just as both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* look forward to events lying beyond the narrative of the poems themselves, so too does the *Argonautica*. The end of the poem is no real end.[77]

The proem thus establishes the *Argonautica* as a creative re-writing of Homer. It also exploits the formal anonymity of the heroic epic singer; we do not have, for example, the 'autobiographical frame' which we often find in Pindar's epinicians or Callimachus' hymns. On the other hand, Apollonius glorifies his role as poet in quite non-Homeric ways. He begins[78] with an acknowledgement of Apollo (1.1), and so does the voyage (1.362, 411–25): the poet is, at one level, like Jason, and the poem *is* the voyage.[79] The presence of Orpheus on the ship reinforces this sense that the poet is a 'fellow-

[77] More commonly, the final verse of the poem is associated with *Od.* 23.296, the famous τέλος or πέρας of the *Odyssey* identified by Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus; cf. Erbse 1972.166–72, Heubeck on *Od.* 23.247–24.548, S. West, 'Laertes revisited', *PCPS* 35 (1989) 113–43. It is perfectly plausible that Apollonius should conclude his poem with an allusion to a scholarly theory, but we must then assume without proof that this theory, whatever it actually means, antedates Aristophanes of Byzantium; cf. the strictures (not all justified) of M. Campbell, *Mnem.* 36 (1983) 155, against the arguments of L. Rossi, *RFIC* 96 (1968) 151–63. The literary arguments for an allusion to this verse are far weaker than for one to 23.238. For an attempt to steer a middle path and an excellent survey of the arguments cf. Dufner 1988.147–222; for ἀσπάσιος as a mark of closure cf. *SH* 947.4 (which, *pace* Lloyd-Jones and Parsons, need have nothing to do with *Od.* 23.296) and ἐελδομένοισι at 2.1285.

[78] That ἀρχόμενος is doing more than one job is recognised already in Σ 1.1–4; it marks both the hymnal form and Apollo's role in the story, while 'focus[ing] attention on the act of narration' (Goldhill 1991.287).

[79] Cf. above p. 84.

traveller'. Moreover, the poet is also like Apollo, god of poets – responsible for bringing this hazardous journey to a safe conclusion (1.21 (poet), 1.361 (Apollo)). Homer himself is not in fact the only archaic bard conjured up in these opening verses. In the eighth book of the *Odyssey* Odysseus praises the blind Phaeacian bard, Demodocus, – often identified with Homer by later ages – as one who must have been taught by either the Muse or Apollo himself (*Od.* 8.488), the inspirational pair who frame the proem of the *Argonautica*. Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing of the wooden horse 'which Epeios made with Athena's help' (*Od.* 8.493) and which brought about the fall of Troy. This was clearly a familiar theme of epic poetry,[80] and Demodocus takes up the tale from the point where the Greeks have left the horse at Troy and sailed away, omitting to sing of the planning and building of this marvellous creation. The parallel with the proem of the *Argonautica* is clear: Apollonius undertakes to tell the story of a wooden marvel created jointly by Athena and a mortal craftsman, but he explicitly refuses to tell of its building (1.18–19) and moves straight into how it was used. This passage exploits the idea of the wooden horse full of men as a ship under sail, a representation familiar from art, first found in extant literature in Euripides (*Troades* 537), and a commonplace of later epic poetry.[81] The opening verses thus plainly look to Homer's description of Demodocus at work:

> ὣς φάθ', ὁ δ' ὁρμηθεὶς θεοῦ ἄρχετο, φαῖνε δ' ἀοιδήν,
> ἔνθεν ἑλὼν ὡς οἱ μὲν ἐυσσέλμων ἐπὶ νηῶν
> βάντες ἀπέπλειον ...
>
> So Odysseus spoke, and the bard began with the god,[82] and showed forth his song, taking up the story from the point where the Greeks had climbed into their well-benched ships and sailed away ... (*Od.* 8.499–501)

[80] Cf. Hainsworth on *Od.* 8.492–3.

[81] Both Quintus Smyrnaeus and Triphiodorus borrow from Apollonius' description of the launching of the *Argo* in their accounts of how the horse was hauled into Troy, cf. Campbell on Quint. Smyrn. 12.423–4, Austin on Virg. *Aen.* 2.16, 236. κοῖλον δόρυ of the horse at *Od.* 8.507 shows how easily the image could arise. For comparison of the *Argo* to a live horse cf. 4.1604–10; a connected image, that of the *Argo* as a chariot, occurs at Cat. 64.9. On the general affinity of horses and ships cf. Detienne–Vernant 1978.232–42.

[82] Cf. Hainsworth ad loc. for the disputed interpretation of this phrase. Both the Homeric and the Apollonian scholia offer the same range of interpretations for 'beginning the god'.

Like the song which Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing, the Argonautic story was a much-worked vein for poets long before third-century Alexandria.[83] The striking set of matched noun–epithet phrases with which the *Argonautica* begins – 'men of old', 'dark rocks', 'King Pelias', 'golden fleece', 'well-benched *Argo*' – suggests both the familiarity of the material and the immortality conferred by song: these objects 'exist' in a form already memorialised by epic poetry.[84] The theme is picked up at the very end of the poem by the epithet κλυτά, 'famed', to describe the Argonauts' deed: they are famed because 'famed in song'. Thus both proem and epilogue advertise the *kleos* which poetry confers. Moreover, explicit reference to earlier and extant poetry invites us to compare Apollonius directly with his predecessors:

> νῆα μὲν οὖν οἱ πρόσθεν ἔτι κλείουσιν ἀοιδοὶ
> Ἄργον Ἀθηναίης καμέειν ὑποθημοσύνῃσι.
>
> Earlier bards whose songs still live tell how Argos built the ship under the guidance of Athena. (1.18–19)

Which (if any) particular poems Apollonius has in mind here we do not know, but νῆα stands at the head of 1.18 as though a quotation of the opening word of some epic on the subject (cf. μῆνιν, ἄνδρα).[85] Apollonius was presumably not the first epic poet to shape his proem in this way, encompassing a shift from an opening invocation to an allusion to the poet's place within the tradition.[86]

A narrative must position itself: Homer asks his Muse to take up the tale from a particular point. For Apollonius, the perfect linearity of his tale – beginning when the voyage begins and ending when it ends – suggests that 'the unavoidable *difficulty of beginning*'[87] is not a

[83] Cf. Hunter 1989.14–20.

[84] For this technique cf., e.g., Theocr. 16.48–9 (κομόωντας | Πριαμίδας, θῆλυν ... Κύκνον), Virg. *Georg.* 3.4–8 (*Eurysthea durum*, *Busiridis aras*, *Hylas puer*, *Latonia Delos* etc.). Fronto, *Epist.* p. 151.17–24 van den Hout, contrasts 1.1–4 favourably with Lucan's proem: whereas Lucan says one thing many times in the opening seven verses, Apollonius imparts five important pieces of information in four verses. A further noteworthy stylistic feature of the opening verses is the enjambment and delay of the verb – an effect which suggests the length and circularity of both poem and voyage. (I owe this observation to Mark Becker.) Cf. also Collins 1967.11–13.

[85] It is tempting to think of the poem 'The building of the *Argo* and Jason's voyage to Colchis' ascribed to Epimenides, cf. Hunter 1989.16 n. 71.

[86] The proem to the *Persica* of Choirilos of Samos would be particularly interesting if it is true that it began with *SH* 316 and included *SH* 317, but other orderings have also been proposed, cf. W. Kranz, *Studien zur antiken Literatur und ihrem Fortwirken* (Heidelberg 1967) 40.

[87] Genette 1980.46 (his italics).

problem. In fact, however, the opening narrative – elliptical and allusive in the lyric manner – reveals a whole host of other *potential* beginnings: Pelias' seizure of the throne (note βασιλῆος, 'king', prominently in the third verse), Jason's upbringing, Pelias' neglect of Hera, the story of the Golden Fleece. The poet glories in the harsh selectivity that the process of narration imposes. So too at the end. The poem ends as the voyage ends, but the poet does not let us forget that it is he who is controlling that end (4.1776–7). It is indeed the end frequently anticipated through the poem, the end imposed by our expectations as they have been shaped both by the *Odyssey* and by the nature of the story. There is, however, a *potentially* endless sequence of adventures which could be related; within the closed circle of the voyage limitless expansion is possible.[88] Moreover, as we have already noted, the 'famed end of your struggles' was not really an end. The struggles went on, as does the song from year to year (4.1773–4).

Another positioning is necessary for Apollonius also, this time against other literary narratives; he must site his work within and against a tradition. This he does by alluding to several important predecessors and contemporaries.[89] Thus, τεὴν κατὰ βάξιν, 'in accordance with your oracle' (1.8), probably reflects σήν, Φοῖβε, κατ' αἶσιμίην 'in accordance with your apportionment' in Callimachus' version of Apollo's saving of the Argonauts at Anaphe from the first book of the *Aitia* (fr. 18.9). As Apollonius' version of events at Anaphe is the final appearance of Apollo in the epic, it is tempting to accept Callimachean priority here, as Apollonius would then frame his epic with two references to the same passage of the *Aitia*. Apollo and Callimachus are both the beginning and the end. The two works of the classical period to which the proem most forcefully calls our attention are Euripides' *Medea* and Pindar's Fourth Pythian. The action of Euripides' tragedy hangs over the epic like a cloud about to burst, so that the later poem becomes almost an explanatory commentary on the terrible events of the drama.[90] The

[88] Cf. Goldhill 1991.296–7.

[89] My discussion here must inevitably be brief and selective. The arresting parallels in language between the opening four verses and the conclusion of the introduction to Theocritus' poem on the rape of Hylas, Idyll 13, a poem whose links with *Arg.* are familiar, would merit a lengthy discussion; Köhnken 1965 virtually ignores Theocr. 13.16–22. So too the links between the proem and Hesiod's *Works and Days* deserve attention (cf. E. Livrea, *Helikon* 6 (1966) 462–3).

[90] Cf. Hunter 1989.18–19.

opening verses of the epic are replete with echoes of the opening of the tragedy, thereby conveying some of the sense of foreboding that permeates the tragic prologue.[91] Secondly, there is a clear structural similarity with *Pythians* 4.68–72 where Pindar turns to the narrative proper of the Argonautic expedition:

> ἀπὸ δ' αὐτὸν ἐγὼ Μοίσαισι δώσω
> καὶ τὸ πάγχρυσον νάκος κριοῦ· μετὰ γὰρ
> κεῖνο πλευσάντων Μινυᾶν, θεοπομ-
> ποί σφισιν τιμαὶ φύτευθεν.
>
> τίς γὰρ ἀρχὰ δέξατο ναυτιλίας;
> τίς δὲ κίνδυνος κρατεροῖς ἀδάμαντος
> δῆσεν ἄλοις; θέσφατον ἦν Πελίαν κτλ.
>
> To the Muses I shall give Arcesilas and the all-golden fleece of the ram; for when the Minyans sailed in quest of the fleece, divinely sent honours were planted for them. What beginning of the voyage awaited them? What danger bound them with strong bonds of adamant? It was divinely ordained that Pelias ... (Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.68–72)

Apollonius' sketch of the background to the expedition (1.5–17) transfers into epic hexameters this allusive Pindaric narrative. In v. 76 Pindar tells how Pelias was warned to beware of the return of 'the one-sandalled man from the lofty steadings (αἰπεινῶν ἀπὸ σταθμῶν)'; this clearly lies behind δημόθεν (1.7), but the meaning of Apollonius' word is disputed. Platt and Fränkel took it to be synonymous with Pindar's phrase, 'from the countryside',[92] whereas other commentators have understood 'coming from his own people, among [Pelias'] subjects'. It is indeed the very uncertainty of meaning which is crucial here. We must remember that we are presented with an indirect report of an oracle, and oracles are notoriously ambiguous, even in direct speech.[93] Here δημόθεν replaces not only Pindar's 'from the lofty steadings' but also the immediately following 'whether outsider (ξεῖνος) or indeed citizen (ἀστός)' (*Pyth.* 4.78);[94] Jason was notoriously both. The linguistic ambivalence mirrors Jason's ambiv-

[91] Ἀργοῦς ... σκάφος, κυανέας Συμπληγάδας, πάγχρυσον δέρος etc. are all picked up by Apollonius. Obviously, two poets writing about the Argonauts will use similar vocabulary, but in view of the tragedy's importance for the epic as a whole, deliberate reminiscence is here certain.

[92] A. Platt, *JP* 35 (1920) 72, adduced 2.1019–20, where, however, ἢ ἐνὶ δήμωι | ἢ ἀγορῆι probably does not mean 'in the countryside or in the town', cf. Vian ad loc.

[93] For Apollonius' use of indirect speech cf. below pp. 143–51.

[94] Vian ad loc. sees the relevance of *Pyth.* 4.78, but thinks that this is the sole reference of δημόθεν.

alent status, and it is reference to the Pindaric text which points this for us. Secondly, 'not long afterwards' (1.8) varies Pindar's 'in time' (*Pyth.* 4.78) and intensifies the sense of menace: no wonder Pelias took drastic action when the threat of the oracle was apparently confirmed within a short space of time.

The meaning of the poet's wish that the Muses should be the ὑποφήτορες, 'interpreters' or 'inspirers', of his poem (1.22) has been the source of considerable debate, but the former seems likely. The Muses will, the poet hopes, turn what he has to say, the actual material of the poem, what 'actually happened', into excellent poetry.[95] This is a typically pointed reversal of the role assigned to the Muses not only in Homer's invocation before the *Catalogue of Ships* (*Il.* 2. 484–93) and in Hesiod's *Theogony* (vv. 22–35) but also in Theocritus' hymn to the Dioscuri:

> εἰπέ, θεά, σὺ γὰρ οἶσθα· ἐγὼ δ' ἑτέρων ὑποφήτης
> φθέγξομαι ὅσσ' ἐθέλεις σὺ καὶ ὅππως τοι φίλον αὐτῆι.
>
> Tell, goddess, for you know. I, interpreting for others, shall utter the things you wish in a manner pleasing to you. (Theocr. 22.116–17)

Apollonius also exploits the related theme of the possibility of misleading song and conflicting accounts. According to the usual version, the *Argo* was built by Argos, the son of Phrixos, after he had returned successfully from Colchis to Greece; Argos, the son of Arestor, to whom Apollonius ascribes the building of the ship, has a much less certain place in the tradition and never achieved the solid identity of his namesake.[96] Apollonius' reference to Argos in 1.18, therefore, contains a puzzle which we cannot even recognise as such until we have read further (cf. 1.111–12 echoing 1.19). Moreover, it stands at the head of the poem as a marker of how Apollonius will manipulate variant mythical traditions and as a programmatic example of how 'truth' is to function in the poem.

A further passage of Hesiod which introduces a theme of considerable importance in the *Argonautica* is the praise of the power of poetry contained in the proem to the *Theogony* (vv. 94–103). Hesiod says that a bard's songs of the great deeds of earlier men (κλεῖα προτέρων

[95] Cf. Beye 1982.15. This interpretation may also be supported by appeal to the development in the Muses' role through the three invocations introducing Books 1, 3 and 4, cf. above n. 23.

[96] Wilamowitz 1924. II 246 believed that Apollonius invented this second Argos; this is perhaps unlikely, although he may here have innovated with relative freedom within existing traditions, cf. my note on 3.340–6.

ἀνθρώπων, cf. 1.1) and of the gods can bring forgetfulness of grief and sorrows (κήδεα). The *kleos* granted through song to heroes long dead is a particular instance of this gift which poetry can bestow. The Argonauts set out on a 'voyage full of *kedos*' (1.16), and the end of the voyage and the end of the poem marks the end of their 'labours' or 'griefs' (κάματοι, 4.1776). It is the continuance of this poem, its constant repetition 'from year to year' (4.1773–5), which guarantees that the Argonauts are remembered and receive their due reward. Without the epic there would be no 'forgetfulness of pain'. In the fourth book, the crew is saved in the wastes of the Libyan Syrtis by the 'heroine nymphs' who appear to Jason in his distress:

> 'κάμμορε, τίπτ' ἐπὶ τόσσον ἀμηχανίηι βεβόλησαι;
> ἴδμεν ἐποιχομένους χρύσεον δέρος· ἴδμεν ἕκαστα
> ὑμετέρων καμάτων, ὅσ' ἐπὶ χθονὸς ὅσσα τ' ἐφ' ὑγρὴν
> πλαζόμενοι κατὰ πόντον ὑπέρβια ἔργα κάμεσθε.'
>
> 'Unhappy one, why are you so cast down in despair? We know of your quest for the golden fleece; we know every detail of your labours (*kamatoi*), all the extraordinary deeds on both land and sea which you have struggled to accomplish (*kamesthe*) in your wanderings over the waters.' (4.1318–21)

These verses suggest that the Argonauts are saved *because* their fame is known, and hint that the source of the heroines' knowledge is itself epic song; such a reading is supported by the fact that these verses echo the alluring song which the Sirens sing to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. Those destructive goddesses tell the hero that they know all that 'the Argives and the Trojans suffered (μόγησαν) at broad Troy through the will of the gods' (*Od.* 12.189–90), and it would have been almost impossible for any later Greek not to see this as a way of describing the *Iliad*. Here too, then, epic song may be a source of knowledge, although in the *Argonautica* it is used to save, whereas in the *Odyssey* it was used in an attempt to destroy. It is poetry which secures the real 'success' of the voyage by saving the Argonauts and retelling the story for each generation.[97]

Whereas the *Iliad* has a Catalogue of Ships, the *Argonautica* has a catalogue of the crew of a single ship.[98] The actual process of cata-

[97] Cf. Feeney 1991.92.

[98] For detailed comparison of the Homeric and Apollonian catalogues cf. Carspecken 1952.38–58, Vian I 5–10. It is unsurprising that within a much smaller catalogue Apollonius uses a more varied way of introducing the characters than the 'three basic modes' of the Homeric model (for which see Kirk's edition, Vol. I pp. 170–1).

loguing was not unimportant, as far more 'Argonauts' were known to antiquity than could fit in one fifty-oared vessel.[99] Any writer of an *Argonautica* was faced with various choices, unless the whole problem was to be avoided by refusing to give a complete list; this is not Apollonius' way.[100] Indeed he advertises this crucial process of selection by the phrase ἐνικρινθῆναι ὁμίλωι, 'to be included in the group', which occurs twice in the Catalogue (1.48, 227), once as the very final phrase where it refers to Akastos and Argos who only just made it into the list and into the voyage (cf. 1.321–6). It is tempting to see ἐγκρίνειν as a 'scholar's word' for the judgement required in drawing up such lists.[101] In tension with this overt process of contemporary, scholarly selection is set the traditional memorialising function of poetry as embodied in the figure of Memory's grandson, Orpheus, who stands at the head of the Catalogue – as Heracles stands at its centre – and by his magical power banishes the bad omen of his Homeric analogue, Thamyris.[102] φατίζεται, '[she] is reported' (1.24), and ἐνέπουσιν, 'men say' (1.27), in the account of Orpheus are, as elsewhere in the Catalogue, both an acknowledgement of the conserving power of popular tradition, as represented particularly by epic poetry, and a mark of caution in the choosing between variant sources. Apollonius constantly demands to be viewed as both the traditional transmitter of a cultural heritage and as the manipulative creator of a scholarly poem.

A particular example of those who have achieved the 'forgetfulness of pain' brought by posthumous *kleos* are the heroes of Hesiod's fourth race, ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος, the race of ἡμίθεοι, 'demigods,'[103] who fought in the Theban and Trojan wars, and the race to which the Argonauts belong (cf. esp. 4.1641–2). This race, whose

[99] Cf. Carspecken 1952.41–3.

[100] Twenty-one Argonauts appear only in the Catalogue. Note how Theocr. 13.17–18 summarises and avoids a catalogue, as a marker of its different 'genre'. Apollonius could, of course, do this when he wanted to (cf. 2.762–3, 3.347–8).

[101] Cf. Pfeiffer 1968.206–8 on 'canons' of poets. I also suspect that the mannered pedantry of 1.71–4 contains a joke about how easy it is to make mistakes with catalogue genealogy.

[102] Whereas Homer seeks to distance himself from Thamyris by his overt reverence for the Muses (*Il.* 2.491–2, 597–8), the narrator of the *Argonautica* hugs Orpheus to himself, cf. below pp. 148–51. The 'Thamyris' role in Apollonius' catalogue is actually taken by Eurytos who wished to contest with Apollo in archery (1.86–9). For Thamyris and Eurytos cf. *Il.* 2.596.

[103] Literally, 'those with one divine parent', although poetry freely extends the word to cover the warriors of the heroic age. It is striking that Homer uses the word to describe his heroes only at *Il.* 12.23, in a passage where they appear (uniquely for Homer) to be thought of as a separate *genos* from later men, cf. above p. 103. It may be relevant to *Arg.* that Σ^{bT} *Il.* 12.23 suggests that Homer is referring to the generation of Heracles.

fame derives, at least implicitly, from epic song (*WD* 161–5), was rewarded for their lives of struggle and justice by an afterlife as ὄλβιοι ἥρωες, 'blessed heroes', free from *kedos* on the Islands of the Blessed (*WD* 170–1). Archaic poetry observes no clear distinction between ἥρως and ἀνήρ, and the former is often simply a poetic term for 'warrior', but it is in fact the case that many Argonauts were honoured throughout Greek lands with 'hero-cult';[104] the pervasive aetiological interests of the *Argonautica*, which present us with tangible, continuing evidence for past lives,[105] make heroes (in the 'religious' sense) and their cult an obvious source of interest. The poem celebrates the 'heroic' status of all the Argonauts, even if only a few individuals are singled out for explicit mention in this respect (e.g. Boutes, 4.912–19), and two of the Argonauts, Castor and his brother Polydeuces, actually inhabit the marginal area between 'hero' and 'god'.[106] Hero-cult was particularly associated with and performed by young men entering upon manhood;[107] Jason and his crew thus become themselves role-models for those crossing over this generational barrier, just as they are following after such as Heracles, Theseus and Orestes.[108] It is tempting to associate the hoped-for annual repetition of the epic (4.1774) by *men* (ἄνθρωποι), as distinguished from the μακάρων γένος,[109] with the annual performances which characterised hero-cult.

Apollonius imitates Hesiodic language in describing the Argonauts as a 'divine expedition of heroic men' (ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖος στόλος, 1.970, 2.1091) and a 'race of demi-god men' (ἡμιθέων ἀνδρῶν γένος, 1.548), cf. Hesiod, *WD* 159–60 ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος, οἳ καλέονται | ἡμίθεοι, 'a divine race of heroic men, who are called demi-gods'. The distinctions between gods, 'heroes', and ordinary mortals which could be constructed from such language became a topos of later hymns and the encomiastic poetry which influenced them (Cf., e.g., Pind. *Ol.* 2.2, Theocr. 17.1–8). The 'religious' aspect of this language and of Apollonius' chosen hymnic form is not to be

[104] For Jason cf. 1.960, with L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford 1921) 410 n. 77.

[105] Cf. 1.1047–8, 1058–62, 4.471–81 for 'heroic' survivals.

[106] Cf. A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford 1972) II 575–602, esp. 577–8; Burkert 1985.203–8.

[107] Cf. Burkert 1985.208.

[108] Cf. above pp. 15–16.

