

JASON'S PRAYERS TO APOLLO IN AETIA 1 AND THE ARGONAUTICA

ROBERT V. ALBIS

THE RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY of the Alexandrian poets and their works is maddeningly uncertain, and seldom has there been much agreement among scholars. This is unfortunate, since there are numerous instances where an intertextual relationship is obvious, yet it is impossible to determine conclusively which poet has adapted the other's work. Callimachus' treatment of the Argonauts in the first book of his *Aetia* and Apollonius' *Argonautica* have such a relationship. In the middle of this century, Rudolph Pfeiffer declared, *Apollonium Callimachi vestigia pressisse nunc constat*.¹ While many have followed Pfeiffer's opinion, there has been dissent.² Barring some truly extraordinary papyrological discovery, the question will never find a definitive answer. The available evidence allows only for speculative arguments, largely based on scholarly intuition and arbitrary judgments.

The problem is especially thorny because of the nature of publication in the ancient world. Authors could revise their works after they had become public, and also after other authors may have referred to them in their own works. In Ptolemaic Alexandria, where poets would have been in regular contact with one another at the Museum, the pattern of references and cross-references could well have become quite complex. The recognition of this factor is especially important when considering the *Aetia* and *Argonautica*, because we actually have evidence that Callimachus and Apollonius reworked these poems. Self-references to Callimachus' age in the *Aetia* are contradictory, referring sometimes to the poet as a young man, sometimes as an elderly one. Several explanations for this have been offered, perhaps the most convincing by P. J. Parsons. He suggests that Callimachus published the first two books of the *Aetia* as a young man, and much later added Books 3 and 4, the introductory "Reply to the Telchines," and a new epilogue.³ Similarly, the ancient biographies of Apollonius refer to two editions of the *Argonautica*, the first meeting with disapproval, the second a success.⁴ While ancient biographies are notoriously dubious evidence, this claim is supported by the transmission of alternative read-

¹R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus* (Oxford 1949) 1.17.

²T. B. L. Webster, "Chronological Problems in Early Alexandrian Poetry," *WS* 76 (1963) 68-78.

³P. J. Parsons, "Callimachus: *Victoria Berenices*," *ZPE* 25 (1977) 1-50. See especially 49-50, where Parsons summarizes earlier attempts to reconcile the inconsistencies.

⁴Cf. C. Wendel, *Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium Vetera* (Berlin 1958) 2-3; F. Vian, *Apollonios de Rhodes: Argonautiques* 3 vols (Paris 1974-81), at 1.xxi-xxiv.

ings for a number of lines which the scholia assert formed part of the first edition.⁵

All this must be kept in mind regarding the suggestion made below that Apollonius, in Jason's prayers to Apollo, alludes to the *Aetia* as his model. As a guide to the relative chronology of the two works, this could only demonstrate that the edition of the *Argonautica* we possess postdates the first (and if Parsons is correct, also the second) book of the *Aetia*. The allusion is perhaps more valuable as another piece of evidence against the notion, implied by the ancient biographies and often accepted by modern scholars, that Callimachus and Apollonius quarrelled because of disparate literary tastes.⁶

In *Aetia* 1, Callimachus traces the origin of Apollo's unusual rites on the island of Anaphe to the time the Argo was enveloped by an impenetrable darkness near the end of its voyage. Lost in the gloom, Jason begged his divine patron for help, reminding Apollo that he was ultimately responsible for the expedition (fr. 18.5–12 Pf.):

ἀλλ' ὄγ' ἀνι]άζων ὃν κέαρ Αἰσονίδης
 σοὶ χέρας ἤερ]ταζεν, Ἰήιε, πολλὰ δ' ἀπείλει
 ἐς Πυθῶ πέμ]ψειν, πολλὰ δ' ἐς Ὀρτυγίην,
 εἴ κεν ἀμιχθαλόεσσαν ἀπ' ἥερα νηὶς ἐλάσσης·
] ὅτι σὴν, Φοῖβε, κατ' αἰσιμῆν
 πείσματ'] ἔλυσαν ἐκ[λ]ηρώσαντό τ' ἐρετμά
]πικρὸν ἔκοπαν ὕδωρ.

But Aesonides, sick at heart, lifted his hands to you, Phoebus Hēios, and promised to send many gifts to Pytho, many to Ortygia, if you would drive the gloomy mist from the ship . . . because it was in accordance with your oracle that they cast off the hawsers and allotted the rowing places . . . and beat the bitter water [with their oars].

Apollo answered the prayer and illuminated the Argonauts' way to Anaphe, where the heroes established rites in his honor.

