CAMBRIDGE GREEK AND LATIN CLASSICS

APOLLONIUS OF RHODES

ARGONAUTICA

BOOK IV

EDITED BY RICHARD HUNTER

CAMBRIDGE GREEK AND LATIN CLASSICS

APOLLONIUS OF RHODES
ARGONAUTICA
BOOK IV

EDITED BY

RICHARD HUNTER

Regius Professor of Greek, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107636750

First published 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Apollonius, Rhodius, author.
[Argonautica. Book 4]
Argonautica: Book IV / Apollonius of Rhodes; edited by Richard Hunter.
pages cm. – (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics)
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
ISBN 978-1-107-06351-8 (hardback)
1. Argonauts (Greek mythology) – Poetry. 2. Jason (Greek mythology) – Poetry. 3. Medea, consort of Aegeus, King of Athens (Mythological character) – Poetry. 4. Epic poetry, Greek. I. Hunter, R. L. (Richard L.), editor. II. Title.
PA3872.A13 2015
883′.01–dc23
2014048899

ISBN 978-1-107-06351-8 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-107-63675-0 Paperback

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Introduction and Commentary have benefited from the perceptive suggestions of Pat Easterling and Neil Hopkinson. Thanks to the kindness of Dr Amin Benaissa, the courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society and the advice of Professor Peter Parsons, I have been able to make reference in the Commentary to some unpublished readings preserved on Oxyrhynchus papyri; I am very grateful for this generous help. My debt to my predecessors, most notably Hermann Fränkel, Enrico Livrea, and Francis Vian, will, I hope, be very obvious. Michael Sharp and Elizabeth Hanlon of Cambridge University Press have been supportive and helpful as always.

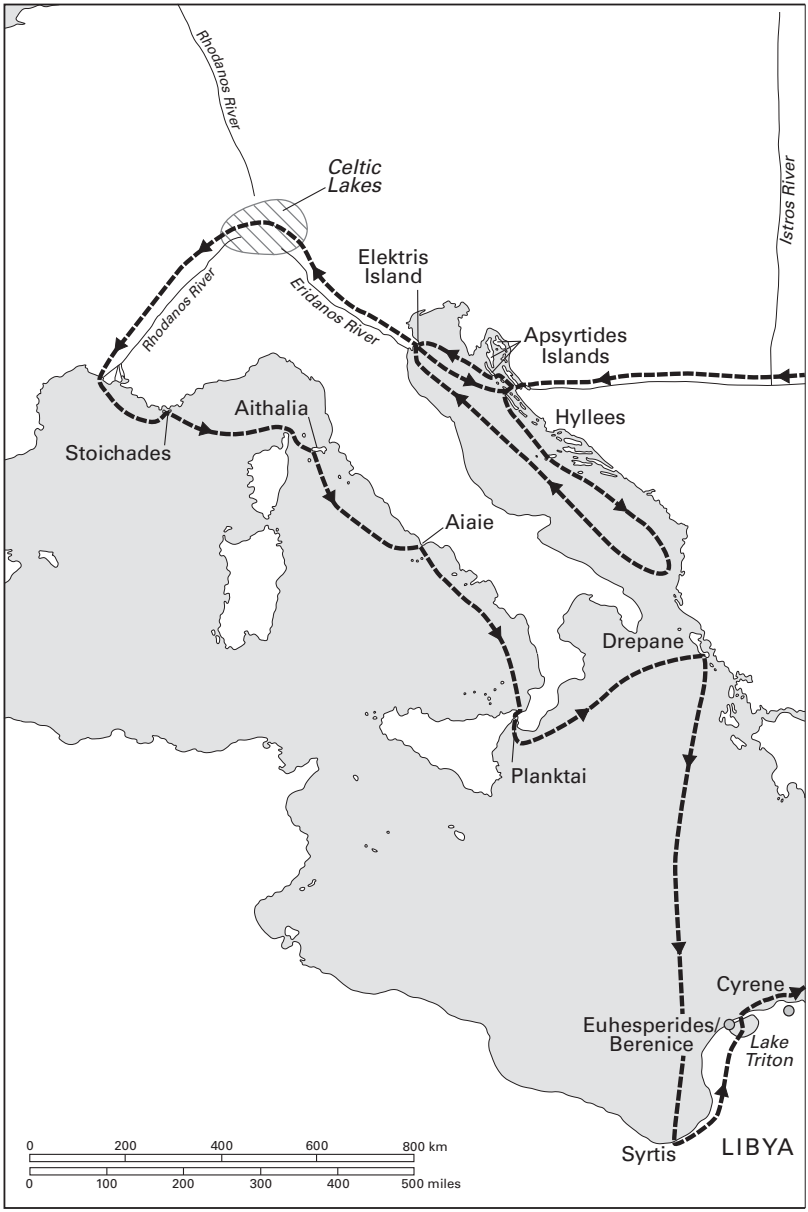
REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

References to *Arg.* 1–3 are by book and line number only, e.g. 2.700; references to Book 4 are by line number only. Vian's Budé edition of *Arg.* (Paris 1974–1981) is cited by volume and page number, e.g. Vian III 165. Other commentaries and editions of *Arg.* are cited by author name, e.g. Mooney, Paduano-Fusillo. References to notes on Book 3, e.g. 3.661n., are to R. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes, Argonautica Book III*, Cambridge 1989. Fragment numbers for Callimachus follow Pfeiffer, unless stated otherwise. Σ indicates 'scholium' or 'scholia'.

Barrington	R. J. A. Talbert ed., *Barrington atlas of the Greek and Roman world*, Princeton 2000
Beekes	R. Beekes, *Etymological dictionary of Greek*, Leiden 2010
CA	J. U. Powell ed., *Collectanea Alexandrina*, Oxford 1925
CEG	P. A. Hansen, *Carmina epigraphica Graeca*, 2 vols., Berlin 1983, 1989
Chantraine	P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, Paris 1948–1953
Denniston	J. D. Denniston, *The Greek particles*, 2nd edn, Oxford 1954
D–K	H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn, Berlin 1951
FGE	D. L. Page ed., *Further Greek epigrams*, Cambridge 1981
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin 1923–1930, Leiden 1940–1958
FHG	C. Müller and others, *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, Paris 1848–1885
GGM	C. Müller, *Geographi Graeci minores*, Paris 1855–1861
GP	A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip*, Cambridge 1968
HE	A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic epigrams*, Cambridge 1965
Heitsch	E. Heitsch, *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Vol. 1, 2nd edn, Göttingen 1963
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin 1873–

K–B	R. Kühner, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, I, 3rd edn, revised by F. Blass, Hanover 1890–2
K–G	R. Kühner, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, II, 3rd edn, revised by B. Gerth, Hanover/Leipzig 1898–1904
KRS	G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic philosophers*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 1983
LfgrE	*Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, Göttingen 1979–2010
LIMC	*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, Zurich 1981–1999
LSA	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques. Supplément*, Paris 1962
OLD	P. G. W. Glare and others, *Oxford Latin dictionary*, Oxford 1968–1982
Pfeiffer	R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, 2 vols., Oxford 1949–1953
PGM	K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd edn, Stuttgart 1973–4
PMG	D. L. Page, *Poetae melici Graeci*, Oxford 1962
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, *et al.* (eds.), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart/Munich 1893–1978
Rhodes–Osborne	P. J. Rhodes and R. Osborne, *Greek historical inscriptions 404–323 BC*, Oxford 2003
Schwyzer	E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik*, 3 vols., Munich 1939–1953
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, Berlin/New York 1983
SLG	D. L. Page, *Supplementum lyricis Graecis*, Oxford 1974
Smyth	H. W. Smyth, *Greek grammar*, Cambridge MA 1920
Thompson, *Birds*	D. W. Thompson, *A glossary of Greek birds*, 2nd edn, London 1936
Thompson, *Fishes*	D. W. Thompson, *A glossary of Greek fishes*, London 1947
Totti	M. Totti, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion*, Hildesheim 1985

MAP



The voyage of the Argonauts


Peuke
Istros River
Aia
Sinope
Halys River
Symplegades
Lemnos
Iolkos
Aegina
Thera
Anaphe
Karpathos
Crete
Alexandria
River Nile

(cont.)