[109] Fränkel is correct that the basic meaning is 'offspring of the gods', but the Hesiodic background adds the resonance 'race of blessed heroes'.

dismissed as a simple literary game: the 'heroic' status of the Argonauts, celebrated in the hymnic form, is precisely the reason why they, and the poem which honours them, matter to us.[110]

(iii) SIMILES

Similes are a narrative mode which Homer bequeathed to all subsequent epic poets,[111] but some similes in the *Argonautica* show overt multiple correspondences with what they illustrate in a way which may seem non-Homeric. I examine below two prominent examples, but it is important to be clear what is at stake in this discussion. As always we must be wary of assuming that Apollonius read Homer in the same way that we do, particularly as the Homeric scholia recognise complete, as well as partial, correspondence between simile and *illustrandum* as a standard Homeric technique.[112] To what extent the examples I will cite do differ from Homeric similes will inevitably be the subject of disagreement, but it is more important to observe how Apollonius' similes reflect the broad concerns of his poetics than to seek to measure precisely his difference from Homer. It may indeed be the use to which the simile is put, rather than the simile itself, which is most distinctive of the Hellenistic epic.

My first example is the description of the pursuit of the Harpies by the Boreads:

[110] In connection with the hymnic frame of *Arg.* editors regularly cite the conclusions of the Homeric hymns to Helios (31) and to Selene (32). These hymns are of uncertain date (quite possibly later than *Arg.*), but three details in common are of interest. First, 1.1, 4.361 and *h.* 32.18 all scan κλέα as two shorts. Secondly, a hymn to the sun has an obvious connection with Apollo whose solar identity is exploited by Apollonius when the Argonauts see him in the Black Sea and again in his epiphany at Anaphe. Finally, the transmitted opening of the Hymn to Selene, μήνην ἀείδειν ταναυσίπτερον ἔσπετε Μοῦσαι, is obviously a reworking of the opening verse of the *Iliad*, i.e. it transfers an epic opening to a hymnic situation; the opening of *Arg.* reverses the process.

[111] For similes as a type of narrative rather than 'ornamental' to narrative cf. already Clausing 1913.46; this simple idea is illustrated for Virgil by Lyne 1989.63–99. On Apollonius' similes cf. Clausing 1913, Carspecken 1952.58–99, Fusillo 1985.327–45, Knight 1990.198–231, Williams 1991.259–72. Whether or not the 'epic simile' was distinguished from other types of comparison by the rhetorical criticism of Apollonius' day may be disputed, cf. M. H. McCall, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge, Mass. 1969) 1–56, Heath 1989.103. It is precisely in such areas, however, that the implicit poetics found in poetry itself is so crucial.

[112] Cf., e.g., Heath 1989.103–7. I have not thought it worthwhile to discuss here the similes of Homer, as any brief treatment is bound to distort. I hope, however, that what I have to say about Apollonius' similes neither depends upon nor requires the reader to share a particularly slanted view of the Homeric simile.

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐνὶ κνημοῖσι κύνες δεδαημένοι ἄγρης
ἢ αἶγας κεραοὺς ἠὲ πρόκας ἰχνεύοντες
θείωσιν, τυτθὸν δὲ τιταινόμενοι μετόπισθεν
ἄκρησις ἐν γενύεσσι μάτην ἀράβησαν ὀδόντας·
ὣς Ζήτης Κάλαΐς τε μάλα σχεδὸν ἄΐσσοντες
τάων ἀκροτάτησιν ἐπέχραον ἤλιθα χερσί.
καί νύ κε δή σφ' ἀέκητι θεῶν διεδηλήσαντο,
πολλὸν ἐκὰς νήσοισιν ἐπὶ Πλωτῆισι κιχόντες,
εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὠκέα Ἶρις ...

As when on mountain-sides dogs skilled in hunting race along as they track horned goats or deer, and, straining just behind their prey, gnash together the teeth at the front of their jaws, but without effect; just so did Zetes and Kalais sprint very close to the Harpies, just touching then vainly with the tips of their fingers. They would have torn them apart against the gods' wishes when they caught them far away at the Floating Islands, had not swift Iris ... (2.278–86)

The second example is the final fall of Talos:

ἀλλ' ὥς τίς τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι πελωρίη ὑψόθι πεύκη,
τήν τε θοοῖς πελέκεσσιν ἕθ' ἡμιπλῆγα λιπόντες
ὑλοτόμοι δρυμοῖο κατήλυθον, ἡ δ' ὑπὸ νυκτὶ
ῥιπῆισιν μὲν πρῶτα τινάσσεται, ὕστερον αὖτε
πρυμνόθεν ἐξεαγεῖσα κατήριπεν· ὣς ὅ γε ποσσὶν
ἀκαμάτοις τείως μὲν ἐπισταδὸν ἠιωρεῖτο,
ὕστερον αὖτ' ἀμενηνὸς ἀπείρονι κάππεσε δούπωι.

Like a mighty pine-tree high up in the mountains which woodcutters left half-chopped by their sharp axes when they went down from the forest, and at night it first shakes in the wind-blasts, but then topples over, broken off at the base; just so did he for a while sway from side to side on his unwearying feet, but then collapsed strengthless with a thunderous crash. (4.1682–8)

This very mannered concern for close parallelism[113] is deliberately 'naive' within the textured literariness of this epic. It calls our attention to the process of creating similes and to the difficulties inherent in that process: every assertion of likeness implies also unlikeness, and this is what the epic simile always struggles to control.[114] When the

[113] In the first example note κύνες of the Boreads, but Διὸς κύνας of the Harpies (2.289). διεδηλήσαντο (2.284) is better suited to dogs ripping something up than to death by the sword; Lyne would call this 'trespass'. In the second example there is very close verbal matching: τινάσσεται ~ ἠιωρεῖτο, ὕστερον αὖτε ~ ὕστερον αὖτε, κατήριπεν ~ κάππεσε.

[114] One modern discussion which has sought (in its own way) to come to terms with this is P. Damon, *Modes of Analogy in Ancient and Medieval Verse* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1961).

two parts are very closely matched structurally and/or verbally, the parallelism (paradoxically) alerts us to the artificiality of the 'likeness' and to the very reality of difference that the purely linguistic construct of the simile cannot contain. The over-determinedness of the simile in fact emphasises its inadequacy. A similar result is achieved by Callimachus through very different means in the *Hymn to Delos* when he compares the clashing of Ares' shield which shakes the cosmos to the roar of Hephaestus' furnace beneath Etna 'as Briareus changes shoulders' (*h.* 4.141–7). The explanation of one mythic sound in terms of another draws attention to both as purely poetic constructs. In the example from *Arg.* 2, the multiple detailed correspondences are not merely a literary game, but are mimetic of the action described: as the Boreads stick very close to the Harpies, tracking their every step but not quite closing with them, so the simile and the narrative match each other point for point, but never quite fuse. Such a conclusion is, however, held out as a real possibility by the fate awaiting the Harpies. The simile flies in relentless pursuit of the narrative.

The main Homeric model for this simile is the description in *Iliad* 10[115] of the pursuit of Dolon by Odysseus and Diomedes:

> As when two saw-toothed dogs, experienced hunters, keep pressing relentlessly on after a young deer or a hare across a wooded countryside, and it runs squealing ahead of them, so the son of Tydeus and Odysseus, sacker of cities, ran in relentless pursuit of Dolon and cut him off from his people. (*Il.* 10.360–4, trans. Hammond)

A number of other motifs also derive from the *Doloneia*: Diomedes catches Dolon because Athena gives him the necessary strength (cf. 2.275); the gnashing teeth of the dogs at 2.281 humorously recall Dolon's chattering teeth at *Il.* 10.375; Dolon, like the Harpies, is swift and ugly (*Il.* 10.316); the Boreads' tired panting at 2.430–1 echoes the panting of Odysseus and Diomedes at *Il.* 10.376,[116] and both scenes prominently involve oaths. The echoes of the *Doloneia* add more than a touch of humour to the Boreads' pursuit; once again the epic totters on the edge of parody. When the Boreads return, they

[115] There are also elements from *Il.* 22.189–93, but that is very much a secondary model (*pace*, e.g., Williams 1983.168–71, Cairns 1989.112).

[116] Cf. Call. *h.* 4.217, the panting Iris reports to Hera and is compared to a faithful hunting-dog. That hymn concerns a 'Floating Island' whose name was subsequently changed (cf. 2.296–7); it is tempting to believe that the description of Delos as ἠνεμόεσσα καὶ ἄτροπος (*h.* 4.11, where see Mineur's note) has some connection with Apollonius' 'Turning Islands'.

tell Phineus and the Argonauts that the Harpies 'in fright entered the cave of Mt Dicte' (2.433–4). The location of the Harpies' cave cannot have been 'realistically' known to the Boreads,[117] but Apollonius strives for variety between narrative and report by distributing the details between the two. The specificity of 'in fright' is something that the Boreads could presumably have seen or deduced, but it is the simile of the hunting-dogs which is here recalled and interpreted; the boundaries between simile and 'narrative' are fluid: neither is privileged as the sole carrier of 'information'.

Apollonius forces us to witness the process by which the epic simile is created; the mechanism, the *techne*, of poetry is revealed. Thus as the Colchians set out in pursuit of the Greeks, the launching of a vast fleet is described:

> οὐδέ κε φαίης
> τόσσον νηίτην στόλον ἔμμεναι, ἀλλ' οἰωνῶν
> ἴλαδὸν ἄσπετον ἔθνος ἐπιβρομέειν πελάγεσσιν.
>
> You would not have said it was so vast a naval expedition, but rather a great family of birds whirring over the sea in flocks. (4.238–40)

The poet offers us, as it were, a simile in the making, one still in his head and not yet committed to the traditionally systematised language of the epic simile.[118] 'You would say' this, if you were an epic poet.[119] The fact that this passage looks to a very similar passage of Homer reinforces this literary depth. In *Iliad* 4 the Trojan and Greek armies as they come together are contrasted in the noise they make. The Greeks advance in silence:

> οὐδέ κε φαίης
> τόσσον λαὸν ἕπεσθαι ἔχοντ' ἐν στήθεσιν αὐδήν,
> σιγῇ δειδιότες σημάντορας.
>
> You would not have said so vast an army followed, with the power of speech in their breast, in silent fear of their leaders. (*Iliad* 4.429–31)

[117] For such phenomena cf. above p. 72.

[118] Cf. Beye 1982.25.

[119] For Homer's use of φαίης κεν etc. cf. De Jong 1987.57–60, Richardson 1990.174–8. An interesting parallel to Apollonius' experimentation with the phrase is Theocr. 1.42 where it occurs within the description of the fisherman in the *ekphrasis* of the cup; there too there is a clear interest – as in any *ekphrasis* – with the viewer or reader as the producer of meaning. For a different approach to such phrases in the *Arg.* cf. C. S. Byre, 'The narrator's addresses to the narratee in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*', *TAPA* 121 (1991) 215–27.

The Trojans, however, make a terrible din which is conveyed by a simile of bleating sheep (*Il.* 4.433–6). A second example takes the process even further. When the Argonauts arrive on Drepane, the whole population welcomes them joyfully: 'you would say that they were delighting over their own children' (4.997). Here Apollonius directs us again towards a specific Homeric passage, this time in fact a simile from the opening of *Odyssey* 16, the description of Eumaeus' welcome for the returning Telemachus:

> As a father embraces lovingly an only and darling son, one for whom he has borne much sorrow, when after nine years away he returns home from a far country, so now did the swineherd put his arms round the radiant prince, covering him everywhere with kisses as one who had just escaped from death. (*Od.* 18. 17–21, trans. Shewring)

The evocation of Homer is the revelation of epic *techne*. Perhaps the clearest example of Apollonius' overt concern with the simile as a literary form is a famous passage describing Jason in the wastes of Libya:

> ἀναΐξας ἑτάρους ἐπὶ μακρὸν ἀύτει
> αὐσταλέος κονίῃσι, λέων ὥς, ὅς ῥά τ' ἀν' ὕλην
> σύννομον ἣν μεθέπων ὠρύεται· αἱ δὲ βαρείῃ
> φθογγῇ ὑποβρομέουσιν ἀν' οὔρεα τηλόθι βῆσσαι·
> δείματι δ' ἄγραυλοί τε βόες μέγα πεφρίκασι
> βουπελάται τε βοῶν. τοῖς δ' οὔ νύ τι γῆρυς ἐτύχθη
> ῥιγεδανὴ ἑτάροιο φίλοις ἐπικεκλομένοιο ...
>
> He leapt up and, filthy with dust, called loudly to his comrades, like a lion, which bellows through the forest as it seeks its mate; at its deep roar the glens in the mountains far away echo like thunder, and the cattle in the fields and the herdsmen of cattle are terribly afraid. To his friends, however, the voice of their comrade calling them did not seem terrifying. (4.1337–43)

Here the explicit *absence of* parallelism not only calls attention to the artificiality of the simile form, but manages also to subvert a whole Iliadic style.[120]

It will be clear that Apollonius expects us to recognise the simile as a site of poetic experimentation, and that humour of various kinds is likely to be an important ingredient of that experimentation. So it is with the series of similes which describes how the Argonauts scared

[120] Cf. Goldhill 1991.307–8.

off the fierce birds from the Island of Ares (2.1068ff.).[121] At 2.1077–9 the crew's screaming is compared to the din (κλαγγή) of two battle-lines coming together. The whole passage is 'a witty pastiche of the preliminaries to Homeric combat',[122] but these particular verses look to the opening of *Iliad* 3:

> When the divisions on both sides had been marshalled under their leaders, the Trojans came on with cries (κλαγγῇι) and shouting, like birds – as when the cries (κλαγγή) of cranes fill the sky, when they make their escape from the huge downpours of winter, and with loud cries (κλαγγῇι) they fly on towards Ocean's stream, bringing death and destruction to the Pygmies; and at early morning they launch their grim battle. But the Achaians came on in silence, breathing boldness, their hearts intent on supporting each other. (*Il.* 3.1–9, trans. Hammond)

Momentarily we 'equate' the birds of which there is at first no sight (2.1080) with the silent Achaeans of the *Iliad*, and the Argonauts with the very birds they are seeking to defeat. Such narrative 'confusion', effected through a Homeric model, is another way in which Apollonius breaks down the barriers between narrative and simile. The multiple similes in this passage link it to another battle narrative, the struggle of Jason with the Earthborn at the conclusion of Book 3.[123] In this latter passage, Apollonius succeeds in writing quite unlike Homer precisely by imitating Homer with such intensity that he packs a whole *Iliad* into the last scene of the book. In both passages multiple similes are associated with important elements of fantasy. At one level, such a technique suggests that what is being described is so remarkable that it can only be indicated through simile, i.e. the poet cannot in fact *describe*, only offer some kind of approximate verbal sketch; at another level, similes, which are so often proclaimed by modern critics to be tools of verisimilitude and *enargeia*, in fact call attention to the very fictionality, the literariness, of what is being described. Here in Book 2, for example, we are encouraged to read the scene in this way by Amphidamas' statement of the model for their action, Heracles' scaring away of the Stymphalian birds (2.1052–7): 'I saw it myself' declares Amphidamas (2.1054) with Herodotean enthusiasm, and immediately we are on our guard.

[121] On this passage see esp. Fränkel 1968.264–73.
[122] Vian 1 228 n. 2.
[123] Cf. Fusillo 1985.330–3; my note on 3.1374–6.

Similes are also an important weapon of emotional control. Nowhere is this clearer than in the multiple similes which describe the Argonauts' appalling plight in Libya. Here again the extensive use of similes shows us a poet unable 'accurately' to depict the full horror of his story. Similes, as we have already noted, deny the possibility of accurate description by reliance upon likeness rather than identity, and multiple similes (or a comparison within a simile, as here at 4.1280) present a poet helpless before the difficulties of his task; the primary model and ancestor of all subsequent examples is the introduction to the Iliadic *Catalogue of Ships* where an explicit admission of helplessness by the poet (*Il.* 2.484–92) follows upon a powerful massing of similes (*Il.* 2.455–83).

Whereas epic poetry normally draws upon the familiar natural world for the material of similes,[124] the first of the multiple 'Libyan' similes disconcertingly appeals to supernatural terrors to describe the fictional events. In these verses the Argonauts in their despair are compared to men in a doomed city:

ἐν δ' ἄρα πᾶσι
παχνώθη κραδίη, χύτο δὲ χλόος ἀμφὶ παρειάς.
οἷον δ' ἀψύχοισιν ἐοικότες εἰδώλοισιν
ἀνέρες εἰλίσσονται ἀνὰ πτόλιν, ἢ πολέμοιο
ἢ λοιμοῖο τέλος ποτιδέγμενοι ἠέ τιν' ὄμβρον
ἄσπετον, ὅς τε βοῶν κατὰ μυρία ἔκλυσεν ἔργα,
ἢ ὅτ' ἂν[125] αὐτόματα ξόανα ῥέηι ἱδρώοντα
αἵματι καὶ μυκαὶ σηκοῖς ἔνι φαντάζωνται,
ἠὲ καὶ ἠέλιος μέσωι ἤματι νύκτ' ἐπάγηισιν
οὐρανόθεν, τὰ δὲ λαμπρὰ δι' ἠέρος ἄστρα φαείνει·
ὣς τότ' ἀριστῆες δολιχοῦ πρόπαρ αἰγιαλοῖο
ἤλυον ἐρπύζοντες. ἐπήλυθε δ' αὐτίκ' ἐρεμνὴ
ἔσπερος.

Their hearts all went cold, and the blood left their cheeks. As when men wander through a city like lifeless phantoms, awaiting the conclusion[126] of war or pestilence or a fearful rainstorm such as washes utterly away the fields where cattle work; it is the time when statues

[124] Cf. De Jong 1987.94.

[125] The text is uncertain. Wilamowitz's ὁππότ' ἄν has been widely accepted. Verses 1280–3 ought not (I think) to represent a different situation from that of 1284–7, but rather one that derives from it.

[126] τέλος plus the genitive here is normally taken, by a common periphrasis, to be the same as the simple noun. I doubt that this is correct. 'Lifeless phantoms' suggests people near the end of a siege or about to die of plague; cf. Thucyd. 2.51.4 on the despair (ἀθυμία) of those who realised that they had caught the plague.

> sweat and flow with blood of their own accord, when phantom groans are heard in sacred shrines, or when the sun draws night across the heavens in the middle of the day and the stars shine brightly in the sky. Like this did the heroes creep aimlessly along the long shore throughout the day. Suddenly the dark evening came down. (4.1278–90)

The most important[127] Homeric model here is Theoclymenus' vision of darkness, blood and phantoms (εἴδωλα) in the house of Odysseus and the disappearance of the sun foretelling the death of the suitors (*Od.* 20.350–7). Whereas, however, the suitors revel in arrogant confidence and disdain, the Argonauts are certain that death is at hand; it will, however, be a death unremarked and unmourned, in contrast to the public disaster foreshadowed by the portents of the simile.[128] As regularly, therefore, the simile conveys meaning by difference as well as by similarity. The awful terror facing the Argonauts is stressed by the frame of the simile which does not demarcate it strictly as a separate narrative element; just as the fearful pallor of 4.1279 is picked up by 'lifeless phantoms' in the opening verse of the simile, so the darkness and stars of 4.1286–7 lead into the coming of evening (4.1289–90). The Argonauts in the text must confront not only the terrors of Libya but also of the simile itself.

The second pair of similes compares Medea and her maids from Drepane to birds:

> ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐρημαῖοι, πεπτηότες ἔκτοθι πέτρης
> χηραμοῦ, ἀπτῆνες λιγέα κλάζουσι νεοσσοί,
> ἢ ὅτε καλὰ νάοντος ἐπ' ὀφρύσι Πακτωλοῖο
> κύκνοι κινήσουσιν ἐὸν μέλος, ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμὼν
> ἐρσήεις βρέμεται ποταμοῖό τε καλὰ ῥέεθρα·
> ὣς αἱ ἐπὶ ξανθὰς θέμεναι κονίησιν ἐθείρας
> παννύχιαι ἐλεεινὸν ἰήλεμον ὠδύραντο.
>
> As when parentless chicks, which have fallen out of their nest in the rocks, cry pitifully because they cannot fly, or when on the banks of the fair-flowing Pactolus swans raise their song, and the dewy meadow all around and the fair streams of the river are alive with noise, so did the girls place their fair hair in the dust and moaned aloud their piteous lamentation all night long. (4.1298–1304)

[127] Neither *Il.* 10.5–8 nor 17.547–52 is central to the meaning of Apollonius' simile.

[128] Commentators rightly cite the portents associated with Alexander's destruction of Thebes (Diod. Sic. 17.10), cf. A. A. Donahue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta 1988) 40–3.

Again there is similarity and difference. The young birds are exposed to death from predators and starvation.[129] The defencelessness of the girls is marked by an echo of another *koure*, Artemis, fleeing from the battle of the gods in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 21.493–6). Artemis was stripped of her bow by Hera and is thus likewise defenceless, but she is compared to a dove taking refuge from a hawk within a protecting rock; Apollonius' birds, like Medea and her maids, have no hiding-place. So too Artemis can return to heaven to be comforted on her father's knee (*Il.* 21.505–6); the Scherian maids are far from home and have no one to comfort them. Moreover, the Homeric and Apollonian *hapax* ἀπτής allows a resonance of Achilles' description, through simile, of his own wearisome life:

> 'ὡς δ' ὄρνις ἀπτῆσι νεοσσοῖσι προφέρησι
> μάσταξ', ἐπεί κε λάβησι, κακῶς δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλει αὐτῇ,
> ὣς καὶ ἐγὼ πολλὰς μὲν ἀϋπνους νύκτας ἴαυον'
>
> 'Like a bird which offers any scrap it finds to its chicks which cannot fly and itself goes without, so I have endured many sleepless nights ...' (*Il.* 9.323–5)

The birds of the Apollonian simile, however, are bereft of parental support, unable to fend for themselves. It is difference which is also most strongly marked in the comparison of the pitiful lamentation of the girls to the singing of swans beside the gold-bearing Lydian river Pactolus.[130] This fabulous paradise could not be further removed from the wastes of the Syrtis; the suggestions of beauty and fertility ('the dewy meadow') highlight the pathetic wasting of young girls' lives. By tradition, a swan's most beautiful song was its last before death; here, therefore, the spectre of imminent death has spread from narrative to simile.

Finally, I wish to note one of the most remarkable passages of the whole poem, the simile which describes Athena's rapid descent to help the Argonauts at the Symplegades (2.541–8, quoted above p. 86). Athena's speed is compared to the flashing thoughts of a homesick wanderer, and the simile is 'interrupted' by a *gnome* in the

[129] The verses suggest an etymological link between πεπτηότες and ἀπτῆνες; they fall because they cannot fly. For the link cf. *Et. Mag.* 673.4–12.

[130] The repetition of καλά which frames the simile (4.1300–2) points to Pactolan gold (*RE* 18.2439); cf. also Livrea on 4.1300. In the other poetic occurrence of Pactolan swans (Call. *h.* 4.249–50) the river's gold is also relevant (cf. vv. 260–4).

first person on how suffering mankind roams all over the world.[131] Like the simile concerning the Boreads' pursuit of the Harpies, this simile 'enacts itself': the intrusive parenthesis, breaking open the syntax of the sentence, imitates the flashing and shifting thoughts of the homesick wanderer. Moreover, the position of the simile immediately before the passage through the Rocks is very significant. The opening of the Rocks to human navigation which made the seas passable is the most striking symbol of man's conquest of the oceans, a conquest which ancient poetry presents in two different, though intersecting, ways. On one hand, it is a triumph of Greek technology and the human spirit; on the other, it marks the original hybristic foolishness of men who refuse to accept divinely ordained limits, and is the start of moral decay.[132] Apollonius' *Argo* is not the first ship of all, but such a tradition clearly existed before the epic and is indeed utilised in it;[133] the gloomy simile, therefore, which precedes the great achievement, activates this ambivalent interpretation of that achievement. The 'heroism' of the action is not subverted; rather, we see that the action narrated in the text is multivalent and that interpretations of it change over time. Time is indeed crucial to Apollonius' technique here, as the simile also confronts us with the continuing 'presence' of the heroic action, which becomes almost an aetiology for our present condition.[134]

(iv) SPEECH AND SPEECHES

Whereas some 45% of the *Iliad*, 67% of the *Odyssey* and 47% of the *Aeneid*[135] are in the direct speech of characters – the high *Odyssey* figure being largely due to Odysseus' narrative of his adventures in Books 9–12 – only 29% of the *Argonautica* falls into this category.[136]

[131] Such a parenthesis within a simile is very hard to parallel in epic, but cf. the apostrophe within a simile at *Aen.* 12.451–5 (an 'empathising' version of *Il.* 4.275–82) and, for the first person in a simile, *Aen.* 12.910 (a 'Lucretian' passage).

