

JASON'S CLOAK¹

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Half way through the first book of the *Argonautica*, Jason and his men land at Lemnos, the island inhabited by women who have recently killed off the entire male half of the population. As the hero sets out to meet the Lemnian queen, Hypsipyle, and become involved in an amorous adventure which prefigures his much grander affair with Medea, he puts on a shining purple cloak (δίπλακα πορφυρέην, 1.722). It is a garment which Athena wove for him when the expedition was setting out (1.721–24) and is embroidered with a number of mythological scenes which the poet describes in a lengthy digression from the narrative (1.730–67). For convenience of reference I list here the seven scenes:

1. Cyclopes forging Zeus' thunderbolt (730–34)
2. Amphion and Zethos building Thebes (734–41)
3. Aphrodite holding Ares' shield (742–46)
4. Battle of Sons of Elektryon and Taphians (747–51)
5. Chariot race of Pelops and Oinomaos (752–58)
6. Apollo killing Tityos (759–62)
7. Phrixos and the golden ram (763–67)

As all commentators have recognized, the inspiration for this *ekphrasis* is, like much else in Apollonios, consciously Homeric.² The

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² Paul Friedländer, ed., *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius: Kunstbeschreibung justinianischer Zeit* (Leipzig 1912) 11–12. Friedländer here attempted a survey of

Shield of Achilles is by far the longest and most ambitious *ekphrasis* in Homer, but there are many others, not only of weapons, but of various objects, including a brooch, a cup, and a girdle.³ Δίπλακα πορφυρέην echoes *Iliad* 3.125, where Helen is in the midst of embroidering such a garment with battle scenes from the war at Troy. The individual compositions are not described; instead, Helen is at this moment called away by Iris, to witness a real-life scene, the single combat of Paris and Menelaos, which, we imagine, she will later record in her art. A purple δίπλαξ recurs at *Iliad* 22.440–41, this time one woven by Andromache and embroidered only with flowers, rather than figural decoration, and at *Odyssey* 19.241–42, a gift which the disguised Odysseus tells Penelope he gave her husband.

Jason's cloak is the only proper *ekphrasis* in the *Argonautica*. Two other items briefly described, one of them also a garment, merit some attention and will be discussed below.⁴ Clearly the poet felt the inclusion of one full-scale *ekphrasis* in his epic to be *de rigueur*, and we may suppose that he was quite deliberate in his choice of which object to describe and how to describe it. Critics both ancient and modern have, accordingly, tried to see in the choice and decoration of the cloak a reflection of fundamental themes of the poem. Much modern interpretation of the cloak was anticipated by the ancient scholiasts. One remarked that the cloak had been substituted where we would expect an arming scene, in order to make Jason appear ἀπόλεμος and appealing to the ladies,⁵ two qualities which he exhibits repeatedly through the poem. D. N. Levin has noted that the great attention paid to the cloak, followed by only a perfunctory mention of the spear given to Jason by Atalanta (1.769–70), symbolizes his reliance on persuasion, rather than force, and the triumph in the *Argonautica* of the gentle, more civilized approach.⁶

Similarly, since the whole description of the cloak is set off from its narrative context by two direct addresses to an unspecified viewer, with whom the reader is intended to identify (725–26; 765–67),⁷ it

ekphraseis in ancient literature from Homer to the early Byzantine period, making many useful observations and comparisons. See also J. F. Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic," *YCS* 13 (1952) 33–143.

³ The brooch: *Od.* 19.226–31; the cup of Nestor: *Il.* 11.632–37; the girdle of Aphrodite: *Il.* 14.214–17.

⁴ The robe given to Jason by Hypsipyle: 4.423–34 (and see below, p. 271); Eros' golden ball: 3.135–41.

⁵ Sch. on 1.721–22.

⁶ "Δίπλαξ πορφυρέη," *RFIC* n.s. 98 (1970) 17.