INTRODUCTION

1 APOLLONIUS AND THE ARGONAUTICA

Our principal sources for the life of Apollonius and for the composition of *Arg.* are three biographical notices, going back at least to the Roman imperial period, and what seems to be a list of those who were in charge of the Royal Library at Alexandria, preserved in a miscellany on a papyrus of the second century AD; this evidence is, however, riddled with contradiction, anecdote and some obvious errors.[1] A generous reading of these texts suggests that Ap. served as Librarian at Alexandria in the central decades of the third century, but poetic and scholarly activity well into the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BC) can hardly be ruled out and may indeed be thought probable. Uncertainty is increased by the fact that *Arg.* does not contain explicit references to contemporary events and personages, and the identification of implicit references, as also the explanation of elements of the narrative in terms of contemporary concerns, is always a matter for critical judgement and hence potential difference of opinion;[2] the history of scholarship on *Arg.* clearly illustrates how difficult it is for agreement to be reached. Similar uncertainties beset attempts to establish absolute (or even relative) chronologies through the obvious intertextual relations between *Arg.* and some works of Theocritus and Callimachus.[3] In particular, the very rich pattern of correspondence between *Arg.* and Callimachus' *Aitia* has suggested to most of those who have studied the matter that Ap. is usually the borrower from Callimachus (which also seems to have been the prevailing view of ancient γραμματικοί), but that does not take account of the possibility (to put it at its weakest) that the two poets, working in the same Alexandrian institution, were engaged in an on-going interchange of poetic ideas. We are, moreover, hampered by our uncertainty of the process and chronology by which the four books of the *Aitia* were circulated,[4] and the argument is thus in constant danger of merely chasing its own tail.

[1] Hunter 1989: 1–12 will not be repeated here; translations and fuller discussion of the ancient evidence may be sought there. See also Rengakos 1992, Green 1997: 1–8, Lefkowitz 2008. Murray 2012 has stressed that we would do well not to assume that the list of (?) Librarians on *POxy.* 1241 has very good authority, even allowing for the correction of what look to be a couple of obvious slips.

[2] The rich geographical and cultural material in *Arg.* allows the thought that much was indeed determined by Ptolemaic and contemporary concerns, but (again) persuasive 'proof' is very hard to find. For certain aspects of how *Arg.* reflects a third-century world see Hunter 1995.

[3] See pp. 21–5 below.

[4] There is a helpful summary of views in Harder 2012: 1.2–15.

Jackie Murray has recently proposed that a pattern of astronomical indications allows the Argonauts' progress to be mapped precisely against the astronomical calendar of 238 BC, the year in which Ptolemy III seems to have inaugurated a new calendrical era for Egypt.[5] Such a hypothesis can hardly be ruled out on the basis of the ancient biographical notices that have survived, and there is in fact nothing inherently implausible about a date as late as this.[6] What any such reckoning cannot, however, successfully encompass is the length of time (many years?) the composition of a work such as *Arg.* may have taken and the possibility, or even likelihood, that parts at least were constantly being revised; although there are no clear signs of this, we cannot assume that the text we have was considered by Ap. to be fully finished.[7] As for revision, for six places in Book 1, and perhaps also for two in Book 2, the scholia cite variant versions, ranging from one to five verses, which they ascribe to a 'preliminary edition' (προέκδοσις) of the poem; it is clear from the nature of these verses that we are indeed dealing with a different text of the poem, something which cannot be explained as a concentration of the kind of casual variants which inevitably arise in the course of transmission.[8] What lies behind these facts, and to what extent knowledge of this 'preliminary edition' has shaped some of the anecdotal tradition that obviously surrounded Ap. in antiquity, in particular the alleged 'quarrel' with Callimachus, remain fascinating provocations to speculation. The very existence, however, of this προέκδοσις, whatever the term denotes, is a reminder that the search for a date of 'publication' for a poem such as *Arg.* is directed at a very different object than would be the case for a modern literary work.

Many of the principal concerns of *Arg.*, travel, geography and ethnography, cultic and cultural aetiology, female psychology and characterization, the power and effects of *erôs*, magic and the supernatural, are shared not just with other poetry of the third century, but also with what we can reconstruct of Hellenistic literate culture more broadly. It is often observed that the very breadth of the canvas across which the narrative of the epic unfolds is not merely a re-imagining of the spirit of the *Odyssey*, and in particular of the encounters of Odysseus with 'other', often

[5] Murray 2014. Murray is to publish a full version of her views in a forthcoming monograph, and a proper judgement about the matter will have to wait until then.

[6] For the view that 1021–2 echo Callimachus' 'Lock of Berenice' (Euergetes' young bride), a poem which cannot have been composed before 245 BC, see n. ad loc. So too, 1629–30 seem related to Callimachus' 'Victoria Berenices', a poem probably of *c.* 240, cf. n. ad loc.

[7] See, e.g., nn. on 945–7, 1601–2.

[8] On these verses of the *proekdosis* cf. Fantuzzi 1988: 87–120.

threatening cultures, but also seems to reflect the broad horizons of the international aspirations of the Ptolemies.

2 THE FOURTH BOOK

The events of Book 4 may be schematically set out as follows:[9]

1–5 Address to the Muse
6–108 Medea's flight from Aietes' palace and reception by the Argonauts
109–82 Medea and Jason take the Fleece
183–293 Flight from Colchis to the Paphlagonian coast
294–337 Argonauts and Colchians sail up the Istros to the Adriatic
338–521 Planning, execution and aftermath of killing of Apsyrtos
522–657 Trip through central Europe to western Mediterranean
658–752 Purification of Jason and Medea by Circe
753–981 Hera and Thetis help the Argonauts pass through the Planktai
982–1222 Stop on Drepane; wedding of Jason and Medea
1223–1392 The Syrtis and the Libyan desert; *Argo* transported to Lake Triton
1393–1619 The Hesperides, deaths of Kanthos and Mopsus, intervention by Triton, gift of clod of earth to Euphemos
1620–88 Voyage to Crete; episode of Talos
1689–1772 Voyage home: Anaphe, Euphemos' dream, Aeginetan *hydrophoria*
1773–81 Farewell to the heroes

Book 3 had concluded with perhaps the most epically 'marked' scene of the whole poem, Jason's overcoming of the fire-breathing bulls and the earthborn warriors. Book 4, by contrast, is characterized by scenes of flight, of despair, and of deception, but also by an eerie other-worldliness (the dragon which guards the Fleece, the ritualized killing of Apsyrtos, Phaethon's smouldering body, Circe's 'Empedoclean' animals, the emptiness of the Syrtis, the Garden of the Hesperides, Triton, Talos etc.) which we have good reason to believe was as experimental when Ap. composed it as it seems to us now. As the Argonauts confront one such τέρας after another, readers too are forced to stretch their own imaginations to encompass the new and the strange: Ap. makes all of us fellow-travellers with the Argonauts. Hera's protection of the Argonauts (cf. 11, 510, 576–80, 640–8, 753–841) lends some pattern to the first parts of the book, but a powerful sense of improvisation and randomness, nowhere more strongly felt than in Jason's formulation to Medea of how he plans to

[9] This plan is intended merely as a guide; it does not seek to distinguish the major and minor structural markers which Ap. includes in the text.

deal with the threat from Apsyrtos' pursuit (395–409n.), in the purposeless 'drift' of the Argonauts past the stench from Phaethon's body and in Hera's intervention to prevent them taking a fatal turn (619–44), lends Book 4 a remarkably unsettling feeling; no more than the Argonauts do we really know where we are.

Book 4 picks up and continues some of the themes of the Greek encounter with foreign cultures adumbrated already in Book 3. Jason had described to Medea the patterns of Greek culture and civilization (3.1085–95), apparently so remote from the barbarian land she inhabits, and she – with what is, for the reader, in the light of Euripides' *Medea*, a savage irony – contrasts Greek respect for agreements with what she knows of her own father;[10] this, on the surface, is a distant eastern land where it is not just burial customs (3.200–9n.) and Medea's practices with drugs and body-parts (51–2) which are surpassingly 'other'. That theme resurfaces strongly in Book 4 after the securing of the Fleece, when Jason presents the success of the Argonauts' expedition as determining whether or not 'Hellas' will win great glory (202–5, with n. ad loc.) and proclaims Medea the benefactor of 'all Achaia' (195–6).[11] In evoking both the Trojan War and the Greek wars against the Persians, Jason casts the present poem within a long tradition of Hellenic struggle. Aietes, conversely, speaks the language of tyrannical threat (231–5n.), so different from the communal values and ὁμόνοια of the Argonauts;[12] the fact that Medea's subsequent actions and those of the two teams of pursuing Colchians are driven by overriding fear of returning to face punishment at Aietes' hands speaks volumes for the difference between cultures. The theme recurs in Arete's arguments to her husband on Drepane, where 'the whole city laughed with pleasure at their arrival – you would say that they rejoiced over their own children' (996–7): Aietes, according to Arete, lives so far away that they know nothing of him, whereas Argos and Thessaly are close at hand. In his reply, Alcinous acknowledges that Aietes could, if he chose, bring war to Hellas (1103), as the barbarian Persians notoriously had done.