[132] For the 'optimistic' view cf. the evidence collected in M. Fantuzzi, 'La censura delle Simplegadi: Ennio, *Medea*, fr. 1 Jocelyn', *QUCC* 31 (1989) 119–29; for the other view cf., e.g., Virg. *Georg.* 2.503–12, Hor. *C.* 1.3 (with Nisbet and Hubbard's commentary), Sen. *Medea* 301ff.

[133] Cf. my note on 3.340–6.

[134] For further instances of how Apollonius breaks down the chronological boundaries between us and the heroic past cf. below pp. 163–9.

[135] Cf. Highet 1972.302.

[136] The individual books range from 39% for Book 3, where there are many 'dramatic' scenes, to 21% for the largely narrative Book 1.

These figures, though meaningless in themselves, do point towards an important literary debate which almost certainly influenced Apollonius.

In the *Poetics* Aristotle praises Homer for recognising that, as poetry is mimetic, 'the poet himself must say as little as possible' (*Poetics* 1460a5ff.).[137] In wanting epic to be like drama, and indeed seeing epic as the direct ancestor of its more 'complete' descendant, Aristotle privileged the mode of 'letting characters speak for themselves'. Thus, after a brief introduction, Homer 'immediately' introduced[138] characters who spoke for themselves (*Poetics* 1460a9–11). In fact, characters speak the seventeenth verse of the *Iliad* (Chryses) and the thirty-second verse of the *Odyssey* (Zeus). The *Argonautica* presents a very different picture. The first two direct speeches follow the Catalogue and are by anonymous members of crowds (1.240ff., 1.250ff.);[139] there is no direct speech by a named character until Alkimede's lamentation at 1.278ff. Regardless of what view we may take concerning the *Argonautica*'s relation to the tenets of the *Poetics*,[140] it is clear that Apollonius' procedure here is strikingly un-Aristotelian. Moreover, immediately after the brief proem there is a report in indirect speech of the dark words of an oracle (1.5–7); it becomes harder to believe that we are not dealing with a deliberate revision of the epic manner. It is further to be noted that the verb Aristotle uses for the majority of poets who fall short of the mimetic ideal is ἀγωνίζεσθαι, 'take part in competition' (1460a9), another metaphor from rhapsodic or theatrical competition. Here it is very tempting to see at least the germ of the idea which the current chapter has been tracing: the self-conscious presence of the narrator's voice, always demanding our recognition and admiration, contrasted with Homer's submerging of himself within his characters.

[137] De Jong 1987.7 prefers to refer Aristotle's comment to the difference between the 'personal' proems and the rest of the poems (cf. 1460a9–10), rather than to the difference between 'narrator-text' and 'character-text'. Many of her arguments against the traditional interpretation have substance, but too strict a consistency of terminology should not be sought; De Jong's view makes Aristotle's description of the practice of non-Homeric poets very hard to understand. Moreover, the traditional interpretation better suits Aristotle's stress in this passage on the *ethos* of Homer's characters (1460a11). For Aristotle *ethos* is revelatory of *proairesis* (1450b8–10) and is displayed in speech; this is what Homer, like a good tragedian, understood. Poor epic poets do not let their characters speak for themselves, thus forcing them to be 'without *ethos*'.

[138] εἰσάγει, a word from the theatre as most editors correctly note.

[139] Cf. Feeney 1991.58.

[140] Cf. below pp. 193–5.

Behind these notions of Aristotle lies a famous passage of Plato's *Republic* where a distinction is drawn between 'simple narrative' (διήγησις ἁπλῆ), 'mimetic narrative' (διήγησις διὰ μιμήσεως) and 'mixed narrative', i.e. a mixture of 'simple' and 'mimetic' (διήγησις δι' ἀμφοτέρων).[141] Epic poetry is the prime example of 'mixed narrative'; thus, Plato notes, in the early verses of the *Iliad* Homer speaks both as himself, the narrating poet, and as the priest Chryses. To illustrate this distinction Plato turns the speeches of Chryses and Agamemnon into indirect speech as examples of 'simple, non-mimetic narrative' (393e–4b). These ideas have left surprisingly little trace in subsequent rhetorical theory,[142] but it may have been the poets who took them up, and it is not hard to believe that Alexandrian poetry embodies a conscious rejection of this formal system, or at least of the privileging of the mimetic mode. Callimachus' *Hymns* mix the various modes in bewildering tonal shifts, and we have already seen how Apollonius has mingled the discrete vocabularies of speech and narration found in Homer.[143] We may even be able to identify a specific case where Plato's text has influenced a poetic technique.

When Chryses prays to Apollo for revenge on the Greeks, he begins as follows:

> 'Hear me, lord of the silver bow, protector of Chryse and holy Killa, and mighty lord of Tenedos, Smintheus.' (*Il.* 1.37–9, trans. Hammond)

Plato's 'indirect version' summarises this as 'calling upon the god's titles' (*Rep.* 3, 394a). Alexandrian poets and their Roman successors, however, are fond of reproducing such hymnal lists even in narration. A typical[144] example occurs in the account of how Medea gathers the magic 'Prometheion':

> ἑπτάκι δὲ Βριμὼ κουροτρόφον ἀγκαλέσασα,
> Βριμὼ νυκτιπόλον, χθονίην, ἐνέροισιν ἄνασσαν ...
>
> [She gathers the drug] having called seven times upon Brimo, the nurse of children, Brimo the night wanderer, the chthonic, the queen of the dead ... (3.861–2)

[141] *Rep.* 3, 392cff. Helpful discussions in Genette 1980.162–71; Rimmon-Kenan 1983.107–16; S. Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle* (London 1987) 171–4; De Jong 1987.2–5.

[142] Cf., however, below p. 141 on *Il.* 4.301ff., and note Σ^{b} *Il.* 2.494–877.

[143] Cf. above pp. 109–12.

[144] Cf. 1.1125–6, 4.147–8, 708–9; 4.1701–5 is related, though rather different.

Such experiments with narrative form are typical of post-classical poetry, but in this instance it may have been Plato who first issued the challenge. Later scholars were indeed interested in those Homeric passages where narrative suddenly becomes direct speech without an explicit signal. Such a passage is *Il.* 4.301ff.:

> ἱππεῦσιν μὲν πρῶτ' ἐπετέλλετο· τοὺς γὰρ ἀνώγει
> σφοὺς ἵππους ἐχέμεν μηδὲ κλονέεσθαι ὁμίλῳ·
> 'μηδέ τις ἱπποσύνῃ τε καὶ ἠνορέῃφι πεποιθὼς
> οἷος πρόσθ' ἄλλων μεμάτω Τρώεσσι μάχεσθαι . . .'
>
> First he gave his instructions to the horsemen. He told them to hold their horses and not charge wildly in among the mass: 'And do not let pride in your skill and bravery tempt any of you to engage the Trojans alone' (trans. Hammond)

Here, and in related cases, scholars spoke of a switch from a 'narrative' (διηγηματικόν) to a 'mimetic' (μιμητικόν) mode.[145] Recognition of such phenomena in archaic epic was clearly important for the more complex experimentations with which we will be concerned.

The reduction in the amount of direct speech from its Homeric levels will, of course, have more than one explanation; the change from oral to written epic is only a partial answer. Whereas the 'Achilles plot' of the *Iliad* works itself out largely through speech, because of the hero's withdrawal from the field of action, the Argonautic quest ensures a constant movement forward through action. Nevertheless, the sparing use of direct speech must also be viewed in the context of the insistent authorial voice which never allows us to imagine for long that the characters are 'speaking for themselves'. The relative 'non-mimeticness' (in an Aristotelian sense) of the Hellenistic epic emphasises the presence and control of the narrating poet. This may be illustrated from many features of speech in the *Argonautica*, but I here single out three for particular attention: the introduction of direct speech, the suppression of speech, and – at rather greater length – the use of indirect speech.

Homer is at least sparing with overt guidance as to how we are to interpret the words of his characters.[146] When, for example, a speech is introduced by the common verse 'prudent (πεπνυμένος)

[145] Cf. [Longinus] 27.1; F. De Martino, 'Omero fra narrazione e mimesi (Dal poeta ai personaggi)', *Belfagor* 32 (1977) 1–6; De Jong 1987.10–12; Fantuzzi 1988.47–59.

[146] Cf. M. W. Edwards, 'Homeric speech introductions', *HSCP* 74 (1970) 1–36.

Telemachos answered him', oralists still disagree over what weight (?sometimes, ?always) should be attached to such a formulaic usage: how does our knowledge of Telemachos' 'prudence' affect our interpretation of what he says? On the other hand, it is hard (even for the most ardent oralist) to deny all specific meaning to the explicit indication that a character's speech is delivered when he or she is 'angry', 'weeping' or whatever. Some cases, of course, defy dispute: three times, for example, during the 'Deception of Zeus' speeches of Hera are introduced with the words 'Hera spoke planning deception (δολοφρονέουσα)'.[147] Nevertheless, the sense that Homer is rather reticent in this direction may be supported again by very bare statistics: in Books 1, 8, and 16 (chosen at random) of the *Odyssey*, only half as many speeches are introduced by such authorial guidance as lack it, and in the same books of the *Iliad* the figures are roughly even; in those books of both poems the number of speeches which are followed by explicit authorial guidance is insignificant. In the *Argonautica*, however, twice as many speeches are preceded by authorial guidance as not, and roughly one-quarter are followed by some such marker. These unsurprising figures are in line with the general tendencies of the poem which we have been considering. Here again Apollonius performs a delicate balancing act: the Homeric mould is reshaped, not entirely discarded.[148]

Avoidance of repetition is a familiar and fundamental principle of Apollonian style, just as repetition of various kinds is an inescapable fact of Homeric style.[149] In broad terms, in the *Argonautica* speeches are not repeated and scene-types occur only once. A particular instance is the references in the text to speeches which are alleged to have occurred 'off-camera'. Argos tells Aietes that Jason is willing to do battle with the Sarmatians in return for the handing over of the Fleece (3.351–3), though we have heard nothing of this before; he also mentions to Jason their earlier discussions, of which we know nothing, concerning Medea:

> 'κούρην δή τινα πρόσθεν ἐπέκλυες αὐτὸς ἐμεῖο
> φαρμάσσειν Ἑκάτης Περσηίδος ἐννεσίῃσι.'
>
> 'I have mentioned to you before a certain young girl whom Hecate, daughter of Perses, has taught to work in drugs.' (3.477–8)

[147] *Il.* 14.197, 300,329.
[148] Cf. Fantuzzi 1988.61–5.
[149] 3.493–4 is the programmatic example, cf. Hunter 1989.40.

Such passages call attention to the role of the poet as controller and selector of the material of the poem. It is important that this technique is restricted to these instances in the third book;[150] a hallmark of Apollonian experimentation is its limitation in scope. Apollonius refuses to replace standard Homeric techniques with new, but equally standard and consistently present, ones. (The concentration of these features in Book 3 may in fact be one further marker of the influence of drama on that book, for it is drama, particularly New Comedy, which has constant occasion to refer to events 'off-stage'.) Moreover, this technique itself may well derive, as do so many Apollonian experiments, from Homer. At *Od.* 12.374–88 Odysseus gives the Phaeacians an account of reaction among the gods to the killing of the cattle of the Sun, and he adds 'I heard these things from lovely-tressed Calypso; she said that she heard them from Hermes the messenger.' There is no sign elsewhere in the poem of these conversations, and indeed Calypso does not even tell Odysseus that Hermes has visited her. Ancient scholars were puzzled by the episode, and Aristarchus deleted the whole narrative;[151] Apollonius may have turned it to his own use.

Indirect speech[152] is a standard feature of narrative poetry, at home as much in Homer as in Apollonius. This mode may be used to reveal a character's intention,[153] desire,[154] belief,[155] or fear,[156] or as a form of variation for direct address. Thus, for example, Mopsus' advice to the crew after the appearance of the ghost of Sthenelos is given in a brief indirect report (2.922–3), whereas Orpheus' similar instructions after the epiphany of Apollo shortly before are given in a fuller, direct form.[157] Apollonius has, however, also extended the use of indirect speech far beyond Homeric technique, and quite lengthy 'speeches' are presented indirectly. Homer has no real parallel for this syntactic phenomenon,[158] nor would we expect such sub-

[150] Cf. Fusillo 1985.26–7.

[151] See the scholia to *Il.* 3.277, *Od.* 5.79; for modern discussion cf. Heubeck ad loc., Erbse 1972.12–16, Suerbaum 1968.158–61.

[152] Cf. Ibscher 1939.177–81 for an analysis into various categories.

[153] Cf. 1.16–17 (Pelias), 2.190 (? Zeus), 3.211–12 (Hera), 4.242–3 (Hera).

[154] Cf. 1.175, 3.806–7.

[155] Cf. 3.1189–90, 4.9–10, 317–18.

[156] Cf. 3.613–15.

[157] 2.686–93, cf. below pp. 150–1; the two passages are bound together by λοιβῆισί τε μειλίξασθαι (2.692, 923).

[158] Cf. De Jong 1987.114–18; Richardson 1990.70–7, 222.

ordination within the contours of 'oral' style.[159] Before considering the most prominent examples of indirect speech in Apollonius, it is necessary first to note some general characteristics of indirect speech.

The indirect mode does not seek to present a kind of fictive reality in the way that direct speech does. Between 'what was said' and what is in the text stands the mediating poet. In his analysis of Proust, Genette helpfully distinguished between 'narratized, or narrated, speech' (*narrativisé, ou raconté*) and 'transposed speech' (*transposé*). In this latter type, the indirect mode reproduces some of the features and language of what would have been the direct speech and is, to that extent, 'a little more mimetic than narrated speech'; nevertheless, 'this form never gives the reader any guarantee – or above all any feeling – of literal fidelity to the words "really" uttered: the narrator's presence is still too perceptible in the very syntax of the sentence for the speech to impose itself with the documentary autonomy of a quotation'.[160] This mode of 'transposed speech' is not unlike an Apollonian form that has apparently inherited little from Homer and bequeathed little to Virgil.

I turn now to Apollonius' text.

(a) 4.435–44. Medea lures Apsyrtus to his death with a false message delivered by heralds:

> She gave her message to the heralds, to lure (θελγέμεν) him to come, as soon as she reached the goddess's temple according to the pact (συνθεσίη) and the dark gloom of night was spread around; he would help her devise a trick by which she might take the great golden fleece and return again to Aietes' house, for the sons of Phrixos had compelled her when they handed her over to the strangers. With this deceitful message, she sprinkled alluring (θελκτήρια) drugs through the air and breezes; they could attract a wild animal down from a steep mountain, far away though it was.

The text is in places uncertain, and the construction certainly curious, but the atmosphere of deceit here is palpable. The reference to the 'pact' (συνθεσίη) ironically hints at Medea's plan with Jason (4.421), as well as at his agreement with the pursuing Colchians.[161] Medea holds out to her brother the promise of a trick (δόλος), but it

[159] Comparable is the more extensive use of necessary enjambment in the Hellenistic epic, cf. Hunter 1989.41.

[160] Genette 1980.171–3.

[161] For this theme as a whole cf. above pp. 63–4.

is not of the kind he expects, and 'the dark gloom of night' is an appropriate context for such treachery. Here then indirect speech is associated with deceit; heralds are used as the trustworthy transporters of untrustworthy words. Indirectness of speech points to the possible gap between 'what is said' and 'what is meant'. Apsyrtus is lured to his death by gifts, words and drugs: the 'charm' of words is picked up by the 'charm' of Medea's drugs. We have already seen how this network of associations is crucial to an understanding of the Apollonian Medea.[162]

(b) 4.1114–20. After her conversation with her husband, Arete secretly tells a herald to convey the gist of what was said to the Argonauts and to tell Jason to marry Medea at once:

In silence she summoned her herald. Her message was that, in her wisdom, she urged the son of Aison to have intercourse with the girl, and not to beseech King Alcinous; he himself would go to give his judgement before the Colchians, that if she were a virgin he would return her to her father's house, but that if she were sharing a husband's bed, he would not remove her from a legitimate union.

Indirect speech within indirect speech makes this a most unusual 'messenger-scene'. Instead of a herald repeating his message in the text, we are given a quite close version, in a speech *to* a messenger, of what Arete herself has just heard from Alcinous. Omitted, however, from Arete's message is Alcinous' observation about any child Medea might be carrying (4.1108–9), and particular attention is thereby drawn to it; I have noted before its bitter irony.[163] Here again, then, indirect speech is associated with secrecy and planning.

(c) 4.584–91. The sacred plank in the *Argo* warns the Argonauts of what lies ahead:

Deadly fear seized them at once as they heard the voice and the grim anger of Zeus. For [the plank] said that they would not escape the troubles on the wide sea nor bitter storms, unless Circe purified them for the pitiless murder of Apsyrtus. It ordered Polydeuces and Castor to pray to the immortal gods to provide a route into the Ausonian sea, where they would find Circe, the daughter of Perse and Helios.

[162] Cf. above pp. 59–60.
[163] Cf. above p. 74.

This passage raises the problem of the relation betwen the words of the indirect report and the hypothetical 'direct' speech, the problem considered in Genette's discussion cited earlier. As we have just been told that Hera has learned of Zeus's 'plans and great anger' (4.576–7), it is reasonable to ascribe the intervention of the plank to Hera or Hera's assistant, Athena. What the plank says is an interpretation of Zeus's desires as expressed in vv. 559–61:

> Αἰαίης δ' ὀλοὸν τεκμήρατο δήνεσι Κίρκης
> αἶμ' ἀπονιψαμένους πρό τε μυρία πημανθέντας
> νοστήσειν.
>
> He devised that they should be cleansed of the deadly blood by the skill of Aiaian Circe, and should return home after first suffering countless troubles.

How did Zeus intend to enact his plan? Perhaps through Hera and the plank. We cannot be sure, because the Apollonian Zeus does not speak but rather ordains silently (τεκμήρατο, 4.559), and the uncertainty of the origin of the message – an uncertainty shared by the Argonauts and ourselves – is indicated by the indirect mode.[164] Moreover, the change from narrative to indirect speech leaves deliberately unclear whether or not the plank included Zeus's role in what it actually said. The indirect mode thus reinforces the obscurity of divine action and the uncertainty and fear with which the Argonauts are filled. The language of the indirect speech does pick up elements of the earlier statement of Zeus's plan: πόνους, 'troubles' (4.586), picks up πημανθέντας, 'troubled', 'afflicted' (4.560),[165] and νηλέα, 'pitiless' (4.588), corresponds to ὀλοόν, 'deadly' (4.559), but the attitude to the murder in the plank's words is clearly as much the poet's as it is Zeus's (cf. 4.445–51, 476, 541), and δολιχῆς, 'wide [sea]' (4.586), and ἀργαλέας, 'bitter' (4.587), although in keeping with Zeus's intentions, may (or may not) be the poet's gloss on 'what the plank said'. Here we are very close to Genette's 'transposed speech'.

(d) 4.720–37. The interview between Circe and Medea. As Medea, at least, spoke in Colchian, direct speech was not a practical possibility here; indirectness, which places a barrier between us and 'what

[164] Note also that the word-order of 4.585 φθογγήν τε Ζηνός τε βαρὺν χόλον leaves uncertain the relationship between 'voice' and 'Zeus'.

[165] This is an important reason for preferring πόνους to πόρους in v. 586.

was actually said', suggests the linguistic barrier placed in front of Jason.[166] Circe's direct speech of dismissal (4.739–48) then comes with great force after what has preceded; somewhat similar is the pattern of Jason's conversation with Lycus, where the summary of the voyage is in indirect speech (2.762–71) and Lycus' reflections upon Heracles, which are new to us, are given in direct speech (2.774–810). When in the report of Medea's speech Aietes is called 'grim-minded' (βαρύφρων, 4.731), Fränkel and Vian take this to be Medea's own term, as she seeks to present her situation in the most favourable light. This seems unlikely. Elsewhere authorial labels are readily attached to Aietes, and the context here is decisive: 'the daughter of grim-minded Aietes spoke gently (μειλιχίως)'. Two important aspects of Medea – the Colchian inheritance and the vulnerable maiden – vie for priority. For the rest, there seems no reason to doubt that πολυκηδέος, 'with many cares' (v. 734), ἥλιτε, 'sinned' (v. 734),[167] and ὑπέρβια, 'terrible' (v. 735), are intended to be understood as Medea's own words.

(e) 3.579–605. Aietes' address to the Colchian assembly and his private reflections[168] is an extraordinary passage of extended indirect speech, possibly without real parallel in high Greek poetry. The indirect mode places Aietes in strong contrast with the immediately preceding scene of the Greek assembly where openness (including the freedom to protest) and solidarity were much in evidence. Aietes, the absolute and terrible tyrant, embodies deceit and fear: his words can only be heard through the mediation of the narrator.[169] Some of the account of what Aietes said and thought cannot be assigned with confidence to either the poet or his character,[170] but most of it bears the hallmarks of the violence and cruelty we associate with him. Much the same can be said of his threats to his people, again reported in indirect speech, at 4.231–5. Here not only the violence of language, but also a curiously frantic syntax,[171] express the terrorising rage of the king. In the fourth book, too, this indirect mode

[166] Cf. Knight 1990.116.

[167] For this word in the poem cf. above pp. 63–4.

[168] Cf. my note on 3.594.

[169] Cf. Paduano 1972.151–3, Fusillo 1985.231–2, Hutchinson 1988.91–2.

[170] Under this category I would include βαρύν (580), the whole of 581, and probably 601–2. λευγαλέην (598) and στυγερήν (604) may be focalised through Aietes, rather than being the words we are to imagine that he used.

[171] Cf. M. Campbell, *CQ* 21 (1971) 419.

is set against an open and 'democratic' speech from Jason (4.190–205). Like other frightened tyrants, Aietes is associated with an oracle which he has misunderstood. Oracles speak in riddling language which requires interpretation and invites misconstruction. In a rather similar way, indirect speech places barriers in front of any simple decoding of 'what is/was said'; it creates uncertainty and calls attention to gaps in understanding. It thus fits very well with central concerns of the *Argonautica*.

Before leaving passages of this type, it may be valuable briefly to cast an eye forward to the *Aeneid*, which is in general less experimental with narrative technique than is the *Argonautica*. Indirect speech of the kind I have been considering is in fact far less prominent there than in the *Argonautica*; this is in keeping with the more traditional, more 'Homeric' design of the Roman epic. The indirect mode is, however, used to suggest the furtiveness of the spread of *Fama* (4.190–5) and the difficulty in distinguishing truth from fiction in the reports it carries (cf. 4.188, *tam ficti prauique tenax quam nuntia ueri*); it may be significant that Virgil clearly has Apollonius in mind here.[172] More striking perhaps is the use of indirect speech for Aeneas' instructions to his men at 4.288–94; here the atmosphere is one of furtive secrecy and potential deceit – Dido at least has no doubt that Aeneas intended to deceive – and we have learned from the *Argonautica* that indirect speech is often found in such contexts.[173]

To conclude this survey, I wish to consider the two songs of Orpheus which are described at 1.496–511 and 2.705–13.