⁷ On these second-person addresses see Edward V. George, "Poet and Characters in Apollonius Rhodius' Lemnian Episode," *Hermes* 100 (1972) 48–49.

has long been thought that the scenes depicted should carry some unstated but consistent or universal meaning which would not necessarily be apparent to their immediate audience, the crew of the Argo and the women of Lemnos. Thus Gilbert Lawall believes that the cloak performs a didactic function, its individual scenes anticipating the lessons Jason will learn from life in the course of the journey, including piety (Cyclopes), charm (Amphion), the power of love (Aphrodite), the tragedy of war (Taphian pirates), and the effectiveness of intelligence and treachery (Pelops).⁸

Only slightly less ingenious is the interpretation advanced by a scholiast, that the whole is an allegory of τὴν κοσμικὴν τάξιν καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράξεις. The scenes represent divine nature (Cyclopes), the founding of cities (Thebes), and all that takes place in cities: love and war (Aphrodite ὀπλοφοροῦσα), force and battles (Taphian pirates), contests and marriage (Pelops), impiety and its punishment (Tityos), slander and safety (Phrixos).⁹ As Levin points out, the scholiast, who actually uses the word ἀλληγορεῖ, betrays an Alexandrian fondness for allegorical interpretation, especially as it was applied to Homer. If anything, perhaps this should lend his understanding of Apollonios more credibility than Levin would concede.¹⁰

Critics have generally not seen many indications of Apollonios' originality in the cloak *ekphrasis*, or particular traits which mark it as one of those passages which, like Medea's migraine headache (3.761–65) or certain of the similes, could not have been written before the Hellenistic age. It is certainly true that a *de luxe* cloak is better suited to Jason's character than a piece of armor, but does this adequately explain why the garment has mythological scenes wrought on it? Does the verbal reminiscence of Homer in δίπλαξ πορφυρέη necessarily mean that the δίπλαξ Helen wove is the most direct model for Jason's? If the scenes represent all of creation and human activity, as the scholiast would have it, are they not then simply a condensed or summary version of the fully laid-out *kosmos* on the shield of Achilles? And if they are *exempla*, designed to instruct, as Lawall believes, are they any more than pale, pedestrian descendants of such episodes as Phoenix, in *Iliad* 9, telling Achilles the story of Meleager as an *exemplum* of correct behavior?

⁸ "Apollonius' *Argonautica*: Jason as Anti-Hero," *YCS* 19 (1966) 154–57.

⁹ Sch. on 1.763–64.

¹⁰ Above, note 6, p. 26.

Indeed, even so sympathetic a critic as Hermann Fränkel despaired of finding much interest in the passage and concluded, "Es würde uns nicht überraschen wenn diese einzige Ekphrasis des Epos im Hochglanz hellenistischen Raffinements erstrahlen würde, aber Apollonios hat ihr keine solche Politur angedeihn lassen, vielleicht darum weil das beschriebene Kunstwerk der archaischen Epoche angehören soll."¹¹

As Fränkel rightly observes, the diction of the passage is so simple and straightforward that the cumulative effect is rather flat and almost completely lacking in the literary artistry of which we know Apollonios is elsewhere capable. Verbs are repeated several times in the space of not so many lines, and the transitions from one scene to the next are a monotonous series of *ἐν δὲ*'s and *ἐν καὶ*'s.

If, however, we look at the cloak as what in the first place it purports to be, a work of illusionistic art, meant to be admired for certain artistic virtues, rather than as a purely literary construct, fraught with symbolism and deeper meaning, we may gain something. To do this, we must also bear in mind that Apollonios, writing toward the middle of the third century B.C. and having lived, at different times, in Rhodes and Alexandria, two cities in which leading schools of Early Hellenistic art flourished, was certainly conscious of trends in contemporary art and aesthetics which we ourselves can document with both extant monuments and written accounts of many others that have not survived.

I would like to suggest in this paper that Jason's cloak is unmistakably a product of the Early Hellenistic age on two accounts: first, because as a richly embroidered garment it stands in a long tradition which culminated in third-century Alexandria; and, more importantly, because each scene wrought on the cloak reflects an aspect of contemporary doctrines of aesthetics. I propose first to survey earlier examples of woven garments we know to have actually existed. I will then return to the question of Hellenistic aesthetic principles and attempt to apply them to each of the individual scenes.