It is indeed Medea, the 'foreign body' who accompanies the Argonauts back to Greece, through whom the theme of inter-cultural confrontation is mediated. Much modern discussion has been devoted to the question of Medea's state of mind and attitude to Jason in Book 4,[13] but Ap. uses what may be termed 'mirror passages' between Books 3 and 4 to mark the consequences for Medea of her decision (made with Hera's reinforcement, 3.818) to help Jason. Thus, for example, her nocturnal flight in terror from Colchis (41–53) evokes (and reverses) her procession to the

[10] Cf. 3.1105n. [11] For such ideas cf. also, e.g., 1.243, 3.347.
[12] On the importance of ὁμόνοια in *Arg.* see Hunter 1995: 21–4.
[13] The bibliography may be pursued through Hunter 1987 and Dyck 1989.

temple of Hecate to meet Jason in Book 3, just as the simile comparing Medea in her fear of being handed over to the pursuing Colchians to a poor working woman (1062–6) forms a pair with the simile depicting the first awakening of her love for Jason (3.291–7). What is stressed in Book 4 is not, as many critics would have it, any 'extinction' of Medea's *erôs* (far from it, cf. 445–9, 1168), but rather her fearful isolation now that she has cut her ties with her family (vividly expressed by Circe at 739–48) and, particularly, with a father whose penchant for terrible violence and punishment she knows well (e.g. 1043–4); in Book 4, Medea has no alternative but to follow the consequences of her decision and thus entrust herself entirely to the protection and promises of Jason and his crew (88–91). Even in Book 3, Medea had been racked by doubt and guilt almost as soon as she had handed the φάρμακα over to Jason, an action which she viewed as a κακὸν ἔργον (3.1157–62), but there is no way back. Arete's defence of Medea to Alcinous (1080–3), which does not include the killing of Apsyrtos (of which Arete is ignorant), effectively accepts this view of Medea's abandonment of Colchis, which is indeed how Medea had presented it to her (1015–19), while glossing Medea's behaviour as the kind of 'mistake upon mistake' which humans constantly make. Medea's principal actions in Book 4, the taking of the Fleece, the luring of Apsyrtos to his death and the destruction of Talos, are all aimed at securing a safe and successful *nostos* for herself and the Argonauts.[14] In fact, however, we know that her safe arrival in Greece will eventually lead to a very bitter fracturing of her relationship with Jason, a break most clearly foreshadowed in Book 4 in her speeches of reproach to Jason at 355–90 (where see n.) and to the Argonauts in turn at 1031–52, which evoke and echo the harsh exchanges between Jason and Medea in Euripides' *Medea*, thus keeping the events of that tragedy firmly before our eyes.

A striking feature of Book 4 is indeed the rich use of tragic models to mark certain significant moments and narrative patterns.[15] The dominant tragic pattern in Book 4 is not the foreshadowing of the events of Euripides' *Medea*, but rather a web of analogies between the killing of Apsyrtos and tragic versions of the death of Agamemnon and Orestes' subsequent killing of Clytemnestra. This pattern, by imitating the way in

[14] The poet leaves somewhat unclear why the Argonauts wish to land in Crete and therefore are threatened by Talos (cf. 1635–6n.), and it is sometimes claimed that this episode is simply added in an inorganic fashion for the sake of the description of Medea's magical powers. That Talos is a 'leftover' of the previous Bronze Race is clearly relevant to the important pattern whereby the Argonauts are made to confront earlier stages of the cosmos (Hunter 1993: 166–7), but from Medea's point of view Talos is simply one more obstacle to be removed.

[15] Book 3 also had almost certainly drawn extensively on tragic, very probably Sophoclean, models, Hunter 1989: 19. On *Arg.* and tragedy more generally cf. Nishimura-Jensen 1996.

which the paradigm of Orestes' revenge floats in and out of the *Odyssey*, belongs in part with Ap.'s large-scale debt to the Homeric poems (p. 14–21 below); the Homeric model is, morever, elaborated through echoes, including specific verbal allusions, to tragic treatments of the House of Atreus, in particular Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Both the killing itself and the sacrificial imagery with which it is described, as well as the subsequent mutilation of the body (477–8), all evoke the death of Agamemnon in both epic and tragedy (468n., 477n.), and the explicit place given to the Furies (476, 714) suggests, above all, the aftermath of the death of Clytemnestra in Aeschylus. So too, the purification of Medea and Jason by Circe replays the Delphic purification of Orestes (560n., 693–4n., 705–6n.); Clytemnestra's troubling and prophetic dream is here transferred to Circe herself (663–4n.), as Apsyrtos (like Agamemnon) is not allowed any warning at all of what is to happen. The epic background of much of this material lies not so much in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as in the Cyclic poems, and so these tragic patterns must also be seen within Ap.'s considerable debt to, and *mimesis* of the manner of, the Epic Cycle.[16] There is, then, a rich literary and cultural history written into the epic, which produces an effect of deep layering.

One result of this layering is a sense of successive generic stages in an attempt to encompass and describe a now very past world. What, for example, did Ap.'s contemporaries know of *maschalismos* as a 'real' practice (cf. 477n.)? When the poet says that spitting out the blood of the murdered man 'three times' is θέμις for murderers (479), we may ask what kind of imaginative act we have to perform in order to think ourselves into the past. If early epic and tragedy are two genres which offer models of such imaginative recreation, then Ap. also uses Presocratic science and speculation as a third. Circe is accompanied by creatures which resemble Empedocles' weird forms which first emerged at the beginning of time (672–5n., 676–81n.); Empedoclean cosmogony is thus another cultural model for imagining the past. Parmenides too is evoked in the 'gates and halls of Night' from where the Rhodanos is said to rise (629–30n.), thus 'familiarizing' an extraordinary geography but also – given the context of Parmenides' proem – emphasizing the inspired strangeness of the whole. So too, Medea's powers of 'the evil eye' by which she bewitches Talos are in part described through an evocation of Presocratic physical theory (cf. 1665–72n.).

This marked use of Presocratic speculation is also a contribution to a debate about the kind of traces of 'history' which poetry preserves; our fullest ancient source for that debate is the discussion of Homer in Book 1 of Strabo's *Geography*, written in the time of Augustus, but we know that it

[16] See below p. 140.

was a very active debate in third-century Alexandria. Eratosthenes' *bon mot* that one would be able to follow the path of Odysseus' wanderings 'when the shoemaker who stitched the bag of winds was found' (Strabo 1.2.15) is only the best-known reflection of this concern to establish what, if any, 'reality' was to be expected from poetry. Strabo's answer was that Homer's geography was indeed rooted in reality, however much that reality had been elaborated with pleasure-giving μῦθοι, and he will not have been the first to take this view. Apollonius' 'Odyssean' geography (cf. below) already shows clearly how the Homeric hero's wanderings had been located in a known geography (SW Italy, Sicily, Corcyra), even if one where marvellous *paradoxa* can still happen. The use of Presocratic patterns allows the Argonauts to confront extraordinary material which is, nevertheless, sanctioned by an authority which is beyond the 'scholarly' concerns of the Alexandrian Library; from an Alexandrian perspective, the Presocratics (particularly those who composed in hexameters) were, to oversimplify, poised between μῦθος and λόγος, between poetic myth and rational reflection, and this made them very suitable vehicles through which to express the peculiar nature of the 'truth' of poetry. We may perhaps think of this as an alternative model to allegorization for how poetic material could be presented and/or understood.