The first cosmogonical song is narrated in a series of indirect statements which are very deliberately, almost monotonously, articulated: 'he sang how ... and how ... and how ...' This form is not merely a familiar marker of didactic style,[174] but also stresses the poet's control of Orpheus' song: Orpheus can only utter through our poet. It has been suggested that Apollonius uses this indirect form because Orpheus' poetry is 'an unattainable ideal' which cannot be

[172] Virgil's *Fama* evokes the βάξις spread by Hera after the cave-wedding on Drepane (4.1184–5).

[173] This, of course, is not the place for any lengthy discussion of 'free indirect speech' in the *Aeneid*; that form is fundamentally different from the phenomena considered here.

[174] Cf. Brown 1990.316–20.

directly reproduced.[175] Both the other song of Orpheus, and the Homeric form which Apollonius is imitating (cf. below), make this very unlikely. Moreover, the poet's quasi-identification with Orpheus has been established in the Catalogue,[176] and is here reinforced by the fact that the end of the song is picked up by the beginning of the description of Jason's cloak (1.730–4)[177] and by the close integration of the song into its narrative context: 'strife' in the narrative and 'strife' in the song, the power of Zeus in the narrative (cf. 1.516) and also in the song (1.509–11).[178] In the final six verses of the song, our uncertainty as to whether the words are those of Orpheus or of the poet increases; the mingling of voices, our uncertainty as to 'who speaks', is crucial. Orpheus and the poet have become one.

The Homeric models for Orpheus' song are the songs of Demodocus in *Odyssey* 8. In his narrative of Ares and Aphrodite, allegorical interpretations of which are evoked by Orpheus' song,[179] there is, after the initial introduction (8.268), no further formal indication that we are listening to an inset song until the concluding 'this was the famous singer's song' (8.367); Demodocus' voice is here largely indistinguishable from 'Homer's'.[180] In his song of the fall of Troy (8.499–520), however, the initial indirect marker is repeated (8.514), and the concluding verses are in indirect speech (the accusative and infinitive construction). The song of Orpheus varies this by changing to direct speech for its final five verses, whereas the Homeric song changes from one indirect mode to another. Orpheus' song is thus indebted to all three of Demodocus' songs: to his song of the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles (*Od.* 8.73–82) for the theme of *neikos* between allies (cf. Idmon and Idas), an example of an included Homeric song becoming part of the Apollonian narrative,[181] to the song of Ares and Aphrodite for the cosmological theme, and to the 'Fall

[175] Cf. P. E. Knox, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry* (*PCPS* Suppl. 11, Cambridge 1986) 12.

[176] Cf. above p. 127.

[177] Cf. above pp. 53–4.

[178] Cf. Brown 1990.324, 'the progression of the song, from elemental strife to the reign of Zeus, parallels – and promotes – the alteration in the mood of its audience, from contentiousness to peacefulness and piety'.

[179] Cf. above p. 54.

[180] Cf. Richardson 1990.84–7. Noteworthy, however, are two occurrences of δόλος (8.276, 282) and δολόεντα in 8.281. This word and its cognates are predominantly speech – words in Homer.

[181] Cf. Clauss 1983.55–65.

of Troy' for its structural starting-point. Such a *tour de force* of Homeric allusion and conflation makes very strong the identification between Apollonius and the 'ideal poet', whether this be Orpheus or Demodocus. It is also worthy of note that 'like Ares' at *Od.* 8.518 must reproduce a comparison or allude to a simile in 'what Demodocus really said'. Here is one seed of Apollonius' experiments with indirect speech.

The mixture of voices in Orpheus' 'Hymn to Apollo' (2.703–13) has long been held to be the model for similar phenomena in the 'Hymn to Hercules' at *Aeneid* 8.285–302. The passage is singularly complex in its interplay between poet and character:

> σὺν δέ σφιν ἐὺς πάϊς Οἰάγροιο
> Βιστονίηι φόρμιγγι λιγείης ἦρχεν ἀοιδῆς·
> ὥς ποτε πετραίηι ὑπὸ δειράδι Παρνησσοῖο
> Δελφύνην τόξοισι πελώριον ἐξενάριξε,
> κοῦρος ἐὼν ἔτι γυμνός, ἔτι πλοκάμοισι γεγηθώς –
> ἱλήκοις· αἰεί τοι, ἄναξ, ἄτμητοι ἔθειραι,
> αἰὲν ἀδήλητοι· τὼς γὰρ θέμις· οἰόθι δ' αὐτὴ
> Λητὼ Κοιογένεια φίλαις ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἀφάσσει –
> πολλὰ δὲ Κωρύκιαι Νύμφαι Πλειστοῖο θύγατρες
> θαρσύνεσκον ἔπεσσιν, ἴη ἴε κεκληγυῖαι,
> ἔνθεν δὴ τόδε καλὸν ἐφύμνιον ἔπλετο Φοίβωι.
>
> With them the noble son of Oiagros sang a clear song to the accompaniment of his Bistonian lyre. He sang how once at the foot of the rocky ridge of Parnassos the god killed the monstrous Delphyne with his bow, when a young boy still in his nakedness, still rejoicing in long curls – be gracious, please! Eternally, lord, your hair is uncut, eternally it remains unravaged. Thus does holy law proclaim: only Leto herself, daughter of Koios, may hold it in her dear hands – the Corycian nymphs, daughters of Pleistos, gave much encouragement, shouting 'Hie, Hie!'; this is the source of Phoebus' lovely title.

The hymn begins in the now familiar indirect mode, and the narrative of vv. 705–6 seems to be in the poet's voice, although the excited style of the following verse then suggests rather Orpheus' hymnal voice.[182] Verses 708–10 correct the ambiguity of 707 – for 'still' may imply 'still at that time (though it later changed)' or 'still (to this day)' – and are normally thought to be in the mouth of the poet.[183] On the other hand, the repeated 'eternally' corrects the repeated

[182] Cf. 1.508, 4.1384, Call. *h.* 1.2.
[183] So Fränkel, Vian, and myself at Hunter 1986.57.

'still', and such jocularity would well suit an Alexandrian Orpheus; it is over-solemn to object that Apollonius could not attribute theological error to his Orpheus.[184] In fact it is not possible to distinguish the voices here,[185] as both etymology and aetiology, which are prominent in these verses,[186] are familiar markers both of the poetic voice of the *Argonautica* and of the voice of hymns. Reading (or hearing) Orpheus' hymn thus presents, in concentrated form, the same experience as reading (or hearing) the *Argonautica* as a whole; at the centre of both stands the powerful poet, controlling a complex pattern of competing voices.

[184] So Fränkel 1968.227–8, Vian on 2.713.

[185] τόδε, however, in 713 is addressed to the reader by the poet.

[186] In Hunter 1986 I failed to point to Πλειστοῖο as continuing the suggestion of Apollo's name being derived from πολύς.

CHAPTER 6

The Argonautica *and its Ptolemaic context*

As Librarian of the Royal Library, [1] Apollonius occupied what was probably the principal position of academic patronage available to a Greek intellectual at Alexandria, and it is this social and academic context in which his epic must always be read, even if we cannot be completely certain of the circumstances of the poem's production. His lost poems of which we know something (though often only the title) – works on 'foundations' and on local history – fit well with a central area of the scholarly activity which centred on the Museum and Library;[2] his prose works on archaic poetry (Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus) are also of a type very familiar in the history of third-century Alexandrian scholarship. In writing the *Argonautica*, Apollonius chose to deal with an area of the world – Colchis and the Black Sea – which was believed to have traditional racial and cultural links with Egypt,[3] and which we know to have been of interest to the Ptolemies.[4] Moreover, the epic is presented as a rewriting of Pindar's Fourth Pythian, a poem composed (like Pythian 5) for the victory of Arcesilas IV of Cyrene, who is said to have reorganised the colony at Euhesperides, the site of which Apollonius celebrates in Book 4;[5] echoes of Pythian 4 open Books 1 and 3,[6] and the last great sequence of Apollonius' poem closes with the foundation myth of Cyrene, with which Pindar had begun his poem.[7] Rela-

[1] Cf. Hunter 1989.1–4 for the evidence; Goldhill 1991.272–3 rightly stresses our comparative ignorance of the institutions and organisation of Ptolemaic artistic patronage. Parts of the present chapter rework material from Hunter 1991b.

[2] For these poems cf. Hunter 1989.9–12.

[3] Cf. Argos' speech at 4.257–93 (below p. 164); Hdt. 2.103–5.

[4] Cf. the papers (in Russian with English summaries) of N. L. Grach, *Vestnik Drevnei Historii*, 1984, 81–8, and M. Y. Treister, *ibid.*, 1985, 126–39.

[5] Cf. Σ Pind. *Pyth.* 5.34 (26) = Theotimos, *FGrHist* 470 F 1; F. Chamoux, *Cyrène sous la monarchie des Battiades* (Paris 1953) 174–5.

[6] Cf. above p. 124, my note on 3.1, and Braswell's note on *Pyth.* 4.1.

[7] Cf. below pp. 167–8. For the various myths cf. Chamoux op. cit. 69–127, Jackson 1987, Livrea

tions between Alexandria and Cyrene ranged from the cool to the openly hostile for nearly a quarter of a century after Soter's death,[8] but even before the crucial marriage of Ptolemy III Euergetes to the Cyrenean princess Berenice was finally accomplished in 247/6, it would have been difficult for any reader not to understand that Apollonius was constructing some kind of analogy between himself and 'the ruler of Cyrene' on one side and Pindar and Arcesilas on the other.[9] The identity of the 'ruler of Cyrene' – Magas or Ptolemy? – was indeed at issue at various times throughout the middle of the century, and Apollonius' clear, if implicit, answer is 'Ptolemy, my patron'. This interpretation must, of course, remain at the level of speculation, but it can hardly be doubted that Apollonius evokes an explicitly 'political' frame of reference for his epic. The current chapter is thus an attempt to read the *Argonautica* as a Ptolemaic poem within the context of what we can learn about the courtly aspects of Alexandrian poetry from the work of Callimachus and Theocritus; this will also serve as an introduction to a consideration of how Virgil read and used the *Argonautica* in writing a poem which manipulates its special relationship to the prevailing ideology much more openly than does the Greek epic.

Apollonius' decision to write epic must not in fact be viewed solely from a literary perspective, as something of an oddity in the general context of Hellenistic (and specifically Alexandrian) poetics. It also has a much wider, sociological, importance. Both the nature of epic itself and the peculiarly important status which the Homeric texts had for Greeks of all ages mean that any epic rewriting of Homer was inevitably bound to the culture and values which gave rise to that rewriting. The epic 'code' has been well described as 'the medium through which society takes possession of its past and gives that past the matrix value of a model . . . the preliminary level of that elabora-

1987, Calame 1990, and P. Giannini, 'Cirene nella poesia greca: tra mito e storia', in *Cirene. Storia, mito, letteratura* (Atti del Convegno della S.I.S.A.C. 4, Urbino 1990) 51–95. Vian III 54–5 notes Apollonius' apparent silence about Cyrene as an example of *arte allusiva*. In fact, however, Cyrene *is* in Apollonius' text, if only allusively. Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.8) calls the original site of the city a 'white breast', one ancient interpretation of which (cf. Σ citing Aristarchus) saw this as a reference to the nurturing richness of the land. Euphemos' dream in *Arg.* thus resonates against the Pindaric phrase. At 4.1734, δαιμονίη βῶλαξ ἐπιμάστιος not only echoes *Pyth.* 4.37, but also suggests 'clod in the shape of a breast'.

[8] Cf. Will 1966.125–7, 216–17; Laronde 1987.349–417.

[9] Pindar's Arcesilas was to have rather an unhappy time of it (Hdt. 4.162–4), and was eventually driven out by a democracy, thus bringing the dynasty to an end. How closely Apollonius would wish us to press the parallel we can hardly know, but biographically-oriented criticism of *Arg.* might make more of this fact than it has.

tion whose purpose is the literary organisation, in narrative form, of collective cultural values',[10] and the *Argonautica* has particular interest as coming from a society which was very concerned, in a quite overt way, with its past, with 'where it came from', and with asserting the presence and importance of 'collective cultural values'. The decision to write *epic* in such a society, even (or particularly) an epic which constantly sets out to explore the cracks in what are set up as Homeric certainties, carries special weight. This weight cannot be minimised by appeal to the undeniable difference between oral and literary epic.[11] Rather, the status of epic as embodiment and transmitter of traditional values is in constant tension with the novelty and the literariness of Apollonius' project. Where Virgil must create by pretending to re-create, must see the present as the extension or 'logical outcome' of the past, Apollonius must emphasise fracture and discontinuity both within the 'heroic' age itself and between the past and the present, *as well as* the unbroken chain which bound his readers to the pre-Homeric heroes of his story. The Alexandrian epic, no less than the Alexandrian Greeks themselves, is overtly concerned with 'where it came from', with its relation to the cultural icon that was Homer, and to the process by which that icon is assimilated.

(i) THE *ARGONAUTICA* AND COURT POETRY

The intellectual life and outlook of privileged Greeks in third-century Alexandria is a fascinating source for speculation. In particular, the pressures allegedly produced by 'deracination', by life in a new city perched precariously on the edge of a 'barbarian wasteland', far from the traditional seats of Greek culture and without the ties binding ordinary colonies to their mother-cities, have been held responsible for certain prominent features of Alexandrian poetry – the importance of aetiology, and the highly literary and allusive quality of the writing, for example.[12] It would be both easy and attractive to read the Argonauts' Libyan adventures in Book 4 as a kind of allegory of the Alexandrian Greeks lost in the cultural desert of North Africa, saved only when they reach Euhesperides[13] and then

[10] Conte 1986.142–3.
[11] Such an appeal is a leitmotif (and fatal flaw) in Hainsworth 1991.
[12] Cf. particularly Bing 1988 and Goldhill 1991 for both of these aspects.
[13] Cf. above p. 152.

the open sea, which had always been a crucial presence in definitions of 'Greekness';[14] the decisive, saving encounter with Triton is indeed structured by two exchanges which are crucial markers of Greek 'civilisation' in the epic tradition – the giving of guest-gifts (4.1547–55) and pious sacrifice (4.1593–1602). After this, there is only one more obstacle – Talos, the last survivor of the Bronze Age – before the Argonauts reach the Greek mainland and, with it, truly heroic status.[15] Moreover, certain other passages of Alexandrian poetry may be adduced in support of this notion of cultural unease. One example must here suffice to illustrate a wider phenomenon.

In his poem in honour of the courtier Sosibios, Callimachus imagines the aftermath of Sosibios' athletic victories:

ὄφρα κε Σωσίβιόν τις Ἀλεξάνδρου τε πύθηται
γῆν ἐπὶ καὶ ναίων Κίνυφι διστεφέα
ἀμφοτέρωι παρὰ παιδί, κασιγνήτωι τε Λεάρχου
καὶ τὸ Μυρινᾶιον τῶι γάλα θησαμένωι,
θηλύτατον καὶ Νεῖλος ἄγων ἐνιαύσιον ὕδωρ
ὥδ' εἴπηι· Καλά μοι θρεπτὸς ἔτεισε γέρα
οὐ] γάρ πώ τις ἐπὶ πτόλιν ἦγαγ' ἄεθλον
] ταφίων τῶνδε πανηγυρίων
κ]αὶ πουλύς, ὃν οὐδ' ὅθεν οἶδεν ὁδεύω
θνητὸς ἀνήρ, ἐνὶ γοῦν τῶιδ' ἔα λιτότερος
] οὓς ἀμογητὶ διὰ σφυρὰ λευκὰ γυναικῶν
καὶ πα]ῖς ἀβρέκτωι γούνατι πεζὸς ἔβη ...

... so that the people of Alexandria and those living on the banks of the river Kinyps may learn that Sosibios received two crowns near-by the two sons – the brother of Learchus and the child that the woman of Myrina suckled – and so that the Nile may say as it brings each year its most fertilising water: 'A beautiful reward has my nursling paid back to me ... for till now no one had brought a ... trophy from these sepulchral festivals ... and, great though I am, I, whose sources no mortal man knows, in this one thing alone was more insignificant than those streams which the white ankles of women cross without difficulty, and children pass over on foot without wetting their knees ...' (Callimachus, fr. 384.23–34, trans. Trypanis)

In this passage we hear resonate the famous words of Sarpedon to Glaucus in *Iliad* 12:

[14] Most memorably expressed, of course, in the story of Xenophon's mercenaries (*Anab.* 4.7.24).
[15] Cf. below pp. 166–7.

'Glaukos, why is it that we two are held in the highest honour in Lycia, with pride of place, the best of the meat, the wine-cup always full, and all look on us like gods, and we have for our own use a great cut of the finest land by the banks of the Xanthos, rich in vineyard and wheat-bearing ploughland? That is why we should now be taking our stand at the front of the Lycian lines and facing the sear of battle, so that among the heavy-armoured Lycians people will say: "These are no worthless men who rule over us in Lycia, these kings we have who eat our fat sheep and drink the choice of our honey-sweet wine. No, they have strength too and courage, since they fight at the front of the Lycian lines."' (*Iliad* 12.310–21, trans. Hammond)

Callimachus has borrowed the traditional association between a martial or athletic victor and his people in order, through Homeric allusion, to set Sosibios and his city within the mainstream of the 'heroic' Greek world, just as a few verses later the new *Ptolemaia* have apparently joined the list of great Greek festivals (v. 40).[16] The Nile's proud boast, however, if that is the correct interpretation of vv. 31–4,[17] certainly suggests the enthusiasm of the newly arrived; at the very least, the placing of this boast – with its Homeric referent – in the mouth of the great Egyptian river creates a distance of irony which will be lengthened or shortened for different readers, partly perhaps in accordance with the weight each attaches to the Homeric allusion. The new context for traditional language thus produces a new range of encomiastic effects. It is also worth noting that such multi-layered effects allow (perhaps indeed assume) a wider audience for this poetry than scholars are often inclined to imagine.

It is indeed the encomiastic aspect of Alexandrian court poetry, and the representation in it of Egyptian ideas, which has been the subject of the most fruitful recent discussion.[18] The overtly encomiastic passages of Callimachus' *Hymns* and of Theocritus range brilliantly from the playful to the solemn, and often rely upon a

[16] Cf. Pfeiffer ad loc., Fraser 1972. II 1004–5. For the Ptolemaia cf. Will 1966.179–81.

[17] I follow Trypanis; Pfeiffer proposes an alternative view.

[18] Cf. Griffiths 1979; R. Merkelbach, 'Das Königtum der Ptolemäer und die hellenistischen Dichter', in N. Hinske (ed.), *Alexandrien* (Mainz am Rhein 1981) 27–35; T. Gelzer, 'Kallimachos und das Zeremoniell des ptolemäischen Königshauses', in J. Stagl (ed.), *Aspekte der Kultursoziologie. Aufsätze ... Mohammed Rassem* (Berlin 1982) 13–30; L. Koenen, 'Die Adaptation ägyptischer Königsideologie am Ptolemäerhof', in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Studia Hellenistica 27, Leuven 1983) 143–90; Bing 1988. W. Meincke, *Untersuchungen zu den enkomiastischen Gedichten Theokrits* (diss. Kiel 1965) and Goldhill 1991.272–83 discuss only the Greek heritage. The standard view of Alexandrian art, by way of contrast, is of 'distinct Alexandrian and Pharaonic traditions ... substantially impervious to one another' (J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge 1986) 250).

productive tension between inherited Greek notions and language and the new ideological situation. Two small examples must suffice here. In the 'Hymn to Adonis' which concludes Idyll 15, the singer refers to the apotheosised Berenice:

> 'Κύπρι Διωναία, τὺ μὲν ἀθανάταν ἀπὸ θνατᾶς,
> ἀνθρώπων ὡς μῦθος, ἐποίησας Βερενίκαν,
> ἀμβροσίαν ἐς στῆθος ἀποστάξασα γυναικός.'
>
> 'Cyprian, daughter of Dione, it is the tale of men that you changed Berenice from mortal to immortal, by letting ambrosia drip into her woman's breast.' (Theocritus 15.106–8)

Of ἀνθρώπων ὡς μῦθος Gow notes 'a common qualification of statements concerning matters outside the speaker's personal knowledge ... and [the phrase] contain[s] no implication of disbelief', and Dover rightly adds that such a phrase can 'strengthen a story, not weaken it' and that 'the dissemination of a story which increases the *kleos* of a deity or hero is important'. The phrase is, however, not merely an item in a lexicon, but occurs in a particular hymn delivered by a particular character in a particular poem, and 'the *mythos* of men' concerns not just any story, but a representation which, while having familiar Greek analogues, nevertheless leaves traditional Greek ideas and praise far behind. Just as the whole hymn implies (or creates for itself) at least two 'readerships', the 'common folk' of Alexandria who come to marvel at the palace and its festival and a learned elite who see themselves as standing somewhat aloof, so this phrase carries more than one resonance. There is, at the very least, an amusing dissonance in the singer's banal phrase, 'used' by the character no doubt as Gow and Dover interpret it, but which can also be seen as a splendid piece of honest, innocent tactlessness. This effect of nuanced layering is typical of the style of Alexandrian poetic encomium.

A further instructive case is a famous passage from Callimachus' second *Hymn*:

> ἰὴ ἰὴ φθέγγεσθε· κακὸν μακάρεσσιν ἐρίζειν.
> ὃς μάχεται μακάρεσσιν, ἐμῶι βασιλῆι μάχοιτο·
> ὅστις ἐμῶι βασιλῆι, καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι μάχοιτο.
> τὸν χορὸν ὠπόλλων, ὅ τι οἱ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀείδει,
> τιμήσει· δύναται γάρ, ἐπεὶ Διὶ δεξιὸς ἧσται.
>
> Cry 'Hie, Hie!' It is a bad thing to strive with the blessed ones. He who fights with the blessed ones would fight with my king; he who

> fights with my king would fight with Apollo too. Apollo will honour the choir, because its song is pleasing to him; he has the power, since he sits at Zeus's right hand. (Callimachus, *h.* 2.25–9)

Scholarly interest in these verses is now largely concentrated upon seeking the identity of 'my king' – Ptolemy or Magas of Cyrene? –[19] but the style of the verses is at least as interesting. Like the poem as a whole, this passage both invites an association between king and god,[20] and refuses anything as obvious as an 'identification'.[21] At one level the verses say no more than that Apollo is the poet's king, and that Apollo is one of the blessed immortals; the repetition of 'my king' and the theme of fighting, however, invite the further association. At another level, therefore, the verses explore and exploit the range of nuances that could be borne by the optative mood. Once the polyvalent association between god and king has been constructed, poet and reader are involved in a complex struggle to control the use to which it is put.[22] Even this 'association' is, of course, more direct and overt than anything comparable we may hope to find in the *Argonautica*. Nevertheless, the style of Alexandrian encomium is a necessary background to any consideration of the epic as a 'court poem', for it is knowledge of this style which may enable us to sense layers in the poem which would otherwise remain hidden.

Certain passages of Alexandrian poetry directly discuss Egypt's place in the Greek world. In Theocritus 14, for example, Egypt is presented as set apart from the mainstream Greek world, which is defined by the many adjectives of place throughout the poem, but ruled by a king of quintessential Greek virtues (vv. 61–5).