Apollonius describes the same incident in a passage near the end of the *Argonautica* (4.1701–6):

... αὐτὰρ Ἰήσων
 χεῖρας ἀνασχόμενος μεγάλῃ ὀπί Φοῖβον ἀύτει,

⁵For the nature of this "proecdosis," or first edition, cf. H. Fränkel, *Einleitung zur kritischen Ausgabe der Argonautika* (Göttingen 1964) 7–11; M. Haslam, "Apollonius of Rhodes and the Papyri," *Illinois Classical Studies* 3 (1978) 47–73, at 61–67.

⁶For more comprehensive arguments against the existence of such a quarrel, cf. E. Bundy, "The 'Quarrel Between Kallimachos and Apollonios' Part 1: The Epilogue of Kallimachos' *Hymn to Apollo*," *CSCA* 5 (1972) 39–94; T. M. Klein, "Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, and the Concept of the 'Big Book'," *Eranos* 73 (1975) 16–25; M. Lefkowitz "The Quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius," *ZPE* 40 (1980) 1–19; R. L. Hunter, *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies* (Cambridge 1993) 190–195.

ρύσασθαι καλέων· κατὰ δ' ἔρρεεν ἀσχαλόωντι
 δάκρυα. πολλὰ δὲ Πυθοὶ ὑπέσχετο, πολλὰ δ' Ἀμύκλαις,
 πολλὰ δ' ἐς Ὀρτυγίην ἀπερείσια δῶρα κομίσειν.

But Jason, lifting up his hands, shouted for Phoebus with a great voice, calling upon him to save them; in his distress, tears ran down his cheeks. He promised to dedicate many things at Pytho, many at Amyclae, and to send countless gifts to Ortygia.

Clearly one of these passages was written with an eye on the other.⁷ Both poets describe the identical scene, and include a detail not found in other accounts of the Argonaut story: Callimachus and Apollonius cast the Argonauts' peril in the form of an eerie darkness, while other versions of the myth simply state that the heroes encountered a storm.⁸ The language is also strikingly similar in the two poems, most notably in the anaphora of *πολλά*.⁹

Jason makes another prayer to Apollo earlier in the *Argonautica*. The context of this prayer has nothing to do with the incident at Anaphe, yet the language has much in common with Callimachus' treatment of that story.¹⁰ While still on the beach at Pagasae before the start of the voyage, Jason prays to Apollo, and it is here that he makes the remark, also found in his prayer in the *Aetia*, that Apollo should protect the expedition since he was responsible for launching it (1.411–419):

Κλῦθι, ἄναξ Παγασάς τε πόλιν τ' Αἰσωνίδα ναίων
 ἡμετέροιο τοκῆος ἐπώνυμον, ὅς μοι ὑπέστης
 Πυθοὶ χρειομένῳ ἄνυσιν καὶ πείραθ' ὁδοῖο
 σημαίνειν, αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐπαίτιος ἔπλευ ἀέθλων·
 αὐτὸς νῦν ἄγε νῆα σὺν ἀρτεμέεσσιν ἐταίροις
 κείσε τε καὶ παλίνορσον ἐς Ἑλλάδα. σοὶ δ' ἂν ὀπισσω

⁷C. Corbato (*Riprese Callimachee in Apollonio Rodio* [Trieste 1955, Pubblicazioni dell' Istituto di filologia classica 3] 20–21), E. Eichgrün (*Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios* [diss., Berlin 1961] 128–131), Lefkowitz ([above, n. 6] 17), G. O. Hutchinson (*Hellenistic Poetry* [Oxford 1988] 87–88), and Hunter ([above, n. 6] 123) see Apollonius' passage as dependent on Callimachus' treatment.

⁸Pfeiffer (above, n. 1) 17; cf. Apollodorus 1.9.26; Conon *FGrHist* 26 F 49. Vian ([above, n. 4] 3.207, on Arg. 4.1698) objects that Apollonius' account differs from Callimachus' in that he does not make any mention of clouds (fr. 20 Pf.) or mist (fr. 18.8 Pf.). Still, in neither account does the darkness seem to be a normal meteorological phenomenon, as in the other accounts. Cf. H. Fränkel, *Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios* (Munich 1968) 616.

⁹E. Livrea, *Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticon Liber Quartus* (Florence 1973) 467, cites another Callimachean parallel in *Hymn* 5.125, and notes that Homer provides precedents; cf. *Iliad* 9.464–466, 567–568; 15.314–316; 16.772–774; 17.431; *Odyssey* 3.273–274; 4.230; 22.47. For other passages in the *Argonautica* which seem to recall the Callimachean passage, cf. Vian (above, n. 4) 3.207 on Arg. 4.1705.

¹⁰Eichgrün (above, n. 7) 128–131.