3 THE RETURN ITINERARY

At 2.420–2 Phineus tells Jason that, if the Argonauts pass safely through the Clashing Rocks on their voyage to Colchis, 'a god will lead you by another route away from Aia', and the Argonauts remember his words at 4.254–5 when they pause on the south coast of the Black Sea in their escape from the pursuing Colchians. Ap.'s readers will have been tantalized by Phineus' riddling lack of detail, which stands in sharp contrast to the pedantic precision of his instructions for the outward voyage, as both poetic and geographical tradition had bequeathed to Ap. a variety of possible return routes for the Argonauts.[17] One possibility was in fact to return by the same (direct) route as that of the outward voyage, as the Clashing Rocks were now fixed immobile and no longer posed an almost insurmountable obstacle (2.604–6); the scholia tell us that Sophocles (in the *Skythai*, fr. 547R), Herodorus of Heraclea (*FGrHist* 31 F10) and Callimachus (fr. 9) were among those who had exploited that possibility.[18] Ap.'s Argonauts do not know (cf. 1252–5, 2.1190–1) that this will be one

[17] Helpful surveys in Delage 1930: ch. 3, Vian III 11–20, Vian 1987, Dufner 1988: 128–33.

[18] Fraser 1972: II 628–9, Harder 2012: 2.162–3. It remains a puzzle how Callimachus combined a return through the Bosporus with episodes clearly set in the west (e.g. on Corcyra).

consequence of their success in traversing the Rocks (this information was perhaps one of the things which Phineus did not believe it was *themis* for them to know, 2.311–13), but little is made of the potential narrative ironies that such a situation lays open. Rather, Ap. adopts a return route which is not only as ἕτερος, 'different', as possible in certain respects from the outward voyage, a difference in fact neatly symbolized by the contrast between the passage through the Clashing Rocks and that through the Planktai, but one which allows him to encompass the whole tradition of Argonautic voyaging to which he was heir. By claiming authority for this route in the primeval knowledge of Egyptian priests and the travels of a now nameless conqueror and civilizer, whose records survive at Aia (259–81, cf. 272–6n.), Ap. not only creates a marked difference from Phineus' dry and precise *periegesis* (cf. 257–93n.), but appeals to a secret wisdom befitting the extraordinary journey which the Argonauts are to undertake, a journey which will, in some senses, take them too back to the beginning of time.

From an early date the Argonauts were brought back to Greece by circuitous and fantastic routes. Hesiod (fr. 241)[19] apparently took them from Aia up the Phasis, and from there into the stream of Ocean in the extreme north, from where they voyaged west and south around the imagined land mass to Africa, where they then carried the *Argo* across the desert to the Mediterranean; this was in principle the route adopted also by Pindar in *Pythian* 4 and, so the scholia inform us, by Antimachus in the *Lyde* (fr. 76 Matthews). Libya, which plays such an important role in *Arg.* 4, had a very firm place in the Argonautic saga. Herodotus 4.179 reports a *logos* which is very reminiscent of *Arg.*, and almost certainly echoed in it,[20] but also very different. Before the expedition, the story goes, Jason wanted to make dedications at Delphi, including a bronze tripod; as he was sailing around the Peloponnese, he was blown off course at Cape Malea southwards to Libya and was caught in the shallows of Lake Triton,[21] where the eponymous god appeared to him and told him to give him the tripod; in return for this, Triton showed Jason and his crew how to leave the lake. The god placed the tripod in his own temple and told the crew that when one of their descendants carried off the tripod, 'one hundred Greek cities would be established around Lake Triton'; as a result of this, the local inhabitants hid the tripod. Herodotus places these events much further west than is Ap.'s 'Lake Triton' (cf. 1311n.), but Ap.'s narrative at 1537–1619 clearly follows the Herodotean pattern very

[19] It is debated in which poem or poems (the *Catalogue*, the *Megalai Ehoiai*?) Hesiod told of the Argonauts' return; see Hirschberger 2004: 452–4, D'Alessio 2005: 195–9.

[20] Cf. 157on., 1581–2n., 1731–64n.

[21] With Jason's ἀπορία of Hdt. 4.179.2 cf. 1539–40.

closely.[22] Herodotus' account also reminds us how deep and early is the fusion of the adventures of Odysseus, who was also blown off course at Cape Malea, with those of the Argonauts; Ap.'s Argonauts will both lead and follow where Odysseus travelled.[23]

Two prose writers nearer in time to Ap. opened new geographical possibilities which he was to exploit. Probably in the first half of the fourth century, in a work *On Harbours,* Timagetos described the Istros (Danube) as rising in the 'Celtic mountains' and splitting into two branches, one emptying into the Black Sea (presumably) on the NW coast, the other into the Mediterranean, though exactly where is uncertain (Σ 257–62b, 282–91a = *FHG* IV 519);[24] the scholia report that Timagetos brought the Argonauts into the Mediterranean through these two branches and claim that Ap. 'follows' him in this. Scholiasts, like modern scholars, are fond of identifying a direct connection between texts which happen to survive, but we do not in fact know whether Timagetos was the first to propose such a river system, nor to what extent he was directly influential upon Ap. What is certain, however, is that by the end of the fourth century it was a common idea that the Istros had a branch which emptied, not west of Italy, but rather on the north coast of the Adriatic;[25] the existence of the Istroi tribe on the northern Adriatic coast and another (small) river there named Istros no doubt helped to facilitate this misconception (cf. Strabo 1.3.15, Diod. Sic. 4.56.8).

Diodorus Siculus 4.56.3–6 reports that 'not a few both of the ancient historians and of those who came after, including Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F85)' reported that the Argonauts sailed up the Tanais (Don) to its source and then dragged the *Argo* over land to another river which flowed into Ocean; they then sailed anticlockwise round Ocean and into the Mediterranean through the Pillars of Heracles at its western end.[26] This itinerary allowed such writers to explain 'visible signs' of the Argonauts'

[22] Herodotus notes that Jason was caught 'in the shallows of Lake Triton, before sighting land'; Ap. (and perhaps others before him) redistributed this motif into two parts – the Argonauts are indeed trapped in Lake Triton, but the unforeseen shallows seem to correspond to the Syrtis of 1237–49.

[23] See below pp. 14–17. [24] Cf. further *RE* 6A.1071–3.

[25] Cf. 282–3n., Ps.-Scylax 20 (with Shipley 2011: 105), Theopompus, *FGrHist* 115 F129, Arist. *HA* 7.598b15–17. The geography of the northern Adriatic, as it appears in *Arg.* 4, is very inexact and impressionistic. Strabo 1.2.39, immediately after citing Callimachus fr. 11 on the Colchian foundations in Illyria (cf. below p. 22), reports that 'some say that Jason's crew sailed a great distance up the Istros, and others say that he reached the Adriatic'. It is unclear to whom Strabo is referring (cf. n. 47 below), but the juxtaposition of that notice to an extensive quotation from Callimachus is at least suggestive.

[26] Σ 282–91b ascribes this Argonautic route to Scymnus of Chios (fr. 5 Gisinger); on this periegetic writer of (probably) the late third – early second century BC cf. *RE* 3A.661–72.

presence in the western Mediterranean, such as on Aethalia (Elba, cf. 654–8), and this would have been particularly important for Timaeus, the great historian of the Greek west, who was clearly an important source for Ap.[27] It also allowed the Argonauts to come into close contact with sites associated with Odysseus' travels by those who placed a major part of them in the west, rather than removing them to the outer reaches of Ocean, the so-called ἐξωκεανισμός (cf. Strabo 1.2.37); this too was to prove very important for Ap. After the voyage eastwards (at least as far as the west coast of Italy), the Argonauts were blown by winds to the Libyan Syrtis, where they were guided to safety by Triton, 'who ruled Libya at that time', and in return they gave him 'a bronze tripod inscribed with ancient characters', which remained 'until recent times' among the people of Euhesperides. Diodorus proceeds to criticize unnamed others who took the Argonauts up the Istros to its source and then down a branch of the same river which allegedly flowed into the Adriatic; 'time has demonstrated them wrong' (cf. Strabo 1.2.39).

From these various poetic, historiographical and geographical traditions, Ap. constructed (or adopted) a route which allowed his Argonauts to visit most of the places previously associated with them, except for Ocean and the far west of the Mediterranean.[28] In his scheme (see the map at the beginning of the book which shows the route as envisaged by Ap., including his geography of rivers, imposed on a modern map of the Mediterranean), the Argonauts (and one group of pursuing Colchians) sail NE across the Black Sea, and then directly to the Adriatic, by means of the Istros, which is imagined to flow from the far north before splitting into branches which flowed into the Black Sea and the Adriatic.[29] After their Adriatic adventures, including the murder of Apsyrtos, the Argonauts enter the Eridanos (Po, cf. 505–6n.) and proceed NW until, thanks to Hera's intervention, they turn south down the Rhodanos (Rhone), which was imagined to flow from the 'Celtic Lakes' both north into Ocean and south to the Mediterranean. From there the Argonauts' route home encompasses the west coast of Italy, the Straits of Messina, with Scylla, Charybdis and the Wandering Rocks, Corcyra ('Drepane', the Homeric Scherie), Libya, and finally Crete and the Aegean islands. The two major 'joins' in the narrative are both clearly signalled, and in such a

[27] Interest in an Ocean route for the Argonauts may have been increased by the publication near the end of the fourth century of Pytheas' *On Ocean*, an account of his travels in the northern Atlantic, cf. Cunliffe 2001, Roller 2006: 57–91; the date of this work remains, however, fiercely debated.