[19] For a bibliography cf. Williams ad loc. and K. Bassi, *TAPA* 119 (1989) 225.

[20] Every Ptolemy was also Horus, the Egyptian god long identified by the Greeks with Apollo.

[21] Thus the situation is misrepresented not only by Williams, but also by Merkelbach art. cit. 34: 'Wenn von Apollon gesprochen wird, ist immer gleichzeitig auch Ptolemaios gemeint ...'

[22] It is a version of this same phenomenon which is visible in the association in the *Aeneid* between Aeneas and Augustus, whose links with Apollo require no justification; cf. J. Griffin, 'The creation of characters in the *Aeneid*', in B. K. Gold (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin 1982) 118–34, p. 122. It would in fact be nice to believe that there is some connection between Propertius' report (2.31) of the scenes on the doors of the temple of Palatine Apollo – the driving of the Gauls from Delphi and the killing of the Niobids, scenes untypical 'of the bulk of public Augustan visual iconography' (Hardie 1986.124) – and the fact that Callimachus uses both of these exempla in Apolline–Ptolemaic contexts (*h.* 2.22–4, 4.171–4). It might be worth noting that Propertius 2.32, a poem joined in our MSS to 2.31 and very variously treated in modern editions, begins with a verse which almost looks like a reworking of Call. *h.* 2.10, *qui uidet is peccat: qui te non uiderit ergo | non cupiet.* μάρμαρον at *h.* 2.24 perhaps suggests that Callimachus too wants us to think of an artistic representation of Niobe, cf. Fowler 1989.40–2.

Not dissimilar is the old bawd's list of the pleasures of Egypt in Herondas 1:

> 'There is the goddess's house; everything that is and exists anywhere, all this is in Egypt: wealth, wrestling-schools, power (δύναμις), peace, reputation, festivals, philosophers, money, young men, the shrine of the Brother Gods, the king's a good chap, the Museum, wine ...' (Herondas 1.26–31)

In the first part of the list, one word – δύναμις, 'power' – shows how the world has changed since the first formulation of such lists of the delights of Greek city life. In the exercise of that power the Ptolemies not only depended upon native Egyptian wealth, but also adopted Egyptian religious and institutional customs; the whole question of Egypt and the native Egyptians was likely to have been one where court poets trod cautiously. The Ptolemaic court was not the right place for strident 'public' assertions of Greek cultural and racial superiority, or too much loose talk about *barbaroi*.[23] Writing an *Argonautica* presents these problems in a particularly sharp way; it is my contention that this is no accident.

The story of the Golden Fleece might almost have been designed as a narrative of cultural and racial difference and interaction: a journey to the ends of the earth,[24] a terrible confrontation with the unknown and 'the other', and the ultimate triumph of a Panhellenic crusade and of Greek technology and daring. Scholars of Hellenistic and later antiquity indeed rationalised the story as an account of early Greek colonisation and the quest for gold.[25] It is clear that in the second half of Book 2, as the Argonauts approach Colchis, there is in the peoples they pass a steady movement away from Greek customs and towards inversion of Greek norms (explicitly of the Mossynoikoi at 2.1016–25).[26] Here Apollonius' (and Phineus') ethnography works within a Hellenocentric framework most familiar from Herodotus. The persistent and, broadly speaking, un-Homeric and un-Callimachean[27] presentation throughout the *Argonautica* of an undifferentiated 'Hellas'[28] would seem on the surface to fit both

[23] Cf. further Hunter 1991b.83–7; on Theocritus 15.46–50 cf. also Goldhill 1991.276.
[24] For Phasis as the world's eastern boundary cf. my note on 3.678–80.
[25] Cf. Strabo 1.2.39.
[26] Cf. Fusillo 1985.162–7.
[27] Cf. Hunter 1991b.85.
[28] It is noteworthy that this usage is much more common in the mouth of characters than in the voice of the narrator (4.349; 2.459 and 3.1134 are special cases).

a simple version of the traditional Greek/barbarian opposition, and the Ptolemies' concern – evidenced in many surviving public texts – to present themselves as the successors of Alexander and protectors of 'the Greeks'.[29] Within the complexities of the epic, however, this simple opposition is repeatedly broken down, particularly by the figure of Medea, as Apollonius borrows and rewrites a crucial feature of Euripides' *Medea*, in which the behaviour of both Medea and Jason sets at risk the complacently secure definition of what is 'Greek' and what 'barbarian',[30] or at least the valuation which is to be placed upon each category. The last book, and the ever-present intimations of Euripides' tragedy, show clearly how 'Greek' promises and 'Greek' values are not necessarily all they seem.

If there is no simple, monovalent, presentation of the superiority of Greek values through the epic, there is nevertheless a constant concern with Hellenic culture and virtues. One scene in which this is very clear is the boxing-match between Polydeuces, 'the best' (2.15) of the Argonauts after the loss of Heracles, and Amycus, the brutal king of the Bebrycians, who is characterised by both Apollonius and Theocritus with echoes of another son of Poseidon, the Homeric Cyclops.[31] Amycus foreshadows Aietes in his abuse of the rules of hospitality – explicitly condemned by the narrator as ἀεικέα θεσμόν (2.5) – and, as we have already seen,[32] his contest with Polydeuces suggests a familiar pattern of Greek aristocratic ethics, validated by the Pindaric tradition; this is not at all what Amycus had in mind, but like the Cyclops he must pay the price for his lack of 'social grace' and thereby serve to define and endorse 'Greek' norms. Heracles, the divine ancestor of the Ptolemies, and the Dioscuri both had an important place in royal cult, and recur frequently in the poetry associated with the court. The contest between Polydeuces and Amycus would thus find a place within the public ideology of the Ptolemies, without the necessity of anything so obvious as an 'identification' between Ptolemy and the Greek hero or even a parallelism between this fight and the struggle for

[29] Cf., e.g., Rice 1983.106–7.

[30] Cf. Hunter 1991b.92–4. In that article I have also considered the character of Aietes from this perspective. For the various 'competing' aspects of Medea's character cf. above pp. 59–60, and for the ironies of the stress upon how Greeks keep their word (3.1105) cf. my note ad loc.

[31] Cf. my note on 3.176–81. Valerius Flaccus (*Arg.* 4.104–343) makes the similarity to the Cyclops explicit, and his Amycus narrative borrows freely from Virgil's Cyclops episode (*Aen.* 3.588–691).

[32] Cf. above pp. 28–9.

supremacy between Horus/Apollo and his enemy Seth/Typhon, the chthonic power of chaos and confusion.[33] Apollonius is more reserved than, say, Callimachus in his *Hymns* (or indeed Virgil in the *Aeneid*) in openly displaying his patrons in the mythic time of his poem, and for this reason we are in danger of missing what the Ptolemaic context would have allowed contemporary readers to understand. Such generic difference is of a piece with the stylistic phenomena considered in the last chapter, and here again we can see how Apollonius' revision of epic norms sways between tradition and innovation.

A related example may be found in the scenes set on Drepane in Book 4.[34] It has often been noted that domestic themes – the position of royal women and the role of dynastic marriage – figure prominently in Alexandrian court poetry; brother–sister marriage, a very obvious borrowing by the Ptolemies from Egyptian practice (but 'Hellenised' by the paradigm of Zeus and Hera), has an important place in this poetry.[35] Alcinous and Arete formed such a brother–sister pair (at least according to some accounts),[36] but Apollonius is remarkably silent about this aspect of their marriage, preferring to concentrate upon the young queen's role as a skilful controller of events with an instinctive sympathy for things Greek (cf. 4.1074–6) and upon the king's concern with justice and, like Amphitryon in Theocritus 24, getting a good night's sleep. More than one reason for Apollonius' silence may be imagined, but it is hard to believe that any readers associated with the Ptolemaic court would not have been tempted to see some kind of analogue between the Phaeacian royal couple and their own ruling family. In particular, it is to be noted that Arete works in this episode not only as Hera's mortal instrument but almost in concert with her, and Alcinous is expressly linked to Zeus's 'straight justice' (4.1100, cf. 1177–9, 1201–2); the Alexandrian analogues of Zeus and Hera required no elaborate identification. Moreover, the light humour of this exploration of 'how power really works' – Alcinous both preserves the formalities and makes sure that 'the right side' wins –[37] is perfectly in keep-

[33] Cf. J. G. Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth* (Liverpool 1960); H. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion* (Leiden 1967). The comparison of Amycus to a child of 'deadly Typhon' is particularly suggestive; for the identification of Seth and Typhon cf. below p. 163.

[34] Cf. above pp. 68–74.

[35] Cf. especially Griffiths 1979.

[36] For the problems created by *Od.* 7.54–68 cf. Hainsworth ad loc.

[37] Cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.1110. When Alcinous tells his wife that his decision will be based on Medea's marital status, he already knows what this is (4.1074, 1083–5).

ing with the tone of much Alexandrian 'court poetry'.[38] When the Argonauts reach Drepane it is *almost* as though they have arrived 'home';[39] in fact it proves to be the last stop before they nearly perish in the wastes of Libya. In the imaginative world of the poem Drepane can thus 'suggest' Alexandria, as its rulers 'suggest' the Ptolemies. Here again the Hellenistic forerunners of Virgil's epic transformations become clear.

(ii) CREATING A NEW ORDER

The Argonauts' voyage is preceded by the cosmological song of Orpheus (1.496–511). Framed by echoes of Hesiod's *Theogony*,[40] this song brings the history of the world down to Zeus's childhood:

> ἤειδεν δ' ὡς γαῖα καὶ οὐρανὸς ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
> τὸ πρὶν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι μιῇ συναρηρότα μορφῇ,
> νείκεος ἐξ ὀλοοῖο διέκριθεν ἀμφὶς ἕκαστα·
> ἠδ' ὡς ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἐν αἰθέρι τέκμαρ ἔχουσιν
> ἄστρα σεληναίης τε καὶ ἠελίοιο κέλευθοι·
> οὔρεά θ' ὡς ἀνέτειλε, καὶ ὡς ποταμοὶ κελάδοντες
> αὐτῆισιν Νύμφηισι καὶ ἑρπετὰ πάντ' ἐγένοντο.
> ἤειδεν δ' ὡς πρῶτον Ὀφίων Εὐρυνόμη τε
> Ὠκεανὶς νιφόεντος ἔχον κράτος Οὐλύμποιο·
> ὥς τε βίηι καὶ χερσὶν ὁ μὲν Κρόνωι εἴκαθε τιμῆς,
> ἡ δὲ Ῥέηι, ἔπεσον δ' ἐνὶ κύμασιν Ὠκεανοῖο·
> οἱ δὲ τέως μακάρεσσι θεοῖς Τιτῆσιν ἄνασσον,
> ὄφρα Ζεὺς ἔτι κοῦρος, ἔτι φρεσὶ νήπια εἰδώς,
> Δικταῖον ναίεσκεν ὑπὸ σπέος, οἱ δέ μιν οὔ πω
> γηγενέες Κύκλωπες ἐκαρτύναντο κεραυνῶι
> βροντῆι τε στεροπῆι τε· τὰ γὰρ Διὶ κῦδος ὀπάζει.
>
> He sang of how the earth, the heavens and the sea – once upon a time united with each other in a single form – were sundered into their separate beings by deadly strife; and how a position fixed for eternity in the sky is held by the stars and the paths of the moon and the sun; how the mountains rose up, and the origin of sounding rivers with their own nymphs, and all creatures on the ground. He sang how first Ophion and Eurynome, daughter of Ocean, held power over snowy

[38] Cf. J. Griffin, 'Augustus and the poets: "Caesar qui cogere posset"', in F. Millar and E. Segal (eds.), *Caesar Augustus, Seven Aspects* (Oxford 1984) 189–219.

[39] At 4.994–1000, cf. above p. 133.

[40] Note 1.496–502 ~ *Theog.* 108–13, 1.509–11 ~ *Theog.* 139ff. For further discussion of the form of this song cf. above pp. 148–50, and see now D. P. Nelis, 'Demodocus and the song of Orpheus (Ap. Rhod. 1.496–511)', *MH* 49 (1992) forthcoming.

> Olympus, and how a violent struggle caused them to yield their positions of honour, he to Kronos and she to Rhea, and to fall into the waves of Ocean. Kronos and Rhea then ruled over the blessed Titan gods, while Zeus was still a young boy, still with the thoughts of an infant, and lived in the Diktaian cave; the earthborn Kyklopes had not yet armed him with his blazing bolts, his thunder and lightning – the weapons which guarantee Zeus his glory.

The history of the world is then continued by the scenes on the cloak Jason wears to Hypsipyle's palace on Lemnos (1.730–67) which 'begin' with the Kyklopes fashioning Zeus's weapons; as the song tells of *philia* and *neikos*, in language which is clearly intended to suggest the doctrines of Empedocles, so on the cloak scenes of *philia* and *neikos* are combined and juxtaposed.[41] This thematic insistence points to an association between the Argonauts' voyage and the history of the world.[42]

The separation of earth, heaven and the sea of which Orpheus sings would be familiar in many ancient cultures other than the Greek.[43] In particular, it would sit easily in an Egyptian context, in which 'separation' of all kinds is a central notion; heaven and earth are separated as Horus and Seth, the latter being identified with the monstrous Typhon of Greek mythology. Plutarch indeed, in associating Seth with what is 'imperious and violent' (τὸ καταδυναστεῦον καὶ καταβιαζόμενον), connects Greek dualities, such as that of Empedocles, with Egyptian ideas.[44] We cannot be certain whether or not the Egyptian ideas are relevant here, but it is clear that there is a danger that the very familiarity of this cosmogonical material within a purely Greek context may blind us to what it may have suggested within the new Ptolemaic situation.

As the history of the world moves towards the establishment of Zeus and his justice – a justice seen in the fourth book both in its sternness after the murder of Apsyrtus and in its 'humanity' through the ruling of Alcinous – so the voyage moves towards its apparently successful conclusion on the Greek mainland; we are, however, well

[41] Cf. above p. 54. ἔμπεδον αἰέν in 1.489 may, as David Sider points out, be an echo of Empedocles' punning on his own name, cf. frr. 17.11 (= 26.10), 77.1 DK. For other allusions to Empedocles in *Arg.* cf. Livrea on 4.672, Campbell 1983.129.

[42] Cf. Detienne–Vernant 1978.149, an interesting discussion marred only by the assumption that for Apollonius the *Argo* was the first ship (cf. my note on 3.340–6).

[43] For the Greek traditions reflected in the song cf. Vian, *Note complémentaire* ad loc., *RE* Suppl. 9.1469–71, Dickie 1990.278–9.

[44] *De Is.* 48–9 = *Mor.* 370c–1c.

aware that no final *telos* has been reached.[45] The voyage stages a partial, constantly interrupted, movement towards 'order'. In the Alexandrian aesthetic of this poem, we should not expect to find a consistent, steady progression; rather, we must trace a thread through the epic which is sometimes visible, but more often concealed. A central structuring of the work does, however, guide both our voyage and that of the Argonauts. It has long been recognised that the journey out and the journey back are set off against each other; the poet takes constant pains with the correspondences and tensions between the two.[46] The return journey not only operates at a level of fantasy quite beyond the outward trip, as it rewrites the central books of the *Odyssey*, but it also explicitly retraces the journey of an Egyptian civiliser, Sesostris, the legendary forerunner of Alexander and the Ptolemies themselves, a journey that took place not only before Greek culture, but before the universe reached its finished state (4.261–6);[47] the outward voyage, on the other hand, is guided by the dry, quintessentially 'Greek' ethnography of Phineus. This contrast replays, in a different mode, a progression similar to that of which Orpheus sings. These ideas are also explored in a series of scenes which, as we have come to expect in the *Argonautica*, reuse a group of motifs in a variety of registers to create widely differing effects.

The first such scene is that of the 'animals' which accompany their mistress Circe as she goes down to the sea to cleanse herself after the ill-omened dream which precedes the Argonaut's arrival:

> Her beasts – which were not uniformly like flesh-devouring beasts, nor like men, but were a jumble of different limbs – all came with her, like a large flock of sheep which follow the shepherd out of the stalls. Like these were the creatures which in earlier times the earth itself had created out of the mud, pieced together from a jumble of limbs, before it had been properly solidified by the thirsty air or the rays of the parching sun had eliminated sufficient moisture. Time then sorted these out by grouping them into proper categories. Similarly unidentifiable were the forms which followed after Circe and caused the heroes amazed astonishment. (4.672–82)

Whereas in Homer Circe's animals were tame wolves and lions, which were assumed already in antiquity to be men who had been

[45] Cf. above p. 120.

[46] For a useful overview cf. Hutchinson 1988.121–41, Williams 1991.273–94.

[47] On the similarities between Argos' speech and the *agon* between Hellas and Egypt in the opening of Plato's *Timaeus* cf. Hunter 1991b.97–8.

metamorphosed by her magic powers, here she is accompanied by strange 'mixtures', which resemble the weird, primeval monstrosities posited by Empedocles, the same philosopher to whom Apollonius' Orpheus is indebted.[48] Here the poet has taken our constant sense of witnessing events 'before Homer' almost to its logical conclusion. Just as the journey of their Egyptian model took place before the cosmos was fully fashioned (4.261ff.), so the murder of Apsyrtus forces the Argonauts to confront the very beginning of time, as expressed in the extraordinary conceptions of an archaic wise-man. It is important, however, that the poet's commentary on the amazing sight which greets the Argonauts[49] tells us that Circe's creatures were 'like' Empedocles' primeval creations, and it is stated explicitly that the Apollonian Circe regularly did bewitch her visitors (4.666–7). It is left tantalisingly unclear whether in fact the 'mixed' creatures *were* once men, but if so we can see how this Circe outdoes her Homeric self by changing men not to beasts but to the primeval ancestors of beasts.[50] There is, on one hand, an important literary pattern here. The murder of Apsyrtus, a murder carried out by deceit and with the aid of bewitching drugs (4.442),[51] culminated in the rites of *maschalismos*, in which the victim's extremities were cut off, and blood-tasting (4.477–9);[52] the meeting with Circe then hints at an outcome in which this murder is avenged by the victim's aunt, who uses deceit (cf. 4.687) and bewitching drugs to turn Jason and Medea into a sub-human jumble of limbs.[53] Zeus, however, had other plans.

At another level, this episode, like so many in the poem, enacts that fracturing of time which is so central to Apollonius' poetic project. Not only are the animals merely 'like' primeval creatures, but the self-conscious concern with variation from the Homeric Circe, who was 'really' later in time, and with a family drama conducted in a language other than Greek (4.731), creates a strong sense of both the distant past and the 'learned' present, or rather of the former as

[48] Cf. Fränkel 1968.521–4, Livrea on 4.672, Vian, *Note complémentaire* to 4.681. For the Homeric elements in this scene cf. Knight 1990.108–19.

[49] Verses 672–5 are presumably 'focalised' by the Argonauts.

[50] Fränkel 1968.524 notes how Circe's cruel magic reduces men to the same absurdities as random chance produced in the beginning.

[51] Cf. above pp. 144–5.

[52] For the evidence on these rites cf. Livrea on 4.478 and Vian, *Note complémentaire to* 4.477 and to 478.

[53] The parallelism of 'blood for blood' is made explicit at 4.668–9.

a product of the latter. The 'creation of history' is indeed a prime concern of Ptolemaic poetry, as it must have been of the Ptolemies themselves.

In the final section of the poem, visions from and of the past come thick and fast. After leaving Africa, the Argonauts are first nearly prevented from stopping on Crete by Talos, the survivor of Hesiod's violent Bronze Age, which preceded the age of heroes and of the Argonauts themselves;[54] Talos is destroyed by the powers of Medea's malevolent eyes, in a scene which, not unlike that of Circe, mixes rich poetic fantasy with pre-Socratic science[55] in a deliberate shattering of time-frames. What was accomplished in the former scene by the highly literary reworking of a Homeric model, namely a strong sense of the past as a creative invention of the present, is here reflected in a direct authorial intrusion which brings the scene out of the past into the present:[56]

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ μέγα δή μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θάμβος ἄηται,
> εἰ δὴ μὴ νούσοισι τυπῆισί τε μοῦνον ὄλεθρος
> ἀντιάει, καὶ δή τις ἀπόπροθεν ἄμμε χαλέπτει,
> ὡς ὅ γε, χάλκειός περ ἐών, ὑπόειξε δαμῆναι
> Μηδείης βρίμηι πολυφαρμάκου.
>
> Father Zeus, my mind is all aflutter with amazement, if it is true that death comes to us not only from disease and wounds, but someone far off can harm us, as that man, bronze though he was, yielded to destruction through the grim power of Medea, mistress of drugs. (4.1673–7)

By writing this clash of Titan magic with the last remnant of the Bronze Age as a kind of inversion of a Homeric duel – it very deliberately takes place *outside* throwing distance and closes with an 'Iliadic' simile in which Talos crashes to the ground like a great fir-tree –[57] Apollonius again uses the technique of what may be

[54] Cf. above pp. 127–8.

[55] Cf. Dickie 1990 citing Democritus fr. 123 DK. Dickie argues that 'Apollonius has integrated his borrowings from Democritus fully into his account'; maybe, but 'integration' is not necessarily a desirable goal in the Apollonian aesthetic. For another such case (the tears of the Heliades) cf. Dufner 1988.231–2.

[56] For the technique in general cf. above p. 105. In the present example, the obvious view that a mannered expression of amazement actually reveals disbelief is too simple.

[57] Medea's opening words 'I believe that by myself I can destroy that man ...' also suggest the Homeric tradition of single combat. There is, of course, also inversion of the Homeric Cyclops who throws massive boulders in an attempt to prevent his visitors from leaving, rather than from ever arriving. Like Polyphemus, it is through his eyes that Talos is attacked.

called 'literary anachronism' in order to create effects of time disjunction, which strongly suggest that, though the events narrated may have 'happened' long ago, the poet's concerns are very much of the present.

The second primal terror which confronts the Argonauts – immediately after they have left Crete – is the black *chaos* which envelops them and from which they are saved by Apollo in response to Jason's urgent prayers. The gleam from Apollo's bow reveals to their eyes a tiny island, which they call Anaphe ('The Revealed') and where they found a cult of Apollo Aigletes ('the Gleamer'). *Chaos* is familiar from Hesiod (*Theog.* 116) as the 'nothingness' which preceded the various stages of creation, and it is significantly juxtaposed by Hesiod to the joy that Apollo brings on Olympus. As with Talos on Crete, the Argonauts can here only claim one of the traditional sites associated with them after overcoming an earlier level of the cosmic order.[58] Thus, whereas the final stages of the outward journey to Colchis were marked by ethnographies which moved gradually away from the Greek pattern, the Argonauts' final approach to the Greek mainland becomes a series of cosmic progressions towards the 'present' – and indeed the future, promised to them by the continuing renown of the epic (4.1773–4). This closing section of the poem thus forms a ring with the song Orpheus sang before they set out, and confirms our impression of the expedition as a 'voyage through time'; it is the very literariness of the epic, its dependence upon our knowing co-operation, that establishes the 'present', not as a generation or so before the action of the *Iliad*, but as third-century Alexandria.

The final scene in this series is Euphemos' prophetic dream about the clod of earth which he received from Triton in North Africa:

> After they had untied their ropes from that island also, blessed with fair weather, Euphemos then remembered a dream he had had in the night, as he paid honour to the glorious son of Maia. He dreamed that the divine clod was in his arms at his breast and was nourished by white drops of milk, and from the clod, small though it was, came a woman looking like a young virgin. Overcome by irresistible desire he made love to her, but lamented as though he had bedded his own daughter whom he had nursed with his own milk. She, however, consoled him with gentle words:
>
> 'I am of the race of Triton, I, my friend, am your children's nurse, not your daughter, for my parents are Triton and Libya. Entrust me to the maiden daughters of Nereus so that I may dwell in the sea near Anaphe.