τόσσαν ὅσσοι κεν νοστήσομεν ἀγλαὰ ταύρων
 ἱρὰ πάλιν βωμῷ ἐπιθήσομεν· ἄλλα δὲ Πυθοῖ,
 ἄλλα δ' ἐς Ὀρτυγίην ἀπερείσια δῶρα κομίσσω.

Hear me, lord who dwells in Pagasae and the city Aesonis, named after my father, you who, when I consulted your oracle at Pytho, promised me success and guidance to the end of the voyage, since you yourself are responsible for my labors. Now you guide the ship yourself along with my companions, safe and sound, there and back to Hellas. Afterwards, as many of us as return home again will make a sacrifice of bulls at your altar, and I will send you countless gifts, some to Pytho, others to Ortygia.

The passage further resembles Jason's prayer in the *Aetia* in that it also contains an anaphora—this time ἄλλα is repeated rather than πολλά—which describes the gifts Jason will offer to Apollo in return for his protection.¹¹ Nevertheless, these similarities still only point to the presence of an inter-textual relationship; they do not indicate the priority of either passage.

A difference between the two passages, rather than a similarity, may indicate who imitated whom. Callimachus has Jason remind Apollo of his responsibility for the voyage by saying that it was undertaken "according to your oracle, Phoebus": σὴν, Φοῖβε, κατ' αἰσिमῖν. Apollonius' Jason also refers to Apollo's oracle in the prayer he delivers at Pagasae, yet he goes on to make the point more emphatic with blunter language: αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐπαίτιος ἔπλεν ἀέθλων.¹² The word ἐπαίτιος does not appear in the Callimachean fragment, and for metrical reasons could not have appeared in the lacuna located in the lines discussing his role as instigator of the voyage. Apollonius, by using the word ἐπαίτιος, perhaps makes a reference to his model, the Αἴτια. When Jason reminds Apollo that he was the inspiration for the voyage, Apollonius simultaneously acknowledges that the inspiration for his treatment of the myth came from Callimachus.

It is, of course, possible that this pun may have been unintentional, or even that Apollonius echoed language found in another treatment of the Argonaut myth.¹³ The story was quite popular with ancient poets; most importantly for us, it had been treated by Antimachus in his *Lyde* (ff. 56–65 Wyss). Although there is nothing in the fragments of Antimachus to indicate that he described the events near Anaphe, this poet is known to

¹¹Cf. Vian (above, n. 4) 1.251 on Arg. 1.419. J. J. Clauss, *Best of the Argonauts* (Berkeley 1993) 74–79, suggests that an allusion to Callimachus here would indicate that Apollo accepts Jason's prayer, since it would recall the Callimachean passage where Apollo manifestly responds to a prayer made by Jason.

¹²Eichgrün ([above, n. 7] 130) sees Callimachus' σὴν, Φοῖβε, κατ' αἰσिमῖν as being echoed by Arg. 1.423: σὴν διὰ μῆτιν; Hunter ([above, n. 6] 123) detects a similar echo in the poet's invocation to Apollo: τὴν κατὰ βάζιν (1.8).

¹³Hutchinson ([above, n. 7] 87–88), however, argues against the possibility of a common poetic source for this passage.

have influenced both Callimachus and Apollonius.¹⁴ Such caveats observed, it should also be noted that there are reasons for supposing ἐπαίτιος to be not simply an unintentional pun.

The Greek Anthology provides parallels to this sort of witticism. The particular wordplay involving a form of the adjective αἴτιος and the *Aetia* occurs in an epigram tenuously ascribed to Apollonius Rhodius (*Anth. Pal.* 11.275):

Καλλίμαχος τὸ κάθαρμα, τὸ παίγνιον, ὁ ξύλινος νοῦς·
αἴτιος ὁ γράψας Αἴτια Καλλίμαχος.

Callimachus, the scum, the joke, the blockhead: The origin is the author of *The Origins*, Callimachus.

That Apollonius Rhodius actually composed this epigram is dubious,¹⁵ but the little poem displays a more obvious rendition of the wordplay implied in Jason's prayer in the *Argonautica*. The practice of punning another poem's title in verse appears in an epigram written by Leonidas of Tarentum as a preface to Aratus' *Φαινόμενα* (A.P. 9.25). Leonidas echoes that poem's title in the last word of his epigram by declaring that Aratus should be reckoned second only to Zeus,¹⁶ since he made the stars "brighter": ὅστις ἔθηκ' ἄστρα φαεινότερα.¹⁷

The wordplay in these two epigrams, since the poems make explicit statements about the other poets' works, is much more overt than that in the *Argonautica*. Such a transparent reference to Callimachus' *Aetia* in the Apollonian passage would of course be inappropriate for the immediate context of Jason's prayer and also for the epic genre. However, Apollonius apparently compensates for the genre's constraints by calling attention to the significance of words and their origins. Within the ten lines preceding that containing ἐπαίτιος, the word ἐπώνυμος appears twice (1.404, 412), out of only six times in the entire epic.¹⁸ Such bold repetition may encourage

¹⁴For Apollonius' debt to Antimachus, cf. the fragments concerning the Argonauts in Wyss; for Callimachus, cf. *SH* 78 (Philodemus) and Lefkowitz (above, n. 6) 9–11 and 18–19.