[28] We cannot say whether Ap.'s route was, in its complex comprehensiveness, original to him, but it seems not unlikely; see Dufner 1988: 145–6.

[29] Callimachus too (frr. 9–11) used this route for the pursuing Colchians, but not apparently for his Argonauts; see p. 22 below.

way that the 'composite' nature of the route, and hence of the poet's choices, is advertised:[30] a question to the Muses at 552–6 marks the end of the Adriatic adventures and a shift to the voyage to the western Mediterranean, and at 1225–7 the Libyan adventures are 'fated', 'proper', αἴσιμον, and the north winds which carry the Argonauts off (1232–6) come with greater suddenness than usual.

The 'all-inclusive' itinerary of Ap.'s Argonauts, which embraces, on the outward voyage, the northern Aegean, the Hellespont and the south coast of the Black Sea, and, on the return, most of central Europe, the Adriatic, the western Mediterranean, North Africa and the southern Aegean, gives *Arg.* something of the flavour of a *periplous*, or account of the coasts of the known world (or part of it); this sense of a geographical 'tour' is emphasized by ἀκτὰς Παγασηίδας in the final verse, which brings the Argonauts back to exactly where they set off and to a geographical designation which has not been mentioned since their departure. Such a linear (or circular)[31] structure is set in pointed opposition to the *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus' departure for Troy is only briefly alluded to (*Od.* 18.257–71) and he is not even allowed to recognize Ithaca on his return (13.187–216). By the third century there was a rich tradition of geographical 'tours', in both poetry and prose, as well as passages included within other kinds of literature which are clearly related to what was to become a flourishing independent genre (cf., e.g., Hes. frr. 150–6 (pursuit of the Harpies by the Boreads), Aesch., *PV* 707–877).[32] Most such works available to Ap. have not survived, but the so-called '*Periplous* of Pseudo-Scylax', which probably dates in essence from the time of Alexander, 'describes the coasts of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, beginning at Gibraltar and proceeding clockwise to return to the same place (and a little way into the Atlantic)';[33] the style is for the most part very dry and factual, but the significant number of places where it sheds light on Ap.'s geography is suggestive for the extent of the poet's debt to these prose traditions. Phineus' foretelling in Book 2 of the journey along the south coast of the Black Sea clearly evokes the dry style of one kind of *periplous* or *periegesis*, with its admixture of ethnography and mythology,[34] but in Book 4 the emphasis, as we have seen, rather lies on the encounter with the mysterious and the uncanny. Ap.'s Argonauts both follow and pave the

[30] See Hunter 2008b: 138–40.

[31] For *Arg.* as a 'cyclic' poem cf. below pp. 19–20, 421–521n.

[32] The best introduction to the richness of this tradition is Marcianus of Heraclea (perhaps 6th cent. AD), *GGM* 1 564–7, who divides such works into *periploi* of a particular region, of the entire Mediterranean, and of Ocean ('the external sea'); for modern accounts see Marcotte 2000: xxiv-lxxii, Janni 1984.

[33] Shipley 2011: 1; on Pseudo-Scylax see Peretti 1979, 1983, Shipley 2011.

[34] Pearson 1938, Hunter 1993: 94–5.

way for Odysseus (see section 4 below), but they also subsume the *Odyssey* into what is, from one perspective, a poetic history of Greek knowledge of the world, a history in which Homer, Herodotus, and Hellenistic science all play significant roles.[35]

It is in the Libyan adventures where Book 4 might be thought at its most experimental.[36] The opening description of the Syrtis (1235–49, cf. 1235n.), a place from where *nostos* is no longer possible (1235–6, 1272–6), replaces the landscapes of the *Odyssey* with a vision of nothingness which evokes the topographies of geographical and paradoxographical writing. The dramatic shift is pointed by the very Odyssean wind which drives the Argonauts south to Libya (cf. 1228–31, 1232–4nn.), but what awaits them is something quite unlike the perils faced by Odysseus. The description of the Syrtis evokes by reversal the famous description of an island lying off the coast of the land of the Cyclopes (*Od.* 9.116–51).[37] Both spaces are uninhabited and neither supports any form of pastoralism; whereas, however, the Syrtis cannot support human life (there is, for example, no drinking water (1247)), the Homeric island would, if exploited, support a flourishing population of traders: it has excellent agricultural land, fresh water, and wonderful harbours, and even offers Odysseus and his men, in the absence of any inhabitants, a very rich supply of food in the form of wild goats ('we sat feasting on limitless meat and sweet wine all day until the sun went down', *Od.* 9.161–2). The Syrtis, by contrast, is a negative space caught between land and sea, a place where ships and the art of navigation are worthless (1261–76) and the most that any man trapped there can expect is 'a most piteous death' by hunger (1295–6), a death that will erase all trace that such a man ever existed (1305–7). The inversion of 'nature' represented by the Syrtis is pointed by the extraordinary comparison of the Argonauts to men whose grim fate has been foreshadowed by prodigies and reversals of the cosmic order (cf. 1280–9n.).

In the Libyan Syrtis the most Greek of all crafts, navigation, is useless, and the steersman Ankaios abandons himself to despair (1259–60). In this 'no-man's land' (cf. esp. 1239–40, 1247–9) of dream-like mirages, of absence, emptiness and negativity, a sea which is no sea, a ἅλμη ἄπλοος (1270–1), Greek knowledge is so powerless that the *Argo* must be transported over land. Here even Heracles' 'traces' are wiped out by blowing sand (4.1463–4), and there are no directional signs, almost quite literally no geography, and certainly no γεωγραφία.[38] It is more than a sense of

[35] Meyer 2008 offers an introduction to some of the important issues.
[36] Livrea 1987 offers an account of the Libyan adventures as a whole.
[37] For verbal similarities between the two passages cf. 1247–9n.
[38] Cf., e.g., Clare 2002: 151–2, Thalmann 2011: 78–80. Thalmann's whole discussion (78–91) may be consulted for the growing interest in (and bibliography on) the Libyan episode as a paradigm for the colonization of space.

direction which has been lost (cf. *Odyssey* 10.190–3). The Argonauts are finally led to safety by the signing tracks (4.1378–9) left by a horse of Poseidon, by the ability of Peleus to read oracular images, and then by the offering of a tripod to another watery divinity, Triton. As Odysseus at the end of his journey planted in the earth a visible sign, a 'trace', of his passage – the oar which looked like a winnowing-fan – so the Argonauts' final escape from Libya is marked by a return, not just of man-made signs and ritual spaces, but also of a geography based in the imposition of names and an aetiological practice which is itself a marker of Greek culture (1620–2).

The Argonauts survive in Libya, both in the Syrtis and in the area near Lake Triton, thanks to the intervention of minor divinities (the 'heroines', the Hesperides, Triton), the fact that Heracles had preceded them into this dreadful landscape and created a spring of drinking water (1441–9), and through their own epic heroism (1384) in carrying the *Argo* for twelve days and nights across the desert. Even here, however, not everything is as it seems, or rather perceptions no longer erase doubt. Are these epiphanies only mirages created by extreme conditions (cf. 1312–14n., 1408–9n.)? Even the far-sighted Lynceus only 'thinks' he caught a glimpse of Heracles across the desert wastes (1477–82), and the Argonauts' feat is so extraordinary that the poet must stress that this is a Μουσάων ... μῦθος (1381). The Libyan desert, which many critics have seen as Ap.'s version of the Underworld, is a place where all certainties break down; even epic techniques, such as that of the simile, come under strain (cf. 1338–43n.). If Pindar and Herodotus are the main points of reference here (particularly for Triton and the foundation of Thera), Ap. no doubt drew on many other sources also for individual episodes in the desert.[39] Nevertheless, it seems very likely that the Libyan section shows the poet's own combinatory narrative power as clearly as anywhere in *Arg.* Juxtaposed to the very human events on Drepane/Corcyra and the pleasures of navigation on the open sea (1622–36), Libya stands out as a markedly 'foreign' environment (Triton is a τέρας αἰνόν, 1619), where snakes born from the Gorgon's blood (1513–17) are more at home than men. Three centuries later, in Book 9 of the *Bellum ciuile*, Lucan was to make Cato's soldiers acknowledge that human beings are an intrusion in this hostile environment and thus justly punished (*BC* 9.854–62). Triton here serves as a mediating figure, who belongs to this strange world but also offers the Argonauts a guest-gift (1551–63) which is to prove truly valuable (cf. above), and uses his knowledge of navigation and the pathways of the sea to get them back into Greek waters (1573–85). For Ap.'s Alexandrian readers, many of whom will have had some acquaintance at least with the land between Cyrene and

[39] Vian III 58–64.