[58] On Apollonius' *chaos* cf. Detienne–Vernant 1978.154–7, Livrea 1987.189–90.

Later I shall go towards the sun's rays, when I am ready for your descendants.' (4.1731–45)

Jason correctly interprets this dream as an instruction to cast the clod into the sea; from it arises an island, Kalliste ('the most beautiful'), which subsequently became Thera from where (though we are not explicitly told this) Cyrene was settled.[59] The possible Ptolemaic relevance of such a myth has already been noted, but here I wish to call attention to it as the culmination of the 'cosmogonical' series under discussion. Whereas the conquest of Talos apparently removed the last vestiges of violent brutalism, and rescue from the *chaos* proved the gracious power of Apollo, as representative of the 'new' Olympian order, so the story of the clod projects the Argonauts themselves into the future through their descendants, while placing them at the mythic scene of the creation of the Aegean islands. Euphemos' dream shows clearly that *philia* has replaced *neikos* as the creative impulse (cf. 4.1737 ἐν φιλότητι, 1741 ὦ φίλε).

In considering the hymnic coda to the poem, I have already noted that the 'heroic' status of the Argonauts and the annual repetition in song of their deeds are central to an understanding of that passage.[60] The achievement of that status is indissolubly linked both to Jason's progress (and that of the young heroes as a group) from young man to adult warrior, and to the material development of Greek culture as told in the *aitia* and foundation legends with which the poem abounds. Both these strands in the poem and the cosmogonic elements I have traced represent various sorts of change, and indeed progress, towards a positively evaluated Greek culture. The argument of this section has been that these developments would assume particular significance in the context of the Ptolemies' self-projection as the heirs and transmitters of traditional Greek culture in a changed world. This is not, of course, to say that the *Argonautica* is part of any 'organisation of opinion' by the Ptolemies. No reading of this epic as 'simple panegyric' is possible, and not only because of its mythic subject-matter. Jason is far too problematic a figure, the 'aesthetics of fracture' too all-pervasive, and the story of the last two books too troubled and troubling to allow a simple representation of any kind

[59] Cf. above Chap. 6 n. 7. The various motifs of the dream are all readily identifiable in the surviving oneirocritical literature; cf. esp. Artemidorus 1.16 (man with lactating breasts signifying children), 1.78 (sleeping with a daughter). For the cosmogonic aspect of Apollonius' narrative cf. also Calame 1990.321.

[60] Cf. above pp. 128–9.

of values, Hellenic, Ptolemaic, or whatever. There is nothing like Virgil's Jupiter with his cosmic plan for the greatness of a chosen people; nor should we expect this. On the other hand, I hope that it is now clear that a reading which encompasses a form of 'panegyric' is not only possible, but perhaps inevitable. Such a reading will, of course, always be a partial one, and may therefore be deemed unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, one reader at least has understood that the *Argonautica* is not simply a private scholarly exercise, quite remote from the social and political setting in which it was created. That reader was Virgil.

CHAPTER 7

Argonautica *and* Aeneid

The study of how the *Argonautica* is exploited in the *Aeneid* has a long, and occasionally distinguished, history.[1] That it has not advanced further than it has is due to a number of factors, most notably the relative paucity of serious literary critical work on Apollonius' epic; until we have learned to appreciate the *Argonautica*, we can hardly expect to understand how Virgil read it and used it. Moreover, too much of what has been written on this subject – particularly by critics whose primary interest is in the *Aeneid* – betrays a depressing unwillingness to take the Greek poem seriously, indeed often to read all of it, as Virgil manifestly did,[2] with care and attention, let alone with the same critical awareness that is taken for granted in the reading of Virgil. Until very recently, the working assumption of

[1] Rütten 1912 is a much criticised (cf. P. Jahn, *BPhW* 34 (1914) 171–3; Hügi 1952.14–15), but very suggestive collection of material; it is certainly more interesting than Conrardy 1904 which is safer and less adventurous. Rütten's brand of *Quellenforschung* is now unfashionable, but such work was an inevitable and necessary first step; the fact that he was unable or unwilling to separate the gold from the dross does not diminish the value of the gold. Hügi 1952 now properly holds the field, but it is due for replacement; much of what is generally agreed is usefully summarised by Briggs 1981. A breakthrough was promised by the title of W. Clausen's *Virgil's Aeneid and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1987), but no overall view of Virgil's strategy emerges beyond the individual detail, cf. P. Hardie, *CP* 84 (1989) 354–8. F. Mehmel, *Virgil und Apollonios Rhodios, Untersuchungen über die Zeitvorstellung in der antiken epischen Erzählung* (Hamburg 1940) is a specialised monograph on one aspect of epic technique. Of smaller-scale work, J. D. M. Preshous, 'Apollonius Rhodius and Virgil', *PVS* 4 (1965) 1–17, contains a number of perceptive observations, particularly about *Aen.* 4, and is only marred because Preshous felt compelled to enter the pointless debate about the relative merits of the two poets; Feeney 1986 is an excellent example of a detailed study of one theme. The entry 'Apollonio Rodio' in the *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* (1 224–6) is desperately inadequate. Comprehensive treatments of this subject by Damien Nelis and Charles Beye are awaited. Through the kindness of Dr Nelis, I was able to see a copy of Nelis 1988, but only after the completion of my own work; where possible, I have added references to this dissertation.

[2] Presumably both in Greek and in the Latin version of Varro Atacinus; the evidence does not, I think, allow us to go beyond 'presumably', cf. Rütten 1912. 12–15. It is an easy guess that, had Varro's poem survived, we would find passages where Virgil has 'conflated' an echo of Varro's version of Apollonius with one of his own.

much criticism, whether openly admitted or not, was the great superiority of Virgil as an epic poet, and the purpose of that criticism was to demonstrate the assumption; most surprising of all, this remained largely true even where it was acknowledged that we are dealing with two radically different poetic projects requiring very different approaches.[3] A belief in the superiority of one or the other poet, if based on close study, is harmless enough, and indeed appears to answer a 'natural' desire to create hierarchies of merit; if used, however, to block off interpretation such a belief (or assumption) becomes a form of pernicious philistinism.

Even one of the major preliminary tasks, the collection of material, remains uncompleted; in 1952 Hügi felt able to assert that 'it is by and large clear where Virgil imitated Apollonius',[4] but this was certainly premature. It is true that 'the profundities of poetic influence cannot be reduced to source-study, to the history of ideas, to the patterning of images',[5] but these are necessary stages of criticism, particularly when we are concerned in general with a poetic and rhetorical culture which placed heavy emphasis on creative *mimesis/imitatio* of one's predecessors,[6] and, in particular, with two poems in which allusion is so obviously an important constructor of meaning; both epics have a clear 'historical self-consciousness'[7] expressed through allusion. The study of Virgil's use of Homer has been well served in this century;[8] Apollonius and Virgil present different problems, requiring different solutions, because of the varying weight Virgil attached to his two Greek forerunners. Homer has an unchallenged importance for Virgil, carrying in the *Aeneid*, to quote Thomas Greene, 'the special status of that root the work privileges

[3] The extremely influential discussion of Otis 1964, particularly 62ff., almost falls into this category. Otis realised that Apollonius was not trying to be monolithically 'Homeric', and he has many good things to say about discontinuities in the narrative; his analysis is spoiled, however, because an *idée fixe* about Apollonius' interests and methods led him to almost incredibly banal interpretations (p. 89 on similes and *ekphraseis* in *Arg.* is a good example).

[4] Hügi 1952.3.

[5] Bloom 1973.7. Bloom's powerful and attractive reading of 'the anxiety of influence' has had a mixed reception in classical studies. It is, I believe, broadly helpful for understanding Alexandrian poetry, provided that it is remembered that Bloom is resolutely modern in his interests and sees this particular 'anxiety' as a specifically modern phenomenon (1973.8,11), while of course acknowledging the still potent 'paternity' of Homer for all western literature (cf. *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford 1975) 33–5).

[6] For helpful surveys cf. D. A. Russell, 'De imitatione', in D. A. West and T. Woodman (eds.), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge 1979) 1–16, Greene 1982.54–80.

[7] For this phrase cf. Greene 1982.17.

[8] Landmarks are, of course, Heinze 1915 and Knauer 1964. The work of Gian Biagio Conte has been important in forcing classicists to address the theoretical issues.

by its self-constructed myth of origins'.[9] Hügi rightly followed a traditional path of scholarship in distinguishing between Virgilian *aemulatio* of Homer, which he saw as the Roman poet's principal artistic motivation, and the constant reflection of Apollonian motifs and passages throughout the *Aeneid*, which amounted not so much to *aemulatio* as to a way of writing which was thoroughly 'Hellenistic' and 'neoteric'. Such a distinction must, however, be placed in the context of how each of the later poets uses Homer; it will emerge that Virgil uses the *Argonautica* in a more systematic way than Hügi's analysis may suggest.

Apollonius and Virgil share many techniques of Homeric *mimesis*,[10] although it is misleading to assert that 'Vergil imitates Homer ... as a Hellenistic poet would, as Apollonius did.'[11] It is misleading in part because of the fundamental difference in the poetic project of the two poets. The *Aeneid* displays a staggering stylistic and tonal unity which is quite un-Alexandrian in its effect; this is not, of course, to say that the Roman epic is monolithic in either style or subject, but the contrast with, say, the stylistic *uariatio* of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* will strike any reader. This overt imposition by the poet of an all-encompassing vision and control, a feature which the *Aeneid* shares with the Homeric poems and which indeed is part of Virgil's recreation of Homer, has been an important element in modern notions of what constitutes epic, and its absence from the *Argonautica* is not the least cause of the poor critical reception of that poem. The *Argonautica* is a constantly experimental text, which rejoices in its stylistic and material unevennesses. Whereas the opening of Virgil's poem announces a 'Roman Homer', the opening of the *Argonautica* announces that 'this is not Homer',[12] and it is clear that Virgil understood this and used it for his own purposes.

Apollonius' use of Homer, Virgil's use of Apollonius, and Virgil's use of Homer are inter-related studies. While the *Argonautica* is a voyage through the Homeric texts,[13] Virgil voyages past and beyond both Greek epics. Whereas Apollonius had paradoxically shown us a world constructed from Homer but crucially 'before Homer', Virgil

[9] Greene 1982.19. Cf. also G. B. Conte, *Virgilio. Il genere e i suoi confini* (Milan 1984) 150–3.

[10] Helpful summary of such techniques in the fifth chapter of Knauer 1964.

[11] Clausen 1987. p. x. For an excellent appreciation of what is un-Alexandrian in Virgil's reworking of Homer cf. A. Barchiesi, *La traccia del modello* (Pisa 1984); more briefly, Hutchinson 1988.328–9.

[12] Cf. above p. 119.

[13] Cf. above pp. 119–29.

presents a world already visited and marked by both Homer and Apollonius, and he structures an opposition between his two predecessors which bears a heavy weight of meaning. Nowhere is this prior marking of the world clearer than in Aeneas' account in *Aeneid* 3 of the Trojans' journey from Troy to Carthage, and a brief look at this narrative sequence will illustrate one way in which Virgil uses the opposition of allusion which he creates.

(i) *AENEID* 3 AND THE 'IDEA' OF THE *ARGONAUTICA*

It is broadly true that in the first half of *Aeneid* 3 rewriting of the *Argonautica* is particularly prominent, whereas 'Homer' dominates the second half. The strange encounter with the corpse of Polydorus with which the book opens reworks quite closely elements of the account in *Arg.* 3 of how Medea gathers sap from the root of the 'Prometheion' plant (3.846–66).[14] I shall return shortly to the importance of the fact that it is to Apollonius whom Virgil turns for the mysterious, the magical, the 'gruesome', but we may note here how what brings safety in the *Argonautica* (Medea's potion) is rejected in the *Aeneid*: the new Troy is not to be founded in the style or the aesthetics of the Hellenistic epic – from such a vision Aeneas and his men must flee (3.44).[15] A rather similar conclusion may be drawn from Anchises' misinterpretation of Apollo's instruction to the Trojans to 'seek [their] ancient mother' (3.96). Anchises' speech, in which he interprets this advice to mean that they should make for Crete, draws upon Argos' narrative to the Argonauts of the 'different route' by which to return to Greece (4.256–93).[16] The Argonauts' route has divine approval (4.294–7), but the Trojans travel on the basis of an erroneous reading of the divine voice. Here the Apollonian model is a false trail which defers the *telos* of the voyage, but a false trail which is finally ended by another Apollonian motif.

[14] Note especially *Aen.* 3.26–33 ~ *Arg.* 3.856–8 ('dark gore' as the roots are cut), *Aen.* 3.39–40 ~ *Arg.* 3.865–6 (the groans of the victim). Virgil's version exploits Apollonius' comparison of the root to 'new-cut flesh' (3.875, cf. my note ad loc.). An important effect of Virgil's scene is the contrast between Aeneas' horror and Medea's control of such appalling drugs, cf. above pp. 59–60.

[15] The echo of v. 44 in Achaemenides' words at the end of the book (3.639) points to another rejected 'culture'. Just as Odysseus' wanderings confront him with a succession of societies which define by contrast the ideal, settled society of Ithaca, so *Aeneid* 3 presents a series of potential 'Romes', none of which is to be fulfilled; Carthage is, of course, the most important such site.

[16] I have discussed this in detail in Hunter 1991b.94–9.

Stranded in parched and plague-ridden Crete, like the Argonauts in burning Libya,[17] Aeneas and his men are saved by the nocturnal appearance of the Penates to Aeneas, just as the 'heroines' appear to Jason in the mid-day heat.[18] The replacement of Apollonius' local divinities by *effigies sacrae diuum Phrygiique penates*, with all the nationalist religious resonance they carry and which echoes through the whole poem, is a good illustration of Virgil's different conception of the 'unity' of epic. Apollonius rather looks to variety and fracture.

After leaving Crete the Trojans are overtaken by a storm (which owes much to the black *chaos* at the end of *Arg.* 4), and then encounter the Harpies on the islands of the Strophades. Here the Apollonian texture is very obvious and has long been acknowledged;[19] so too the prophecy and advice of Helenus explicitly replays the advice of Phineus to the Argonauts, as well, of course, as its obvious debt to Phineus' model, the Homeric Circe.[20] As the voyage continues, motifs and echoes of Apollonius' poem constantly remind us that this is a voyage past and away from an Argonautic landscape,[21] and a voyage which will nearly come to a disastrous and premature conclusion at the court of Dido, a character who is Virgil's most famous rewriting of Apollonius.

Aeneid 3 thus shows how the *Argonautica* is important for Virgil, not merely as a source of motifs and as a major Hellenistic text to be echoed as part of the usual process of exploiting and acknowledging one's literary heritage, but also as an 'idea' which represents much more than the import of any particular borrowed passage. In creating his own poetic space, Virgil was both interrupting and going beyond the interplay which Apollonius had set up between his epic and those of Homer. When Virgil came to create something entirely new, the *Argonautica* was there, as was Catullus 64, as a challenge to Homer, as a text that could be set up as 'other', and used to

[17] Virgil seems to have in mind particularly the simile of *Arg.* 4.1280–9 ('... like men waiting to be finished off by plague ...'); *aegra trahebant* | *corpora* (3.140–1) may reflect ἤλυον ἑρπύζοντες of the Argonauts at 4.1289.

[18] Cf. above p. 126.

[19] Cf. Briggs 1981. 973–4 for bibliography.

[20] Like Phineus, Helenus is careful only to reveal what the Trojans may know (3.379–80), and his urgent warnings to Aeneas to supplicate Juno (3.433–40) replay Phineus' advice concerning Kypris (*Arg.* 2.423–4).

[21] Note that in avoiding Ithaca (3.272–3) the Trojans not only avoid 'the old enemy', but also mark their difference from the Argonauts; Ithaca is not mentioned in the *Argonautica*, close though it is, because in a literary sense it does not 'exist' before Homer made it famous. So too Aeneas races past Phaeacia (3.291), the scene of a lengthy section of *Arg.* 4.

evoke areas of poetic experimentation and emotion that the Homeric poems (and the heroic 'idea' that 'Homer' embodied)[22] either blocked off or could be represented as having done so. Allusion to a specific passage of the *Argonautica* may thus also direct us more generally, to a different, un-Homeric, aesthetic. It is also worth noting that the obvious importance of the *Argonautica* for Catullus 64 and the fact that it was translated by the neoteric Varro of Atax suggest that Virgil took over and developed a view of Apollonius' epic which was already current in Roman poetic practice.

This way of using the *Argonautica* is not, of course, limited to *Aeneid* 3, but an attempt at an exhaustive treatment is not my intention here. In the next section I shall explore how Virgil uses this poetic technique across a large body of text and in connection with some of his most central concerns. One further small-scale example may, however, clarify the issue. In *Aeneid* 9 the Trojan ships escape, when threatened with fire, by diving into the depths 'like dolphins' to re-emerge as sea-nymphs, for so had Jupiter agreed with the Great Mother at the time the trees were felled to make the fleet (*Aen.* 9.77–122); in Book 10 the metamorphosed ships reappear to warn Aeneas of the danger (10.215–59). It is well understood that these passages make important use of both the *Argonautica* and Catullus 64,[23] but Virgil's overall strategy deserves comment in the present context. The striking uniqueness of this fantastic event within the narrative of the *Aeneid* clearly creates a contrast between the easy saving of the ships and the grim realities of war which loom before the human participants.[24] This miraculous 'other' which obeys different laws is portrayed through extensive reminiscence of the *Argonautica*; Apollonius is here used again to signal the operation of a quite different, almost un-epic, aesthetic.

(ii) CIRCE, MEDEA, DIDO

It is, of course, a great simplification to suggest, as I have, that Virgil uses Homer and Apollonius as two opposed 'ideas' or ends of

[22] It will, I hope, be obvious that my present concern is not with an interpretation of the Homeric poems, but with 'Homer' and 'Apollonius' as meaningful ideas which Virgil could play off against each other.

[23] Cf. Hügi 1952.67–9; P. Hardie, 'Ships and ship-names in the *Aeneid*', in M. Whitby, P. Hardie and M. Whitby (eds.), *Homo Viator. Classical Essays for John Bramble* (Bristol 1987) 163–71; Nelis 1988.376–8; E. Fantham, '*Nymphas ... e nauibus esse*: decorum and poetic fiction in *Aeneid* 9.77–122 and 10.215–59', *CP* 85 (1990) 102–19.

[24] Cf. R. D. Williams in Harrison 1990.35.

an epic spectrum. Virgil, of all poets, does not operate with unproblematic dichotomies or simple moral absolutes. In section (iii) of this chapter I will consider a case where Virgil has in fact 'read' the *Argonautica* as foreshadowing some of his own central concerns, where, to put it crudely, the *Argonautica* is treated as more 'same' than 'other'. On the other hand, the oppositional framework which I have described may be helpful in considering briefly the most notorious case of a close textual relation between the two poems. The details of the rewriting of Medea in Dido are generally familiar enough to allow discussion to remain at the level of overall poetic strategy;[25] I begin with a famous passage which is in many ways emblematic of the kinds of literary relations with which I am concerned.

At the end of *Aeneid* 1 the bard Iopas entertains Dido and her guests with a cosmological song:

> tum Bitiae dedit increpitans; ille impiger hausit
> spumantem pateram et pleno se proluit auro;
> post alii proceres. cithara crinitus Iopas
> personat aurata, docuit quem maximus Atlas.
> hic canit errantem lunam solisque labores,
> unde hominum genus et pecudes, unde imber et ignes,
> Arcturum pluuiasque Hyadas geminosque Triones,
> quid tantum Oceano properent se tingere soles
> hiberni, uel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet;
> ingeminant plausu Tyrii, Troesque sequuntur.
> nec non et uario noctem sermone trahebat
> infelix Dido longumque bibebat amorem,
> multa super Priamo rogitans, super Hectore multa ...
>
> (*Aen.* 1.738–50)

Virgil has here replaced Demodocus' song of Ares and Aphrodite in *Odyssey* 8 with a song which, while nodding to rationalising interpretations of Demodocus' song, draws its main poetic inspiration from Lucretius and from the song of the Apollonian Orpheus which calms the quarrel between Idmon and Idas.[26] The Argonautic song

[25] For the details cf., e.g., Pease's notes on *Aen.* 4 *passim*, Hügi 1952.79ff., Briggs 1981.959–69. On the 'Romanisation' of Dido see especially Monti 1981.

[26] For the song cf. above pp. 162–3. There is a large bibliography on Iopas' song: see esp. C. Segal, 'The song of Iopas in the *Aeneid*', *Hermes* 99 (1971) 336–49; Hardie 1986.52–66; Brown 1990. The debt to the song of Silenus in *Eclogue* 6 and to Virgil's own poetic prayer at *Georg.* 2.475–82 means that in one sense Dido and Aeneas are entertained by Virgil himself, an amusing idea that owes not a little to the special place of Orpheus in the *Argonautica*, and to ancient identifications of Demodocus as Homer.

is a prelude to the journey, the song of Iopas (like the songs of Demodocus) to the narration of a journey just past.[27] Orpheus' song is closely tied to its context: the Empedoclean *neikos* theme clearly refers to the dispute between Idmon and Idas which has just occurred, and in telling of the origins of the present Olympian order Orpheus foreshadows the inevitable retribution which one day will fall upon the blasphemous Idas.[28] Iopas' song, on the other hand, framed and set off by the two contrasted references to drinking (vv. 738–9, 749), seems remote from the poetic concerns around it, but the very clear allusion to Idas (cf. *Arg.* 1.472–4) in the account of Bitias' greedy drinking suggests that the Apollonian context is important in the *Aeneid* also. In Virgil's narrative, rather than Iopas' song, Dido is falling in love, but it is a love which will lead to 'deadly strife' both between Dido and Aeneas and eventually between Carthage and Rome. The memory of Orpheus' song reinforces the pathos of *infelix* (v. 749) in foreshadowing the 'separation' which lies ahead; in as much as Dido and Aeneas represent two worlds, this is in one sense truly a cosmic separation, which one day will lead to the creation of the new Roman order. The book that began with a 'Homeric' proem closes with an 'Argonautic' epilogue, thus marking out the ground over which Virgil's epic will be written. The structural framework which I have sketched makes it clear why it is with Dido's court – the site of danger which imperils the whole Roman undertaking – that the 'Argonautic' elements are primarily associated. Before pursuing these threads in Book 4 I wish to pick them up in the opening of Book 7, as Aeneas arrives in Latium, in order to show how this creative reuse of the *Argonautica* is by no means confined to one particular area of the poem.

Aeneas' arrival in Latium reworks and varies his earlier arrival at Carthage,[29] and with it the primary Greek models of that arrival – not only Odysseus' arrivals at the court of Alcinous and then Ithaca[30] but also the close of Book 2 of the *Argonautica*, in which the crew arrives at the Phasis, and the invocation to Erato which opens Book 3. Subsequent events of *Aeneid* 7 indeed follow quite closely the

[27] On the cosmic theme as appropriate to epic travelling cf. D. M. Gaunt, 'The creation-theme in epic poetry', *Comp. Lit.* 29 (1977) 213–20.

[28] κεραυνῶι in 1.510 is particularly menacing, cf. Theocr. 22.211 αὐτὸν δὲ φλογέωι συνέφλεξε [sc. ὁ Ζεὺς] κεραυνῶι. Cf. further above pp. 162–3.