Jason's cloak belongs to a long textile tradition which may *begin* with Helen's *δίπλαξ*, but also includes many fine examples in the intervening five centuries which transformed and modified the Homeric model. Apart from Helen's *δίπλαξ* in *Iliad* 3, Homer mentions

¹¹ H. Fränkel, *Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios* (Munich 1968) 102.

several other embroidered garments. Athena, when she prepares to enter the field of battle, removes her peplos and puts on her chiton and aegis (*Iliad* 5.734–38). The peplos is described as ποικίλον (5.735), which probably refers specifically to its intricate embroidery. Athena herself, goddess of weaving, had fashioned it, just as she made Jason's cloak. Andromache's δίπλαξ is embroidered with multi-colored (ποικίλα) flowers (22.441), while for Odysseus' no embroidery is specified (*Odyssey* 19.241–42). Finally, a different sort of garment, Aphrodite's girdle, also ποικίλον, is decorated with figures, Love, Desire, and Dalliance (*Iliad* 14.214–17). The popularity of these garments in the Homeric poems suggests that from the eighth century on, woven and embroidered textiles, probably of Near Eastern origin, were well known in Greece. Though none survives, many appear to have been imitated by Archaic vase-painters.¹²

Hesiod mentions only very briefly one such garment, the καλύπτρην δαιδαλέην spread by Athena over the head of the newly created Pandora (*Theogony* 574–75). A single link in the literary tradition between this and the Classical period is another veil, described in a fragment from a primitive cosmogony by Pherekydes of Syros, in the sixth century.¹³ Zeus marries Chthonie (whose name is later Ge), and on the third day, Ζᾶς ποιεῖ φᾶρος μέγα τε καὶ καλόν, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ποικίλλει Γῆν καὶ Ὀγγινὸν καὶ τὰ Ὀγγινοῦ δώματα. Ὀγγινός is a variant for Ὠκέανος which occurs only here. The design on the φᾶρος is not merely decorative; it is an allegory of creation, and Chthonie takes on the deep powers of earth as she puts on the new garment.¹⁴

In the fifth century, Euripides was the only one of the Attic tragedians, in extant plays at any rate, who attempted to adapt poetic *ekphrasis* from epic to dramatic verse.¹⁵ Ion, in preparation for a

¹² For example, on the François Vase, the richly embroidered garments of the divinities at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis: Erika Simon, *Die Griechische Vasen* (Munich 1976) fig. 56.

¹³ H. Diels–W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin 1961¹⁰) B 1–2.

¹⁴ See Kurt v. Fritz in *RE* 19A (1938) 2028–30; G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1957) 61–65.

¹⁵ In the well-known central passage of Aeschylus' *Septem*, a messenger describes to Eteokles the shield insignia of each of the Seven (362–663). These descriptions are a form of *ekphrasis*, though they are relatively cursory, and the emphasis is not so much on artistic or visual qualities of the devices as on their symbolic or political meaning, e.g., the Sphinx holding a Theban in her claws (528–31) or Dike leading Polyneices back to the city (629–35). Three of the seven are said to have writing on them, which we would expect neither on a real shield nor in a conventional literary *ekphrasis*.

banquet at the end of the play which bears his name, sets up tents and decorates them entirely with *ὑφάσμαθ' ἱερὰ* from the temple treasures (*Ion* 1141 ff.). On the ceiling are the peploi Herakles took as spoils from the Amazons. Their decoration is astronomical and alive: Ouranos gathering stars in the aither; Helios driving his horses to set in the West and drawing Hesperos after him; Nyx, wearing a black peplos, in her chariot, accompanied by stars; Orion with his sword; the moon shooting rays, and others. The total effect is that of the night sky, a textile planetarium. The dramatic contrast of light and dark anticipates a Hellenistic convention, as we shall see, and, by two millenia, Rembrandt and Caravaggio. On the walls, Ion drapes more "barbarian tapestries" (1160 ff.), with scenes of oared ships attacking Greek ones, monsters, wild horses, and the hunting of stags and lions. The eastern origin of such textiles is recalled in Euripides' words *βαρβάρων ὑφάσματα* (1159), as well as in their association with the Amazons.¹⁶