Alexandria and/or with the desert west of the Nile, this narrative of Greek heroic intrusion into such an unforgiving environment must have had a dislocating effect. This was their story which was being told.

Almost the final event of Book 4 is the foreshadowing of the creation of Thera from the clod of earth which Triton presented to Euphemos and the story of how the island was settled by colonists from Sparta who included Lemnian descendants of the Argonaut (cf. 1731–64n.). The story was a traditional part of Argonautic legend, and Ap.'s readers will have been very aware that it was from Thera that Libya was then colonized and Cyrene founded. As the Argonauts leave Libya behind, they carry with them Triton's gift which will lead eventually to Greek domination in Cyrenaica. The poem thus ends not just with the *aition* of an amusing running-race on Aegina (1766–72), but with what amounts to a large-scale *aition* for the creation of Greek islands and for the Greek presence in North Africa. The Argonautic expedition thus assumes a significance of scale which might otherwise seem to have been lacking. Jason had proclaimed that the glory of Hellas depended upon the success of their mission (204–5), and we see at the end just what this actually meant.

4 *ODYSSEY* AND ARGONAUTICA

One consequence of and (presumably) motive for moving the Argonauts from the Adriatic to the western Mediterranean was to make it possible for them to visit sites that Odysseus was to visit after them, but where of course he had already been, and Zeus's anger at the killing of Apsyrtos here functions as the narrative analogy to the anger of Poseidon and Helios in *Od.*[40] Circe, the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, the Planktai and Scherie/Drepane/Corcyra are the most prominent episodes shared by the two epic voyages.[41] For any educated Greek of the third century the starting point for the relationship between the two voyages was Circe's famous warning to Odysseus to avoid the Πλαγκταί, where 'waves and blasts of destructive fire' threaten destruction:

> οἵη δὴ κείνηι γε παρέπλω ποντοπόρος νηῦς
> Ἀργὼ πασιμέλουσα, παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα·
> καί νύ κε τὴν ἔνθ' ὧκα βάλεν μεγάλας ποτὶ πέτρας,
> ἀλλ' Ἥρη παρέπεμψεν, ἐπεὶ φίλος ἦεν Ἰήσων.
>
> Homer, *Odyssey* 12.69–72

[40] The fullest account of how *Od.* is incorporated into *Arg.* 4 is Dufner 1988, and cf. also Knight 1995: 152–266; a briefer survey in Hutchinson 1988: 101–4.

[41] Other Odyssean scenes, of course, provide models for episodes earlier in *Arg.*; thus, for example, the unexpected return of the sons of Phrixos to Colchis evokes the unexpected return of Odysseus and his men to Aeolus, cf. 3.299–438.

> Only one sea-going ship has sailed past that way, the *Argo* of which all men know, as it was sailing back from Aietes. It too would have been dashed against the great rocks, but Hera escorted it through, because Jason was dear to her.[42]

Circe speaks with the authority not just of a goddess, but of Aietes' own sister (*Od.* 10.135–9, Hes. *Theog.* 957); Circe herself, then, is already a figure of Argonautic myth, and in Book 12 she seems to evoke not just a story from the past, but a story known through epic song. The similarities between the Argonautic voyage and that of Odysseus were well known to ancient scholars (see below), and many modern students of the *Odyssey* accept that some of Odysseus' most famous adventures were indeed transposed to Homer's epic from an original Argonautic epic setting,[43] though there is no good reason to believe that any very early epic 'Argonautica', as opposed to Argonautic episodes in the Hesiodic corpus[44] or in poems such as the *Naupactia* and Eumelos' *Korinthiaka*,[45] survived to be available to poets of the classical and Hellenistic period. In Book 4 at least, it would seem that, after Homer and Pindar, Ap.'s principal sources are to be sought in prose writing, both earlier annalists such as Pherecydes of Athens and Herodorus of Heraclea[46] and historians nearer in time to Ap. himself, such as Timaeus.

Alexandrian and later scholars were clearly very conscious of a relationship between the two epic stories of Odysseus and Jason; in his discussion of Homer's geography, Strabo lays considerable emphasis upon the fact that Homer knew the Argonautic story in some detail and modelled some features of his *Odyssey* upon this (1.2.10, 38–40 etc.). Strabo has his own particular agenda to pursue – for him the Argonautic story is as rooted in real fact as is the story of Odysseus' wanderings – but there can be little doubt that a long tradition of comparative interpretation of the two adventures lies behind him.[47] It seems likely enough, for example, that

[42] On the causes of Hera's devotion to Jason cf. 3.66–75n.

[43] The arguments and bibliography may be traced through Meuli 1921 and West 2005.

[44] See, e.g., Braswell 1988: 8–10, D'Alessio 2005: 195–9.

[45] Cf. 6–10n., Hunter 1989: 15–16. *POxy* 3698 preserves the beginnings of some 35 hexameters of a first-person narration on an Argonautic theme: Orpheus, Jason, Mopsus, Aietes and probably Medea are all mentioned. The editor, Michael Haslam, notes that 'the likeliest supposition' is that the verses are archaic; Debiasi 2003 suggests ascription to Eumelos' *Korinthiaka*, noting that the apparent subject would suit the scenes on Drepane, cf. 1159–64n.

[46] Fowler 2013: 195–228 is a very rich collection of Argonautic material in early mythography; for Pherecydes see also (more briefly) Braswell 1988: 16–19.

[47] Of particular interest is Strabo's claim that the Homeric Circe was modelled on Medea, who was (for Strabo) an historical figure; an impartial reading of the opening of 1.2.10 might lead one to understand that Homer had had almost as

Timaeus at least had taken the Argonauts to some Odyssean sites before Ap. did the same. In choosing to write an epic *Argonautica*, a subject which Homer himself seems to oppose to his own *Odyssey*, Ap. very deliberately set himself both alongside and 'against' Homer.

The Argonauts' 'Odyssey' takes them first to Circe's home on the south-west coast of Italy, and then down past the Sirens (cf. 891–2n.), the treble threat of the Strait of Messina, Scylla–Charybdis and the Planktai (cf. 761–2, 922–4nn.), the meadow of the Cattle of the Sun (cf. 964–5n.), and then finally eastwards to Drepane/Corcyra, the Homeric Scherie. It has long been noted that this part of the return voyage is not marked by *aitia* and visible signs of the Argonauts' passage; after the 'Harbour of the *Argo*' on Aithalie/Elba (667–8), the next visible trace is the 'Cave of Medea' on Drepane where her marriage to Jason took place (1153–4). On one hand, this is imitation of Odyssean technique. Although Odysseus' travels effect radical change in more than one of the places he visits – the Cyclops is blinded, the Cattle of the Sun killed, the Phaeacian ship turned to stone – there is very little sign in Books 9–12 (or indeed elsewhere) of a concern to explain real or alleged features of the world of Homer's audience; the *Odyssey*, even more starkly perhaps than the *Iliad*, shows little interest in aetiology or the archaeology of the past. From another perspective, however, the Argonauts do not leave traces in this landscape because it is not theirs: these are sites which Odysseus will visit and claim as his own, sites known only because of the *Odyssey*; even the 'Cave of Medea' is in the countryside, away from the palace of Alcinous where Odysseus will be entertained.