[29] Cf., e.g., Knauer 1964.229–31; Fordyce on 7.194ff.; W. Görler, 'Aeneas' Ankunft in Latium', *WJA* 2 (1976) 165–79.

[30] Cf., e.g., Knauer 1964.227–8.

scheme of the opening scenes of *Arg.* 3:[31] to Aietes and Medea correspond Latinus and Lavinia; the *ekphrasis* of the temple-palace at *Aen.* 7.170–91 corresponds to that of the fabulous palace of Aietes (3.215–46);[32] Latinus' speech of welcome and enquiry follows that of Aietes at 3.304–16, and Ilioneus' reply has important features in common with Argos' speech at 3.320–66.[33] The Apollonian texture hereabouts is very thick, and it will be worth considering in rather more detail one character shared by all three epic poets, namely Medea's aunt Circe.

In order to reach the Tiber, the Trojans sail safely past the domain of Circe which Virgil, like Apollonius, places on the coast of Italy between Rome and Naples. In sailing past Circe with Poseidon/Neptune's help, Virgil is obviously bidding farewell to the world of the *Odyssey*, in which Poseidon was anything but 'helpful', but it is a particular vision of that world. This Circe is *diues*, 'rich' (7.11), an epithet which points towards a special view of her.[34] The Homeric 'witch' was commonly allegorised in antiquity as the embodiment of that irrational pursuit of pleasure which turns men into animals; in particular, Circe was interpreted as the harlot after whom men lusted, thus reducing themselves to the level of beasts.[35] In this interpretation she represents luxury and riches (which men lose in their senseless pursuit of gratification). Virgil points us towards this view of her by the echo in vv. 15–16, *hinc exaudiri gemitus iraeque leonum | uincla recusantum*, of the description of Tartarus at 6.557–8, *hinc*

[31] Cf. Rütten 1912.78–9; Nelis 1988.305–32.

[32] The 'realism' of the Virgilian description (cf. Fordyce ad loc.) is in significant contrast to the luxurious fantasy of Aietes' palace.

[33] Ilioneus' denial of a storm reverses both Argos' opening and his own speech to Dido at *Aen.* 1.535–8; note also 3.333–4 ~ *Aen.* 7.217, 3.363–4 ~ *Aen.* 7.219–20, 3.352–4 ~ *Aen.* 7.234–5.

[34] *diues* is normally referred merely to the apparent grandeur of Circe's lifestyle in the *Odyssey*, cf. *Od.* 10.210–11, 252–3, 348ff., 365–70; for Ovid's expansion of this motif cf. *Met.* 14.261–3 (and 2.1ff. for the Palace of the Sun). Two other resonances in the epithet are worth considering: (i) *diues*, suggesting *Plouton*, the Greek king of the Underworld. For the chthonic associations of the Virgilian Circe see P. R. Hardie, 'Augustan poets and the mutability of Rome', in A. Powell (ed.), *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* (London 1992) 59–82. (ii) Varro derives *diues* from *diuus* (*LL* 5.92, cf. *TLL* v 1.1587.33–6), and both Circe and Calypso, whom Virgil conflates with Circe, are commonly called in Homer δῖα θεάων.

[35] Cf. Hor. *Epist.* 1.2.23–6; Kaiser 1964.200–13. For Circe and riches see esp. Palladas, *AP* 10.50. The significance of the moralising view of Circe to *Aeneid* 7 was seen by K. J. Reckford, *AJP* 82 (1961) 255. In the Circe-episode in *Arg.* the substitution of 'Empedoclean mixtures' (above pp. 164–5) prevents us from activating the moralising reading of Circe; Apollonius thereby concentrates the moral force of the scene exclusively upon the 'sinful' state of Circe's visitors.

exaudiri gemitus et saeua sonare | uerbera, tum stridor ferri tractaeque catenae; according to a view very widespread in ancient literature,[36] excessive indulgence in the world above is punished in the afterlife, and in the Virgilian Tartarus it is precisely the greedy and avaricious who form the largest group (*Aen.* 6.610–11). This is the moral degradation which *pius ... Aeneas* leaves behind as he heads for a Latium where more primitive and respectable virtues and values are prominent.

It is, of course, Dido who is the 'Circe' in Aeneas' past,[37] and the picture of the weaving *diues ... Solis filia ... arguto tenuis percurrens pectine telas* (*Aen.* 7.11–14) seems specifically to echo the description of Aeneas as Mercury finds him in Carthage:

> atque illi stellatus iaspide fulua
> ensis erat Tyrioque ardebat murice laena
> demissa ex umeris, diues quae munera Dido
> fecerat, et tenui telas discreuerat auro.
>
> (*Aen.* 4.261–4)

The 'moral message' of the Mercury scene as a whole seems particularly clear. The explicit reference to the god's role as *psychopompos* (4.242–3) directs our attention to Hermes' only such appearance in Homer, at the opening of *Odyssey* 24: Odysseus had returned, killed the suitors and been reunited with his lawful wife; Aeneas, however, has not reached the 'home' where a *regia coniunx* awaits him, but is dallying in North Africa with his 'Circe/Calypso'. Mercury's descent to earth (*Aen.* 4.246–58) reworks Eros' descent in *Arg.* 3;[38] whereas Eros flew down to make Medea fall in love, Mercury descends to separate Aeneas from his 'Medea'.

diues ... Dido (4.263) is one of many references to the wealth of Tyre and Carthage,[39] and his splendid robe shows that Aeneas has accommodated himself to that wealth. The literary ancestry of the cloak is a rich one also: the 'double cloak of purple' in which the Apollonian Jason visits Hypsipyle is the most immediate forerunner;[40]

[36] See esp. Pl. *Gorgias* 525a, and Lucian's Menippean writings.

[37] For Circe and Dido cf. Knauer 1964.209–18; C. Segal, 'Circean temptations: Homer, Vergil, Ovid', *TAPA* 99 (1968) 419–42, at 428–36.

[38] Atlas in Virgil replaces the great eastern mountains of *Arg.* 3.161–3. For discussion of Virgil's scene cf. J. H. W. Morwood, 'Aeneas and Mount Atlas', *JRS* 75 (1985) 51–9 (which, however, ignores the use of Apollonius).

[39] Programmatically placed is 1.14, and note too Dido's final appearance in the poem, 11.72–5, echoing 4.261–4. For other passages cf. Pease on 4.75 (*opes*).

[40] Cf. above pp. 52–3 for the Homeric model (*Od.* 19.221ff.). Servius on 4.262 notes that *laena est ... proprie toga duplex.*

Jason's cloak was like the sun (1.725–6), Aeneas' 'burned bright' (*ardebat*). Hypsipyle and Dido are both hindrances to the fulfilment of heroic missions; Aeneas' cloak, *demissa ex umeris*,[41] recalls not only Jason's cloak as a whole, but also the depiction on it of Aphrodite with Ares' shield, the clasp of her dress undone to reveal her breast. Like this scene, Aeneas' current behaviour is both delaying the war, the *negotium* (cf. 4.271), which lies ahead, and also 'adulterous' in that, though Dido considers herself 'married' to Aeneas, it threatens to deny the *regia coniunx* who awaits in Italy. This paradox, pointed by Mercury's use of *uxorius* (v.266), marks the inversion of what is proper which Carthage represents, and it is echoes of the *Argonautica* which characterise the twin dangers of *amor* and *aurum*, dangers which Aeneas finally skirts as he sails up the Latin coast in the opening of Book 7.[42]

The choice of Erato (7.37) as the Muse under whose aegis the poet is to tell of *horrida bella,* | ... *acies actosque animis in funera reges* has always posed a critical puzzle. This is the Muse whose name signifies *eros* and under whose patronage Apollonius told the story of Medea (3.1–5). Many modern interpretations are variants of the view found in Servius that Erato stands for any Muse; we are thus not to think particularly of her association with *eros* as the proposed match with Lavinia has nothing to do with *eros*.[43] Such a view is, however, based on too modern, perhaps too romantic, a conception of the spheres in which *eros* operates; public and political marriages are also presided over by this power. Any doubt that we are to think of the Virgilian Erato as specifically 'erotic' ought to be removed by the description of Lavinia as *iam matura uiro, iam plenis nubilis annis* (7.53). Rather, it is the very contrast between the consuming and destructive loves of Medea and Dido, here negatively evaluated, and the political bond – positively evaluated – which Lavinia represents that is highlighted

[41] Commentators are divided between 'hanging from the shoulders' and 'let down off the shoulders'; choice between these does not affect the presence of the Apollonian echo.

[42] Cf. the parallel curses of 3.56–7 and 4.412.

[43] Cf., e.g., F. Klingner, *Virgil: Bucolica Georgica Aeneis* (Zurich 1967) 497; I. Mariotti, 'Il secondo proemio dell' Eneide', in *Letterature comparate, problemi e metodo. Studi in onore di Ettore Paratore* (Bologna 1981) 1 459–66; R. F. Thomas, 'From *recusatio* to commitment: the evolution of the Virgilian programme', *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 5 (1985) 61–73, at 64 n.11. For more complex views cf. K. J. Reckford, *AJP* 82 (1961) 256–7; M. C. J. Putnam, *AJP* 91 (1970) 417–18; Nelis 1988.299–304. The proposed match (and mutual feelings) between Lavinia and Turnus must also not be left out of account. The invocation is set within the framework of normal Virgilian practice by G. B. Conte, 'Proems in the middle', *YCS* 29 (1992) 147–59.

by the echo of the opening of *Argonautica* 3. The juxtaposition of Erato to a 'new *Iliad*' marks the *Argonautica* as a crucial text by which the poet defines his difference. Just as the opening and closing of *Aeneid* 1 mapped out an opposition between the two Greek epics which Virgil will use to mark the significance of his own poem, so this close juxtaposition at the start of the second half of the poem renews that creative tension. To what extent the adoption of the *Argonautica* and, specifically, of the many-layered relationship of Jason and Medea must inevitably destabilise a 'new *Iliad*' is something to which I shall return briefly at the end of the chapter.

In turning back now to the debt of Dido to Medea, we can see that in the area of the definition and interaction of public and private the *Argonautica* was a crucial text for Virgil. Already in the *Odyssey*, Nausicaa had raised the possibility – in claiming to be horrified at it – of her choice of husband being contrary to the wishes and perceived interests of the people of Phaeacia (*Od.* 6.273–88); it is one of the ironies of that text that Alcinous has no sooner seen Odysseus than he desires him as a son-in-law (*Od.* 7.311–16). The *Odyssey*, therefore, both lays the foundation for the later development of the motif through Medea and Dido, and presents a situation where 'political' interest and the personal desires of the princess match. Indeed, when Nausicaa is unable openly to reveal to her father her true motives in wanting to wash her clothes after Athena has planted 'erotic' thoughts in her head, her father sees through her 'deceit' and grants her her wish. In reworking the character and situation of Nausicaa in his presentation of Medea, Apollonius stresses that she acts without her parents' knowledge and consent, a consent which would never be given, and against the interests and desires of the people.[44] Medea's actions shatter the familial and 'political' solidarity evident on Homer's Phaeacia. The marriage of Jason and Medea on Drepane is, in one sense, a public matter celebrated with due ceremony, but it is conducted at night in an atmosphere of secrecy and deception,[45] in a scene which highlights the discrepancies between public policy and private position. Moreover, the constant imminence of Euripides' *Medea*, a play in which Medea is abandoned for pragmatic 'reasons of state' and in which her revenge destroys the royal family, reinforces this disastrous clash of 'private' and 'public'.

[44] Cf. my note on 3.1236–9.
[45] Cf. above pp. 70–1, 145.

Unlike Medea, Dido holds real power in a position of public responsibility: Anna's arguments for giving in to *amor* are precisely based upon the matter of public, political advantage (4.39–49) – alliance with Aeneas will bring *urbs* and *regnum*, the very things that her unsatisfied desire is in fact presently putting at risk (cf. 4.86–9). The potential chasm which may be opened between a princess's personal desires and the good of her father's people, a chasm hinted at in the *Odyssey* and fully explored in the *Argonautica*, is here given a new urgency as the 'princess' actually rules her people; it is this fact, no less than the iron rule of *fatum*, which turns the imminent 'tragedy' of Apollonius' Medea into the present 'tragedy' of Dido.[46] The 'marriage-scene', in the *Argonautica* a nuanced mixture of the public and the private, the open and the covert,[47] becomes in *Aeneid* 4 an unwitnessed – except by the immortals – act in a storm-tossed cave which one partner at least will be able to deny ever constituted a formal marriage (*Aen.* 4.338–9). Whereas in the *Argonautica* the report (βάξις) spread by Hera on the morning after the wedding brings the citizens of Drepane to admire and witness the marriage as a public spectacle (4.1182–1200), in the *Aeneid fama* gossips of *pariter facta atque infecta* (*Aen.* 4.190); covert malice is what is involved. Here then Virgil has moved a further stage beyond Apollonius and used the *Argonautica* as a kind of yardstick by which Dido's suffering, and the dangers posed by her, may be measured. Having established an association between the Alexandrian epic and the 'private', the 'non-Homeric', he outdoes it on its own terms in depicting the catastrophe that occurs when the 'private' and the 'public' become inextricably tangled.

(iii) UNDERWORLDS

We have so far considered areas of the *Aeneid* in which Virgil uses the *Argonautica* in representations of what is dangerous and 'other' to the

[46] It has long been observed that the extensive debt of *Arg.* 3 to Attic tragedy (cf., e.g., Hunter 1989.18–19) must have been very influential in the shaping of *Aen.* 4 as a tragedy; the latter theme has a large bibliography, cf., e.g., A. König, *Die Aeneis und die griechische Tragödie: Studien zur imitatio-Technik Vergils* (diss. Berlin 1970), N. Rudd in Harrison 1990.145–66, F. Muecke, 'Foreshadowing and dramatic irony in the story of Dido', *AJP* 104 (1983) 134–55. Both Apollonius and Virgil reflect ancient observation (largely, but not wholly, dependent upon Aristotle) of the shared features of epic and tragedy; for a collection of important statements cf. R. B. Rutherford, *JHS* 102 (1982) 145 n. 3.

[47] Cf. above pp. 71–4.

founding of the Roman state which his poem narrates. He can, however, also impose his vision upon the Greek poem in such a way that it is read as a prior text which authenticates, rather than threatens. Such a case is his use of Apollonian material in the description of Aeneas' visit to the Underworld.

The deaths of Palinurus[48] at the end of *Aeneid* 5 and of Misenus in *Aeneid* 6 are both indebted to Homer's Elpenor, killed when he fell off the roof of Circe's house, and to the paired deaths of Idmon and Tiphys in *Argonautica* 2. Palinurus, unlike Odysseus (*Od.* 5.270–81), is unable to prevent sleep overtaking him as he steers Aeneas' ship, and the soporific bough which Sleep shakes over him (5.854–61) clearly derives from the juniper spray with which Medea sprinkles her drugs over the Colchian dragon's eyes (*Arg.* 4.156–8).[49] In the *Argonautica*, the linking of *Hypnos* with infernal Hecate (4.146–8) creates a powerful ambivalence in the fate of the dragon: modern critics should not be so certain that he is going to wake up.[50] Be that as it may, it is not remarkable that – like Elpenor – Palinurus was not at first missed, given the calm weather and the fact that everybody else was asleep. The loss of Heracles to the Argonautic expedition[51] also, however, resonates here, and Palinurus' fall from the ship, *liquidas ... in undas | praecipitem ac socios nequiquam saepe uocantem* (5.859–60), can hardly fail to recall the disappearance of Hylas as described by both Apollonius and Theocritus.[52] In the *Argonautica* it is the steersman Tiphys whose instructions cause the crew to leave Heracles behind; in the *Aeneid* it is the steersman himself who is

[48] For recent discussion of Palinurus cf. W. S. M. Nicoll, 'The sacrifice of Palinurus', *CQ* 38 (1988) 459–72; G. Laudizi, 'Palinuro', *Maia* 40 (1988) 57–73.

[49] Valerius Flaccus acknowledges Virgil's debt by, in turn, using the sleep of Palinurus in his description of Medea enchanting the dragon (8.68–91), cf. H. Offermann, *Hermes* 99 (1971) 167–8. Valerius uses the 'sleeping steersman' motif at 3.37ff. (Tiphys at Cyzicus).

[50] The meaning of ἀκήρατα (4.157) remains problematic: Livrea's solution, 'which do not bring death', is unconvincing. In Valerius, Medea explicitly foretells the dragon's awakening (8.92–104).

[51] Cf. above pp. 36–41.

[52] Note 6.859 ~ *Arg.* 1.1239; 860 ~ 1.1240, Theocr. 13.59–60. *praecipitem*, enjambed at the head of v. 860, echoes the repeated ἀθρόος at the head of Theocr. 13.50–1. The evocation of the Apollonian Hylas is also noted by Nelis 1988.168 n. 20. The designation of Aeneas in v. 867 as *pater*, used absolutely without any accompanying name, in a context where his status as 'father' is not obviously relevant, may be unique. It may, as Dr Neil Wright has suggested to me, look forward to the story of Daedalus and Icarus at the head of the next book, or we may feel the 'ship of state' metaphor resonate: the *pater patriae* brings the vessel safely to shore. It is, however, noteworthy that both Apollonius and Theocritus play with the similarities and differences in the relationship of Heracles and Hylas to that of a father and son; some versions indeed seem actually to have made them father and son, cf. above p. 37 n. 109.

abandoned. There is a deep pathos in the contrast between Hylas' mysterious future as lover-husband beneath the waves and the cruel realities of death at sea faced by Palinurus.

In visiting the Underworld, Aeneas will of course take on the true mantle of Heracles, and Virgil has used echoes of the Hylas-episode to bridge the break between books, for the verses which describe the Trojans' preparations upon landing (*Aen.* 6.5–10) rewrite the fateful Argonautic landing in Mysia on the occasion of Heracles' abandonment (1.1182–8).[53] So too, Heracles' search for a tree from which to make a new oar is the immediate forerunner of Aeneas' trip into the forest to acquire the golden bough; the typically Virgilian revolution in tone between 'model' and 'imitation' confirms, rather than denies, the echo.[54]

The concentration of Apollonian material in the introduction to the Virgilian *katabasis* might be thought surprising in view of the absence of an Underworld scene from the *Argonautica*. That absence may be ascribed to many causes. Perhaps the whole journey to the land of the Sun was itself too like a *katabasis* to give the poet room for a special descent; it is, in any event, a familiar conjecture of comparative mythography that the Clashing Rocks represent an entrance to the Underworld,[55] and the repeated Apollonian motif of 'even if the *Argo* should sail to Hades' (2.642–3, 3.61) does suggest that at some level the expedition is conceived as an infernal one. The description of the cave entrance to Hades on the Acherousian headland (2.729–51), which Virgil twice reworks,[56] invites us to expect a descent by the Argonauts, but we do so in vain. The scenes in the wastes of Libya are, as we have seen,[57] a further substitute for an explicit descent to Hades. If the Argonauts never actually visit the Underworld, Jason at least has considerable contact with Hecate and infernal powers, and it is worth collecting the Apollonian material in Virgil's Underworld in an attempt to discover how Virgil 'read' these elements in the Greek epic.[58]

[53] Hügi 1952.127 interestingly linked the opening of *Aeneid* 6 with Theocr. 22.32–8, a passage with clear Apollonian links.

[54] Catullus 66.39–40 ~ *Aen.* 6.460 is the most famous example of such a revolution.

[55] Cf., e.g., Meuli 1921.102–4; J. Fontenrose, *Python* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1959) 477–87; J. Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks* (London 1965) *passim*; Clark 1979.34–6; Beye 1982.45,113.

[56] Cf. *Aen.* 6.237–41 (the cave of the Underworld), 7.563–71 (another Italian entrance to Hades). Relevant also is *Arg.* 4.599–603, the fiery emanations from the remains of Phaethon.

[57] Cf. above pp. 30–1.

[58] For a comprehensive survey cf. Nelis 1988.189–224.

Medea's drugging of the Colchian dragon (4.149–55) has very clearly influenced Virgil's description of how Cerberus is drugged by the Sibyl with a 'doctored' cake (*Aen.* 6.417–25).[59] Moreover, Aeneas' first encounter in the Underworld is with the spirits of those who have died as babies (6.426–9); relevant here is the fact that the Colchian dragon's roar terrifies the protective mothers of new-born babies (*Arg.* 4.136–8). The juxtaposition of the snake-haired Cerberus to the crying of dead babies creates the same kind of horror as the possibility that the dragon is looking for children to devour. There is a very clear parallelism between Medea's magical protection of Jason and the Sibyl's protection of Aeneas. Both women are priestesses of Hecate,[60] but whereas Jason follows his guide in fear (4.149), Aeneas shows himself quite equal to the task:

> ille ducem haud timidis uadentem passibus aequat.
> (*Aen.* 6.263)

So too there is an obvious correspondence between the golden fleece, hanging on an oak tree in the shady (4.166) grove of Ares, and the golden bough, plucked from an oak tree in the middle of a dark, shady grove (*Aen.* 6.138–9). As the Argonauts make their escape down the Phasis, the Colchians gather on the river-bank, as numberless as waves or leaves:

> ἐς δ' ἀγορὴν ἀγέροντ' ἐνὶ τεύχεσιν, ὅσσα τε πόντου
> κύματα χειμερίοιο κορύσσεται ἐξ ἀνέμοιο
> ἢ ὅσα φύλλα χαμᾶζε περικλαδέος πέσεν ὕλης
> φυλλοχόωι ἐνὶ μηνί – τίς ἂν τάδε τεκμήραιτο; –
> ὣς οἱ ἀπειρέσιοι ποταμοῦ παραμέτρεον ὄχθας,
> κλαγγῆι μαιμώοντες.
>
> They gathered under arms in their meeting-place, as numberless as the waves of the sea raised high by a winter wind or the leaves in a dense forest which drop to the ground in the leaf-shedding month – who could count them? – like this were the vast hordes who thronged the river-banks, yelling with enthusiasm for the fray. (4.214–19)

[59] Cf. Hügi 1952.63–4. Both collapses are followed by swift action from the heroes (4.162, *Aen.* 6.424–5).

[60] Cf. the parallel invocations at 4.147–8 and *Aen.* 6.247. For the Sibyl and Hecate cf. Norden's edition of *Aeneid* 6 (2nd edn) p. 118; Clark 1979.204–11; H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (London/New York 1988) 92–4; further bibliography in Knauer 1964.130 n. 2.

Virgil reworked this passage very carefully to describe the ghosts waiting to cross a different river.[61]

> quam multa in siluis autumni frigore primo
> lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
> quam multae glomerantur aues, ubi frigidus annus
> trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis.
>
> (*Aen.* 6.309–12)

Where Apollonius has waves and then leaves, Virgil has leaves and then birds, but the correspondences are so close that the later poet clearly wants us to think of this passage of *Arg.* 4;[62] a recently published fragment of an archaic lyric poem in which the number of ghosts in the Underworld was very likely compared to the waves of the sea helps to confirm that Virgil drew inspiration from Apollonius' description of the Colchians for his Underworld scenes.[63]

The amount of material from the early part of *Arg.* 4 which has been reworked in *Aeneid* 6 makes it not unlikely that Virgil himself read the securing of the Golden Fleece from a dread land ruled over by a terrible child of the sun as a kind of *katabasis*.[64] In seeking to understand this reading we can turn back to Homer, as well as forwards to Virgil's own epic.