¹⁵Cf. Pfeiffer (above, n. 1) 2, Testimonia 25; D. Levin, "Apolloniana Minora," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 154–163, at 159–162. U. Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* (Berlin 1924) 2.96–97, reasonably suggests that these lines were written by an epigrammatist adhering to the biographical tradition that, after the alleged quarrel, Callimachus had driven Apollonius from Alexandria into exile at Rhodes. Thus this epigram may have been written as an answer to the question, "What would Apollonius have said upon leaving Alexandria?"

¹⁶This itself is an echo of the *Phaenomena*'s opening lines. See Peter Bing, "A Pun on Aratus' Name?," *HSCP* 93 (1990) 281–286, at 283–284.

¹⁷Cf. A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology* (Cambridge 1965) 101 on φαεινότερα.

¹⁸The total is seven, if one does not accept the deletion of 2.1017 proposed by Wilamowitz (above, n. 15) 249, and Arthur Platt, "On Apollonius Rhodius," *Journal of Philology* 33 (1914) 1–53, at 18–19.

the audience to be on guard for etymological connections. ἐπώνυμος first occurs in a context which also brings Callimachus to mind. Before relating Jason's prayer, Apollonius reports that the Argonauts built an altar to "Apollo of Embarkations": νῆγον αὐτόθι βωμὸν ἐπάκτιον Ἀπόλλωνος, / Ἀκτίου Ἑμβασίου τ' ἐπώνυμον (1.403-404). As J. O'Hara has shown, Apollonius uses ἐπώνυμον as a "signpost" calling attention to Apollo's title, and points to the etymology of Apollo's title of Ἀκτιος by stating that the altar was ἐπάκτιος, "near the shore." Hence Apollo Actios is "Apollo of the Shore."¹⁹ This wordplay also prepares the audience to understand that which occurs a few lines later in ἐπαίτιος. The wordplay based on ἐπάκτιος and Ἀκτιος is exactly parallel to what must be done to understand the reference to Callimachus' poem embedded in ἐπαίτιος. Just as removing the prefix ἐπ- from ἐπάκτιος leaves Ἀκτιος, removing the prefix ἐπ- from ἐπαίτιος leaves αἴτιος, a close echo of the title of Callimachus' poem, the Αἴτια. The second occurrence of ἐπώνυμος only eight lines later, and only two lines before ἐπαίτιος appears, encourages the reader to recollect that wordplay immediately before encountering the similar pun on the title of the *Aetia*. The connection with Callimachus' poem is further strengthened by the very Callimachean flavor of the lines just quoted. Apollo's cult title of Embasios may even be a Callimachean invention, as it is not found elsewhere during this period except in the fragment from *Aetia* 1 under consideration. The only words to survive in the line following the passage quoted above from Callimachus are ἐπώνυμον Ἑμβασίῳ (18.13).²⁰

This subtle allusion to the title of Callimachus' poem in Jason's prayer would support what many scholars have felt about the *Argonautica*: that it is an epic written according to Callimachean poetic aesthetics.²¹ The appearance of ἐπαίτιος in the passage that resembles Callimachus' version of the Argonaut saga may indicate that Apollonius did indeed borrow from Callimachus, and perhaps more importantly, that he acknowledged his debt to him.

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
THE HOTCHKISS SCHOOL
LAKEVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06039-0800
U.S.A.

¹⁹James J. O'Hara, "Etymological Wordplay in Apollonius of Rhodes, *Aeneid* 3, and *Georgics* 1," *Phoenix* 45 (1991) 370-376, at 373. O'Hara provides further discussion of such wordplay in Apollonius, as well as relevant bibliography.

²⁰Apollo Embasios later appears on Ephesian coins, during the time of the Roman Empire. See L. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford 1909) 4.368, n. 36.

²¹This view is argued most extensively in Mary Margolies, *Apollonius' Argonautica: A Callimachean Epic* (diss., University of Colorado, 1981). Cf. Clauss (above, n. 11) 14-22, who argues that the *Argonautica*'s proem leads the reader "to expect an untraditional epic whose esthetics are Callimachean."