The sites and their narratives themselves reflect this almost suspended state of being both before and after Odysseus. Circe's strange animals resemble creatures from a time long before the *Odyssey*, from the very beginning of time in fact; they are, however, described in the language of Empedoclean cosmogony, with an intellectual frame that is certainly

much to say about Medea as about Circe. In fact, of course, Homer never mentions Medea: at *Odyssey* 10.137, Circe is 'very sister to dread-minded Aietes', and when Strabo cites this verse at 1.2.40 he notes that Homer gave Circe magical powers 'on the model of Medea' (παρὰ τὴν Μήδειαν). In other words, Medea was so notorious that Homer must have known about her. There is, however, no clear sign in the relevant chapters that Strabo has *Arg.* in mind, even in 1.2.10 where he lists places in the Mediterranean which bear Argonautic traces, virtually all of which appear in *Arg.*, or in 1.2.39 where he criticizes those who took the Argonauts to the Adriatic via the Istros; Strabo in fact never explicitly cites *Arg.* and only mentions Ap. at 14.2.13 as a prominent Rhodian literary figure, though in reality an Alexandrian. In 1.2.10 he cites rather the Callimachean 'Argonautica' (fr. 7.23, 25–6, fr. 11, cf. below pp. 21–5) as evidence for the τεκμήρια of the Argonautic expedition. This will, in part, be due to Strabo's admiration for Callimachus, whom he sees as a learned scholar (not entirely unlike himself) and whom he cites on a number of occasions, and to the very high standing of the *Aitia*.

post-Homeric.[48] Just as increasing geographical knowledge led to an increasing specificity as to where the travels of both Odysseus and Jason were located, so mythic material itself was subject (at need) to transposition into more 'modern' models of interpretation. The Sirens are overcome by a virtuoso performance from Orpheus (cf. 907–9n.), one much more suggestive of contemporary instrumental performance than of archaic 'simplicity', and the description of the Cattle of the Sun seems at least to reflect some of the interpretative interest which the corresponding Homeric passage had aroused (cf. 977–8n.). Scylla and Charybdis are given relatively little attention (825–31), presumably because Homer's detailed account served once for all, whereas the passage through the Planktai, where Ap. had the opportunity to describe an event to which Homer had merely referred (*Od.* 12.69–72, above), is described at length and with considerable ecphrastic decoration. The *Argo* is transported past the Rocks by the Nereids who pass the ship from one to another like girls playing with a ball, or – more specifically – like Nausicaa and her friends on the beach at Scherie (cf. 948–55n.); here too, then, Ap. both writes a prequel to the *Odyssey* and also makes clear 'post-Homeric' allusion to it. So too, events on Drepane show how and why Arete occupied such a position of influence over her husband, as the *Odyssey* had suggested (esp. 7.66–77) but never really demonstrated; they also show a king and a people, far from wishing to avoid contact with outsiders and keep themselves hidden, in fact making decisions based on considerations of *Realpolitik* and international strategy (1074–7, 1098–1109), more like a Hellenistic court than a mythical land of wonders.[49] Drepane becomes the place where the poem's 'Nausicaa' marries the poem's 'Odysseus', but all of Ap.'s readers know that the ideal of ὁμοφροσύνη (*Od.* 6.181–5) will never travel with this couple.

The debt to the *Odyssey*, as indeed to Homer more generally, is not limited to the tour of Odyssean sites. At every level of motif and language, *Arg.* is saturated with the Homeric heritage and with the reworkings of and scholarship upon that heritage from the centuries before Ap. It is very clear, for example, that at the level of poetic diction the text of *Arg.* reflects in literally hundreds of places contemporary and earlier attempts to understand Homeric diction;[50] very frequently we find Homeric words of disputed meaning used in ways that we know were current in the glossographical and scholarly traditions. Homeric 'problems', including

[48] Cf. above pp. 6–7.

[49] Ap. has greatly reduced the Homeric element of the marvellous in his description of the domain of Alcinous and Arete; thus, for example, the wonders of Alcinous' palace (*Od.* 7.81–132) had already been rewritten in the description of Aietes' eastern palace (3.210–37).

[50] See esp. Rengakos 1994.

textual problems, are also regularly evoked in the texture of Ap.'s language. These features, which are shared with the poetry of Callimachus,[51] do not – as often used to be claimed – turn Alexandrian poetry into nothing more than a scholarly *ludus*. Central to the poetic meaning of *Arg.*, in Book 4 more prominently than anywhere else, is the mixing of temporal levels, so that the present constantly intrudes on a narrative of the past, sometimes – as in the description of Circe's animals or of Talos, the remnant of the Bronze Age – the very distant past; one of the earliest readers known to have appreciated this aspect of *Arg.* was Virgil, who developed this technique in his own directions in the *Aeneid*.

Appreciation of the linguistic texture of *Arg.*, archaizing and (as Aristotle would have put it) ξένον, but also constantly drawing attention to itself precisely by the evocation of contemporary and earlier discussion of Homer's linguistic texture, is an important element of the experience of reading *Arg.*; how that experience is both similar to and different from reading Homer is fundamental to Ap.'s poetic enterprise.[52] When reading Homer, whether today or in antiquity, we are pulled up from time to time by words of uncertain meaning, often what the ancients called 'glosses', i.e. archaic words or words from a dialect not our own which require explanation, which delay our progress through the text. If this concern with understanding at the micro-level is carried to extremes, as it is in the scholarship preserved for us in the Homeric scholia, then it may be that the experience of reading Homer is (for a scholar) not so different from the experience of reading *Arg.* On the other hand, the language of Homer becomes so familiar, and is in any case so marked by repetition, that it is 'naturalized', both in the sense that it seems natural for the epic task it performs and in the sense that we are able to read it in a steady forward flow, without constant interruption. The language of *Arg.*, by contrast, constantly holds us up, both by its own difficulties and by its insistent allusion at the micro-level to the language of Homer; reading *Arg.* is a much more fragmented experience than is reading Homer. As we progress through the text, we are always aware of the 'business of reading', and indeed – through Ap.'s intrusions into the text – of the 'business of composition', because of the nature of this Hellenistic epic language. Here, too, Virgil learned from Apollonius.

Even where Ap. seems most remote from the Odyssean pattern, as for example in the Libyan adventures, resonances of Homer's poem are never

[51] There are significant differences between the 'scholarly' texture of Callimachus' poetry and that of Ap., but for present purposes it is the similarities which are more significant.

[52] The distinction drawn here is very broad and unnuanced, but also very important to the history of literary self-consciousness.

far away.[53] No epic of travel could fail to be at some level an 'Odyssey', and Book 4 evokes the Homeric poem in its opening verse;[54] nevertheless, after securing the Fleece, the Argonauts are almost constantly on the move, whereas the second half of *Od.* is rooted in Ithacan locations and much of the dynamic of change is psychological rather than physical. *Arg.* is in fact markedly, even strangely, anti-Odyssean in that three of the four books are devoted to travel, whereas it is only in Book 3 where the pattern, which dominates the second half of the *Odyssey*, of intrigue and plotting in a particular setting is replicated. Whereas, moreover, the bulk of Odysseus' travels are recounted by the hero himself in Books 9–12, time in *Arg.* moves relentlessly forward and the narration of the expedition is indeed just that, a narration in the poetic voice of the narrator. This simple narrative ordering of *Arg.*, together with many aspects of its subject matter, has been thought to resemble a Hellenistic version of 'cyclic' or 'continuous' (διηνεκές, συνεχές) poetry,[55] which ancient critical tradition associated with epic poets other than Homer. Two aspects of composition are particularly relevant here.

In chapter 23 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle demands of epic that, as in tragedy, plots (μῦθοι) should concern 'one action (πρᾶξις) which is whole and complete, with a beginning, middle and end' (1459a16–19); if Homer had tried to narrate the entire Trojan War, the *muthos* would have been 'either too large and sprawling (οὐκ εὐσύνοπτος) or reasonable in length but over-complex in its variety' (1459a32–4). Homer showed the right path by choosing a single part with its own internal unity (ἓν μέρος, presumably the wrath of Achilles and its consequences) and including other parts, such as the 'Catalogue of Ships' as episodes.[56] Homer's success may be judged from the fact that from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* one could make only 'one or two' tragedies, whereas one could make many from 'Cyclic' epics such as the *Cypria* (cf. 1451a24–9); it is as important in epic as in tragedy that events should follow each other 'by necessity or probability', for it is this internal dynamic which gives unity to the plot. The story of the expedition of the Argonauts is indeed, when viewed from one perspective, 'one action (πρᾶξις) which is whole and complete, with a beginning, middle and end'; it is the story of the Argonautic expedition to bring the

[53] Dufner 1988: 189–95 discusses links between the Libyan adventures and Menelaos' narrative in *Od.* 4 of how he and his crew were stranded on Pharos off the North African coast. The Libyan 'heroines' speak to Jason with echoes of the Homeric Sirens (1319–21n.).