Like Odysseus (and Aeneas) in the Underworld, Jason draws his sword as the Argonauts leave Colchis, initially to cut the mooring ropes.[65] The opening words of his speech to the crew as they depart echo Odysseus' words to his crew as they leave Circe's house for the voyage to Hades (4.190, *Od.* 10.548), and the din of the countless Colchians may remind us of the din made by the ghosts in the Homeric Underworld.[66] It perhaps does not matter greatly whether we see these echoes as merely emphasising the terror endured by the Argonauts, or as actually inviting us to see these scenes as indeed a *katabasis*. For what it is worth, in the later *Orphic Argonautica* the grove

[61] For Virgil's other sources here (including *Arg.* 4.239–40) cf. Austin ad loc.; G. Thaniel, 'Vergil's leaf- and bird-similes of ghosts', *Phoenix* 25 (1971) 237–45.

[62] In brief: *quam multa ... quam multa* ~ ὅσσα ... ἣ ὅσα; *siluis* ~ ὕλης; *autumni frigore primo* ~ φυλλοχόωι ἐνὶ μηνί; *cadunt folia* ~ φύλλα ... πέσεν; *ad terram* ~ χαμᾶζε; *glomerantur* ~ κορύσσεται; *frigidus annus* ~ χειμερίοιο; *pontum* ~ πόντου.

[63] *POxy.* 2622a.12–15 = Pindar, fr. dub. 346.12–15 Maehler; cf. R. J. Clark, 'Two Virgilian similes and the ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΚΑΤΑΒΑΣΙΣ', *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 244–55. For ghosts and leaves cf. particularly Bacchylides 5.63–7.

[64] Note that the effect of the infernal Allecto's blast is described in terms borrowed from the effects of the Colchian dragon's roar (4.129ff., *Aen.* 7.514ff.).

[65] Cf. *Od.* 10.535–6, 11.24, 48–9, *Arg.* 4.207–8, *Aen.* 6.260; Hunter 1988.440 n. 22.

[66] 4.219; *Od.* 11.42–3, 605, 633.

of the Fleece lies behind a sanctuary of Artemis–Hecate which can only be approached by an initiate, and the scene in which Orpheus sings the dragon to sleep is preceded by chthonic sacrifice and the appearance of creatures such as Tisiphone and Allecto; that poem at least, therefore, makes explicit that securing the Fleece involves converse with the Underworld.[67]

It has long been observed[68] that the gleam of the Golden Fleece (4.125–6):

> νεφέλῃ ἐναλίγκιον ἥ τ' ἀνιόντος
> ἠελίου φλογερῇσιν ἐρεύθεται ἀκτίνεσσιν.
>
> ... like a cloud which blushes red in the flaming rays of the rising sun

is reworked in the description of the fiery gleam of the new breastplate which Vulcan makes for Aeneas:

> loricam ex aere rigentem
> sanguineam, ingentem, qualis cum caerula nubes
> solis inardescit radiis longeque refulget. (*Aen.* 8.621–3)

A number of other echoes also[69] show that Virgil drew a deliberate parallel between the acquisition of the Fleece and the new armour for Aeneas, and there is clearly more at stake than merely a common ancestry in Thetis' bringing of new arms for Achilles.[70] All three marvels mark out their heroes as special and give confidence for the future: cf. 4.190 'no longer hold back, my friends ...', *Aen.* 8.613–14 *ne mox aut Laurentis, nate, superbos | aut acrem dubites in proelia poscere Turnum.* The shield of Aeneas is a reprise and confirmation of what the hero saw in the Underworld, and one of the devices which link Book 6 to Book 8 is the shared reworking of Jason's acquisition of the fleece. By associating the Fleece with the *non enarrabile textum* (8.625) of the shield, Virgil acknowledges the special power of the Fleece to confer the gift of song (*Arg.* 4.1143). It was important to Virgil to read the quest for the Golden Fleece as a *katabasis*, because what Aeneas receives in the Underworld – a vision of the future greatness of Rome – is, like the Golden Fleece, a prize which justifies

[67] For the debt in these scenes to Apollonius cf. Vian on *Orph. Arg.* 988–1021.

[68] Cf. Hügi 1952.31; Clausen 1987.156 n. 49.

[69] Note 4.171–2 ~ *Aen.* 8.617, 730; the fact that the new arms are placed under an *oak* (*Aen.* 8.616); 4.184 ~ *Aen.* 8.619, 730; 4.181, 185–6 ~ *Aen.* 8.619; 4.179 ~ *Aen.* 8.731.

[70] In Homer too, a gleaming marvel is brought to a ship as dawn breaks, and the hero's comrades react with fear or wonderment (*Il.* 19.1, 15 ~ *Arg.* 4.183–4).

the struggle. When Jason has secured the Fleece he exhorts the crew: 'Now we hold in our hands the fate of our children, our dear homeland, and our venerable parents. Upon our expedition rests the future of Hellas, whether it is to suffer depression or win great glory' (4.202–5). Such an exhortation – whatever its nuances and ironies – fits easily into the nationalist strain of the *Aeneid*; nothing comparable had occurred in the *Odyssey*. The fractured suggestions of the Hellenistic epic are now to be integrated to the service of the new order.

(iv) APOLLONIUS AND VIRGIL: AN OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter, and of the various references to the *Aeneid* scattered through the earlier part of this book, has been merely to sketch what I take to be Virgil's strategy in his incorporation of the *Argonautica*, and to illustrate that strategy in a small, but exemplificatory, way. What I hope, however, is clear is that, at a deep level, Virgil exploits the *Argonautica* in more than one way, and that the 'idea' of this Greek poem is an important and significant strain within the array of textual voices that the *Aeneid* harnesses to its task. The *Argonautica* is given particular burdens to carry within Virgil's poetic project, and each successive major use of it builds upon the significance of what has gone before and is integrated into larger poetic patterns. The deployment of the *Argonautica* is in fact a very good example of Virgil's architectonic structures – and of his difference from Apollonius.

It will also, I hope, be clear that the complex relationship between the past and the present which the *Argonautica* explores and which I have traced in the two previous chapters has an obvious relationship to central features of the *Aeneid*. In both poems the past is constructed out of the present, though the form of that construction differs widely. The ideology of the *Argonautica* seems far removed from that of the *Aeneid*, and yet it now stands revealed as pointing towards the Roman epic in many interesting ways. This is not because of any inherent teleological pattern in the history of ancient epic, but because Virgil deliberately read the *Argonautica* in a particular way and developed particular aspects of it. The inscription into the *Argonautica* of what – in an unsatisfactory shorthand – we may call 'the Ptolemaic idea', and perhaps too of the Ptolemies themselves,[71] be-

[71] Cf. above p. 161.

comes in Virgil's poem the explicit inscription of Augustus into the epic. The Argonautic voyage which at one level establishes Greek culture through the world[72] becomes a cultural and imperial progression towards the Augustan age. Virgil's reading of the *Argonautica* is thus part of the whole history of how Augustan Rome adopted and refashioned the culture and ideology of Ptolemaic Alexandria, a history which remains very far from written.

The Argonautic myth was, in classical times and texts, told for the most diverse reasons and, as we have seen,[73] Apollonius himself incorporates different 'readings' of the myth into his poem. Virgil's 'myth of Rome' is constructed in a dialogic way which both allows and indeed invites multiple readings. The similarity may not be fortuitous, regardless of any historical reconstruction of what Virgil may have learned from Apollonius. In adopting and displaying the *Argonautica* within the *Aeneid*, Virgil placed near the centre of his work a nuanced and ironised poem which invited readings which could threaten to disturb, if not in fact subvert, the nationalist project upon which he was engaged. Whether or not this is what has happened is, of course, precisely what rends modern criticism of the *Aeneid*. Here is not the place to pursue the matter, but future work on the relationship of the two poems can surely no longer assume that the incorporation of the *Argonautica* can be without ideological significance. To do so would be to assume that Virgil's understanding of the Greek poem was simplistic and defective. That, surely, is one assumption too many.

[72] Cf. above pp. 163–9.
[73] Cf. above pp. 137–8.

APPENDIX

ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές: *Aristotle, Callimachus, Apollonius*

]ι μοι Τελχῖνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀοιδῇι,
νήιδες οἳ Μούσηις[1] οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,
εἵνεκεν οὐχ ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκὲς ἢ βασιλ[
]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἤνυσα χιλιάσιν
]ους ἥρωας, ἔπος δ' ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ[ίσσω
παῖς ἅτε, τῶν δ' ἐτέων ἡ δεκὰς οὐκ ὀλίγη.
]καὶ Τελχῖσιν ἐγὼ τόδε·

[...] the Telchines mutter at my song – they who are ignorant and were not born dear to the Muses – because I have not accomplished one continuous song in many thousands of verses about kings [...] heroes, but like a child I roll out my verse, little by little, while the decades of my years are not few. [...] to the Telchines this is my reply ... (Callimachus, fr. 1.1–7)

Few, if any, passages of ancient literature have accumulated so large a body of critical discussion as has grown up around the fragmentary remains of Callimachus' *Reply to the Telchines* since its publication in 1927.[2] This is perhaps only just, as these verses were written to tease, to say both more and less than they appear to say. Callimachus' strategy – and its implications for the *Argonautica* – has, however, not always been well understood, and I hope that the passage will bear one further (brief) look.

The complaints of the Telchines are not given directly: the direct speech of the poet's reply to them (vv. 7ff.) is opposed to their indistinct muttering.[3] 'Their own words' cannot be reported because they vent their spite in a whispering campaign of malicious hypocrisy; the use of indirect speech advertises the control of the poet over what we learn of the views of the Telchines.[4] It is left deliberately unclear whether these views are to be understood as 'unfair' criticism, or as programmatic badges which the poet

[1] Μούσηις Wilamowitz: -ης pap.

[2] Here, as elsewhere, L. Lehnus, *Bibliografia Callimachea 1489–1988* (Genoa 1989) is invaluable; cf. also L. Torraca, *Il prologo dei Telchini e l'inizio degli Aitia di Callimaco* (Naples 1969). A major new discussion by Alan Cameron is keenly awaited.

[3] Commentators rightly note the reference in this verb to the 'magic incantations' of Telchines, cf. Theocr. 2.62. It is noteworthy that, in its only appearance in Homer (*Il.* 9.311), τρύζειν is opposed (by Achilles) to the straightforward and undeceitful speaking of the truth.

[4] It should not be necessary to stress that I am here concerned not with any autobiographical reality which these verses may reflect, but with Callimachus' poetic strategy.

wears with pride. Certainly, it is not hard to believe that vv. 5–6, the complaint that 'old' Callimachus writes 'like a child', contain a charge to which the poet would readily assent. Soon we are to learn that he preserves the poetic principles handed down to him by Apollo when he was a child, and elsewhere in the *Aitia* he amusingly refers to himself as 'this child' (fr. 75.9); Theocritus too introduces the figure of the child as an analogue of the poet in an overtly programmatic passage (1.45–54 concerning ὀλίγος τις κῶρος). Thus Callimachus here appropriates the voice of the complaining Telchines to advertise the virtues of his poetry, leaving unclear the status and substance of their complaints. Such experimentation with voice and indirect speech – itself presumably an enactment of the poetic style for which the *Reply* pleads – may well remind us of the *Argonautica*.[5]

In turning to the substance of the Telchines' charge, the key phrase for our present purpose is ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές. I shall consider in a moment whether or not the *Argonautica* could be so described, but I wish first to examine the case for believing that this phrase reflects formal poetic theory, specifically that of Aristotle in the *Poetics*.

On purely general grounds we may observe that it would be very much in Callimachus' manner to place in the mouth of the Telchines a phrase redolent of scholastic theorising.[6] This would carry with it the implication that the Telchines, 'who are no friends of the Muses', know poetry only as a set of stylistic criteria and not as a creative act, as the *Aitia* prologue very clearly demonstrates it to be. If this is correct, then the two most likely 'critics' evoked by the phrase are Plato and Aristotle. Before pursuing this possibility, it is important to note that this question is separate from a determination of whether in vv. 3–5 Callimachus is referring to his failure to write epic or – as Alan Cameron will argue forcefully – to the style of the *Aitia* which he has written and at the head of which this passage stands. In either case, Callimachus may be twitting his (real or alleged) critics with their devotion to theory.

In the *Phaedrus* Plato makes Socrates assert – as something to which the naive Phaedrus would readily assent – that 'every speech (λόγος) must be put together (συνεστάναι) like a living creature with its own body, so that it neither lacks head nor feet, but has both middle parts and extremities, all of which are composed in a manner appropriate both to each other and to the whole' (264c). The immediate context suggests that 'appropriateness' will lie, at least in part, in a due ordering of parts of the speech in accordance with some ἀνάγκη, so that one part will properly follow another and the reverse possibility be excluded (cf. 264b, d–e). The extent of Socratic or Platonic irony in this passage is not crucial to the present argument. Plato does not in this text specifically speak of 'unity', 'oneness',[7] but this idea is

[5] For Apollonius' innovations with indirect speech cf. above pp. 143–51.

[6] Cf. the ironically pompous 'I hate the cyclic poem' (*Epigram* 28) which is deflated by the ending of the poem (cf. Hunter 1989.37).

[7] Cf. Heath 1989.17–22; A. Ford, *Arion* 1.3 (1991) 130–5.

clearly not far away. In a subsequent part of the prologue, Callimachus will allude both to the *Phaedrus* and to the *Ion* (vv. 29–34),[8] and so allusion to Plato here would be contextually fitting. On the other hand, the brief remarks of Plato were subsumed into a large-scale theoretical discussion by Aristotle, who thus has the better claim to be primary here. That Aristotelian ideas are relevant to Callimachus fr. 1.3 is an old idea, but one that deserves to be considered again.

An initial problem, of course, is whether or not Callimachus could have been familiar with Aristotelian doctrine as we know it from the *Poetics*. The extent of the Alexandrian holdings of Aristotle is a difficult problem, but the *Poetics* does appear in Diogenes Laertius' Aristotelian catalogue (5.22–7) which has often been held to derive from the Ptolemaic library.[9] It is, moreover, very likely that Aristotelian doctrine (in some form) was promulgated through the large body of peripatetic work on literary subjects,[10] even if that work owed more in style to Aristotle's lost three-book dialogue *On Poets* (frr. 70–7 Rose) and to the works of Theophrastus than to our *Poetics*. There is certainly no good reason to doubt that the Alexandrian library possessed a copy of *On Poets*. What is more, if ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές is intended to evoke theoretical discussion, it does so in a non-obscurantist way; we can hardly doubt that Callimachus knew this much at least about Aristotle.

Aristotle prescribed for the best tragedy and epic that they should be *mimeseis* of a 'single (μία) *praxis*', which was whole and complete in itself.[11] For Aristotle, a poem (and the *praxis* which it 'imitated') was not 'one' if the events in it followed each other, not because of a close causal nexus of necessity or probability, but for some other reason, such as that they happened to follow each other in time while being otherwise unrelated. The telling of such sequences was the job of history, not poetry,[12] a thing not understood by the 'cyclic' poets and those who wrote 'Heracleids' and 'Theseids' which related all the experiences of the hero, but singularly failed to be 'a *mimesis* of a single *praxis*'. Before considering whether or not Callimachus' ἓν resonates against these Aristotelian ideas, we should note that the playful opposition of '*one* song' to '*many* thousands of verses'[13] suggests a quasi-philosophical paradox: 'How *could* you write "the one" in "the many"?' This paradox must strengthen the suspicion that ἓν

[8] Cf. *ZPE* 76 (1989) 1–2.

[9] Cf. I. Düring, *Aristoteles* (Heidelberg 1966) 36–7; id., *RE* Suppl. 11. 190–4; R. Blum, *Kallimachos und die Literaturverzeichnung bei den Griechen* (Frankfurt 1977) 121–32.

[10] For a useful orientation cf. A. J. Podlecki, 'The peripatetics as literary critics', *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 114–37. Despite its title, C. Gallavotti, 'Tracce della Poetica di Aristotele negli scolii omerici', *Maia* 21 (1969) 203–14, deals only with the ancient debates over the *Doloneia* and the end of the *Odyssey*, and is of limited value.

[11] Cf. *Poetics* 1451a16–35; 1459a17–59b16; Hunter 1989.33.

[12] Cf. *Poetics* 1459a21–4.

[13] It is tempting to connect χιλιάσιν with Euphorion's poem Χιλιάδες, but chronology (at least) makes this doubtful.

is an important carrier of meaning, and alert us to the possibility that Callimachus presents the Telchines' complaints as incoherent – they condemn themselves from their own mouths. A consideration of διηνεκές will, I believe, confirm these suspicions.

Like so many of the value-terms in the *Reply*, διηνεκές leaves room for difference of opinion, for disagreement about what sort of poetry might satisfy the requirements. The word does not appear to occur in our extant corpus of genuine Aristotelian works, but at *On Plants* 1.817b39 it is paired with ὁλοτελής and must connote 'constant', 'completed'. A positive reading (in Aristotelian terms) of ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές would therefore be something like 'a unified and consistent [i.e. non-episodic] poem'.[14] Such a meaning would well describe what the *Aitia* is not, and so must be considered a real possibility for the meaning of the disputed phrase. It is, however, not the only possibility.

διηνεκές, 'continuous', 'unbroken', might also suggest, in Aristotelian terms, the rejected 'Heracleids' and 'Theseids' rather than the exemplary Homeric poems.[15] It seems to imply the absence of what is crucial for Aristotle, namely the process of selection by which the poet creates the 'imitation of a single *praxis*' and avoids the artlessness of tedious, *ab ouo* narration. If this is correct, and if ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές is to be given a single, coherent meaning, then ἕν cannot carry Aristotelian resonances, but will mean something like 'solid', 'monotonous',[16] or simply 'one' (as opposed to 'two'...). Given our state of uncertainty regarding the text and interpretation of these verses, this possibility cannot be ruled out. Nevertheless, I hope that the preceding discussion has suggested that a different route is attractive. If ἕν and διηνεκές represent *opposed* styles of composition, respectively an Aristotelian 'good' and an Aristotelian 'bad', the criticism by the Telchines becomes incoherent; being 'ignorant and not born friends of the Muses' they do not understand that it is not possible, in Aristotelian terms, to write a poem which is both ἕν and διηνεκές, both 'one' and 'continuous'. Such a reading, which is admittedly speculative, would well suit the playful and tendentious argument of these verses. The combination of the two words allows Callimachus to 'deconstruct' the assumptions upon which they are based, at the head of a long poem which is to show how this is to be done in practice. Were the four books of *Aitia* ἕν or διηνεκές? With tongue firmly in cheek, Callimachus suggests that his poem is both and neither.

In turning to the *Argonautica*, we may first note the complete absence of scholarly agreement about the epic's 'unity', of an Aristotelian or any other

[14] Cf., e.g., Koster 1970.117–18; G. Serrao in R. Bianchi Bandinelli (ed.), *Storia e civiltà dei Greci* v. 9 (Milan 1977) 223–4.

[15] This is, of course, an old interpretation; cf., e.g., L. Adam, *Die aristotelische Theorie vom Epos nach ihrer Entwicklung bei Griechen und Römern* (Wiesbaden 1889) 74–5.

[16] So, e.g., Newman 1974.355, 1986.44. Appeal to Hor. C. 1.7.5–6 settles nothing; note Hor. *AP* 23 *simplex dumtaxat et unum*, where Brink notes that the opposite of this would be ποικίλος (cf. Arist. *Poetics* 1459a34).

kind.[17] I hope that this book has made clear that the cause is not to be sought solely in the difficulty of identifying Aristotelian 'oneness' – in the unavoidable fact that difference of opinion with regard to extant works of Greek literature is inevitable – but is a result of the very way in which the work is conceived and executed. The poem tells 'without omissions' (cf. 4.1776–8) the story of a voyage, beginning and ending at the same place, and, but for a few 'flashbacks' to events 'before the epic',[18] recounting what happened in strict chronological sequence – quite unlike the *Odyssey* and not, at least not obviously, in accordance with Aristotle's prescriptions, but giving 'unity' and 'oneness' of a kind. As we have come to expect, the epic is in this, as in all matters, uneven. Sometimes sequences of action seem to flaunt their randomness, their lack of 'causal nexus'. The matched pairs of deaths at 2.815ff. and 4.1485ff. seem striking in this regard; the appeals to μοῖρα (2.815, 855) and the reliance upon φάτις (2.854) are particularly noteworthy in this respect. At other times – perhaps most famously in the narrative of the loss of Heracles at the end of Book 1 – Apollonius seems concerned to tie everything together in a very close nexus. More important than these details is the overall conception of the poem. In Chapter 23 of the *Poetics* Aristotle praises Homer in the following terms:

> Most epic poets do make plots like histories. So in this respect too Homer is marvellous in the way already described, in that he did not undertake to make a whole poem of the war either, even though it had a beginning and an end. For the plot would have been too large and not easy to see as a whole, or if it had been kept to moderate length it would have been tangled because of the variety of the events. As it is he takes one part and uses many others as episodes, for example, the catalogue of the ships and the other episodes with which he breaks the uniformity of his poem. (*Poetics* 1459a29–37, trans. Hubbard)

A voyage is analogous to a war in having beginning and end and many episodes, but whereas 'Homer selected episodes from the whole course of the war and incorporated them into a story which, chronologically speaking, is incompatible with them',[19] Apollonius never allows us to forget the strict chronological progression of events. It is noteworthy that Aristotle singles out Homer's ship-catalogue as an episode from those parts of the war which are not Homer's concern but which are used to 'break up' (διαλαμβάνειν) the poem; it is surely tempting to believe that Apollonius' decision to begin

[17] For a recent assertion of its Aristotelian 'oneness' cf. Heath 1989.65. Heath notes that, in Aristotelian terms, the *Argonautica* would be μία πρᾶξις πολυμερής, 'a single action consisting of many parts' (*Poetics* 1459a38), like the *Cypria* and the *Little Iliad*. It is tempting to take μία πρᾶξις in that passage in a looser sense than elsewhere: would Aristotle have considered the events of the *Cypria* bound by a strong causal nexus (cf. Lucas ad loc.)? For this reason Margaret Hubbard deletes the phrase in her translation (D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (eds.), *Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford 1972) 123). Cf. also Halliwell 1986.261.

[18] For this organisation of time see Fusillo 1985, especially Chapter 1.

[19] G. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: the Argument* (Cambridge, Mass. 1957) 585–6.

with the Catalogue of Argonauts was not merely to be different from Homer, but was also prompted to some extent by critical discussion of Homer's practice. It is moreover difficult not to think that Aristotle would have regarded the *Argonautica* as 'tangled because of the variety of events', καταπεπλεγμένον τῆι ποικιλίαι. On the other hand, this continuous, potentially 'open-ended' narrative[20] is set in tension with the insistent voice of the controlling narrator; both poet himself (1.649) and his characters (2.391, 3.401) in fact deprecate the telling of stories διηνεκέως.[21] The epic is thus both ἓν and διηνεκές. Like the *Aitia* prologue, the *Argonautica* too breaks down the Aristotelian dichotomy in a spirit of literary experimentation. Throughout this book we have seen how, in all the main areas of poetic creation, the *Argonautica* is radically at odds with the precepts of the *Poetics*, but also utterly unlike the rejected 'cyclic' epics. We cannot say that it was written to be 'anti-Aristotelian', but the balance of probabilities does seem to me to incline in that direction.

[20] Cf. above pp. 122–3.
[21] Cf. Newman 1974.355, Margolies 1981.45–9, Beye 1982.15–16.

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General index

Bold page numbers indicate a major discussion. There are no entries for Homer, Jason, or Medea, as these occur throughout the book.

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