[54] For the possibility that the final verse alludes to *Od.* cf. 1781n.

[55] Cf. 421–521n., 869–79n., Fantuzzi–Hunter 2004: 95–7, Hunter 2008b: 144–5, Rengakos 2004.

[56] See Hunter 1989: 33–4, Hunter 1993: 190–5, citing earlier bibliography. In view of those discussions, the present consideration of the matter is kept brief and largely focused on Book 4.

Golden Fleece back to Greece, and antecedent events, such as what led Pelias to demand the expedition (cf. 1.5–17, 3. 333–9), are only briefly adumbrated in the course of the poem. On the other hand, structuring the whole poem as a voyage emphasizes its episodic nature: there is no inevitable 'necessity or probability' which determines where the *Argo* stops, and what those stops contribute to the successful return of the Fleece. The whole return route is made to seem 'necessary' only because Phineus, who understood divine intention, muttered darkly about 'a different route' (2.421–2); the Argonauts travel in ignorance of the fact that the Symplegades no longer pose a threat. The mere fact that Ap. combined several potential routes for the return journey, while rejecting others (cf. above), adds to the sense that this πρᾶξις is different in kind from those which Aristotle demands; so too does the marking off of individual episodes by a kind of simple 'ring-composition' (the 'Apsyrtos', the 'Circe', 'Drepane'),[57] a device which works towards fragmentation rather than unity. In the final section of the book, after the four hundred verses in Libya, the episodic sense seems to gather pace (Talos, Anaphe, Euphemos and the clod, the Aeginetan 'hydrophoria'), as the Argonauts too hurry home. From our perspective, rather than Aristotle's, this difference in technique between Homer and Ap. must not be blown out of proportion – Aristotelian 'necessity or probability' hardly govern the whole sequence of Odysseus' adventures – but a further (related) difference between *Arg.* and the Homeric poems seems to reinforce the purely linear, non-Homeric structure of the former.

The two Homeric poems are characterized by remarkable (and differing) narrative techniques. As was noted already in antiquity, the *Iliad* focuses on a set of events near the end of the war, though stopping short of that ending, but encompasses much that seems to belong to, or at least suggest, earlier events (the 'Catalogue', the *teikhoskopia*, the duel of Menelaos and Helen etc.) or to foreshadow those that lie in the future (the fall of Troy, the death of Achilles, the killing of Astyanax etc.); in *Arg.*, it is the events of Euripides' *Medea* which are, above all, foreshadowed at various points.[58] As for the *Odyssey*, it is famously marked by radical dislocations of narrative sequence in its first half: the Telemachy, then the story of Odysseus' voyage from Calypso to Scherie, then the telling of the antecedent adventures. Callimachus' treatment of certain Argonautic events in the *Aitia* seems to have picked up these Homeric dislocations (see section 5 below). In *Arg.*, however, the only interruptions to the straightforward, on-going sequence – from catalogue to launch to voyage out to events at Colchis to the return voyage – are occasional 'mythological' analepses, such as the story of Hyllos at 537–51; the poem moves from

[57] Cf. 450–1n., 661–2n., 982–1223n. [58] Cf. 1108–9, Hunter 1989: 18–19.

episode to episode, as the *Argo* progresses from station to station (cf. 451). At its heart, of course, are the events at Colchis of Book 3 and the first part of Book 4; one wonders if an 'Aristotelian poet' would have written not an 'Argonautica', but rather a 'Colchiad' (*uel sim.*), set in Aietes' city but embracing through inset tales and foreshadowing both the past and the future. To what extent *Arg.* is in fact composed 'against' Aristotelian prescriptions, as well as Homeric practice, has been extensively debated; it may be that the Aristotelian perspective is more hermeneutically useful, in focusing our attention on features of *Arg.*'s narrative ordering, than actually relevant to the poem's compositional context, but the importance of Aristotelian ideas within Alexandrian scholarship is now well established, and – on purely general grounds – we would have expected *Arg.* to reflect critical discussion of narrative technique, just as much as, for example, Homeric lexical scholarship. The balance of probabilities very strongly suggests that it does.

5 APOLLONIUS AND CALLIMACHUS

Arg. is replete with passages, phrases, and even single words which suggest an intertextual relationship with the poetry of Callimachus, who was resident and working in Alexandria at broadly the same period as Ap.[59] The most important Callimachean poem in this regard is the *Aitia*, although the relationship clearly extends well beyond that poem; the *Hymns, Hecale* and *Iambi* all find significant resonance in more than one passage of *Arg.*[60] Since the revolution in our knowledge of the *Aitia*, however, it has been that poem which has dominated discussion, and this is hardly surprising, given the importance of the *Aitia* in antiquity and the importance of aetiology in *Arg.* The majority view, whose most significant proponent was Rudolf Pfeiffer,[61] has always been that Apollonius is almost always imitating or reworking the *Aitia*, rather than *vice versa*; this view continues to hold the field, though significant voices now propose a kind of continuous poetic dialogue between two poets working in very close proximity to each other and (presumably) able constantly to revise their work to respond to the poetry of the other.[62] It is generally agreed that arguments from absolute and relative chronology are too uncertain to be decisive,[63] and so we are forced back to internal,

[59] See further Hunter 1989: 6–9, 34–8.
[60] For the *Hecale* cf., e.g., 110–11n.; for the *Iambi* cf. below on the Aeginetan 'Hydrophoria'.
[61] Pfeiffer II xli-ii.
[62] See, e.g., Harder 2012: 1.4, 32. Stephens 2011: 205–6 sketches an argument for Apollonian priority.
[63] For what we can say about the chronology of *Arg.* cf. above pp. 1–2.

poetic arguments, where disagreement between readers is almost inevitable.

Book 4 has always been central to these discussions because the *aition* for the ribald cult of Apollo Aigletes on Anaphe (1719–30) was extensively narrated in Book 1 of the *Aitia*, and in a manner which puts an intertextual relation with *Arg.* beyond any doubt. Moreover, Argonautic *aitia* seem to occupy significant structural positions in the *Aitia*. The Anaphe-*aition* follows immediately on the first principal *aition* of the poem, the cult of the Graces on Paros, which is still to some extent proemial, as it includes (fr. 7.13–14) a prayer to the goddesses for the success and the longevity of the poet's elegies; so too, the penultimate *aition* of Book 4 (frr. 108–9), immediately before the 'Coma Berenices', was the story of how the Argonauts left behind at Cyzicus an anchor-stone which was too light and how this was later dedicated to Athena, a story which Ap. tells briefly at 1.955–60. Of itself, such parallelism may simply be one of the many devices by which Callimachus gave shape to his poem, but the coincidence (if that is what it is) of reversed correspondences between Books 1 and 4 of both poems, together with the nature of Callimachus' Anaphe-*aition*, prompts closer inspection.

In fr. 7 of the *Aitia* the tirelessly eager poet asks the Muses about two cults involving ritual abuse, the cult of Apollo on Anaphe and the cult of Heracles at Lindos, and in response Calliope offers a relatively extended version of the Argonautic story which culminates in what seems to be very much the same *aition* as that in *Arg.* The narrative begins with an angry and threatening speech by Aietes (cf. 212–35); much is lost after that, but Calliope seems at least to have mentioned the death of Apsyrtos (in Colchis), the return route of the Argonauts with the Colchians in pursuit (p. 10 above), some events on Corcyra and the fate of the pursuing Colchians and their foundations in Illyria (frr. 11–12), before coming to the darkness which threatened the Argonauts and from which they were saved by Apollo's revelation of Anaphe, to be followed by the *aition* for the cult of Apollo Aigletes. There are close (sometimes very close) verbal correspondences throughout this sequence with the parallel events in *Arg.* 4, and these are recorded as appropriate in the commentary;[64] these similarities far outweigh visible differences of plot or treatment.[65]

[64] It is suggestive of how much we might be missing that a new Michigan papyrus has added another very close parallel between the Callimachean and Apollonian accounts of the ritual at Anaphe (Call. fr. 21.11 Harder ~ 1727). For discussion of *Arg.* and the Callimachean 'Argonautica' cf. Eichgrün 1961: 125–33, Hutchinson 1988: 87–93, Albis 1996: 125–9, Harder 2002: 217–23.

[65] Perhaps the most interesting of these is that Callimachus appears to have Tiphys still steering the boat in the Anaphe-episode (cf. fr. 17.9 Harder), whereas in *Arg.* he dies on the outward journey. The tradition knew different accounts of