To this same period, the late fifth century, belongs our earliest evidence for the scenes woven by Athenian maidens on the peplos for Athena every four years.¹⁷ Euripides (*Hecuba* 465–74) first provides information on the appearance of the peplos, in an allusion to the Titans on it. The scholiast on the passage explains that the scene represented was the *ἀναίρεσις τῶν Τιτάνων ἢ τῶν Γιγάντων*, because it was customary to weave Athena's deeds as a warrior goddess, that is, Athena Promachos. An Aristophanic scholiast (on *Knights* 566) identifies one of the figures on the peplos as Enkelados, the traditional opponent of Athena in the Gigantomachy. Plutarch (*Demetrios* 20) and Diodoros (20.46) both record that when Demetrios Poliorketes entered Athens in triumph in 307, among the honors accorded him and his father Antigonos were likenesses of both men woven into the peplos.

The appearance of historical figures in the decoration is one feature which obviously sets a real garment such as Athena's peplos apart from a literary *ekphrasis*, and is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the late fourth century. This is, after all, the period when Greek rulers, the Diadochoi, first put their own portraits and that of Alexander on coins.

Nevertheless, Helen Bacon believes the shields of Eteokles and the defenders of Thebes were displayed on the stage, each having as its insigne one of the gods or, in Eteokles' case, a Fury (*Aeschylus, Seven Against Thebes*, trans. Anthony Hecht and Helen H. Bacon [London 1974] 76–78).

¹⁶ See Friedrich v. Lorentz, "Βαρβάρων ὑφάσματα," *MDAI(R)* 52 (1937) 198–219.

¹⁷ The basic discussion of the peplos and its part in the Panathenaea is E. Pfuhl, *De Atheniensium pompis sacris* (Berlin 1900) 6–14.

An earlier, comparable instance of this practise is the cloak (*ἱμάτιον*) made for Alkimenēs the Sybarite and described by pseudo-Aristotle.¹⁸ It must have been made before the destruction of Sybaris in 350 and was perhaps made before the earlier destruction of 510.¹⁹ The decorative scheme of the fifteen-cubit purple cloak was as follows: Susa above and the Persians below; in the center, a company of divinities: Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, and Aphrodite; at one end, Sybaris; and at the other, Alkimenēs. This is the first instance in which we have an indication of the spatial disposition of the embroidered elements, in a symmetrical scheme. We shall see that considerations of symmetry may likewise have influenced the composition and paratactic arrangement of scenes on Jason's cloak.

Finally, during Apollonios' own lifetime, we know of a most splendid group of textiles, made and publicly displayed in Alexandria, thus probably familiar to the poet from autopsy. These tapestries furnished the tent of Ptolemy Philadelphos, carried in ceremonial procession, a lengthy description of which by Kallixenos of Rhodes is quoted by Athenaeus (5.196). In addition to a scarlet canopy, white-striped tapestries, Phoenician curtains, and tunics woven of cloth of gold, the account mentions military cloaks (*ἐφαπτίδες*) woven with portraits of historical kings and mythological subjects. On the couches were *περιστρώματα ποικίλα* and, on the floor, Persian carpets *ἀκριβῇ τὴν εὐγραμμίαν τῶν ἐννυφασμένων ἔχουσαι ζωδίων*. The juxtaposition of myths and kings on the *ἐφαπτίδες* probably expressed the same kind of royal propaganda we have seen in the mixing of gods and mortals on Athena's peplos and Alkimenēs' cloak, and is a common motif on Ptolemaic coins.²⁰

The long tradition of woven garments with figured scenes, culminating in Ptolemy's tent, influenced not only Apollonios, but also his contemporaries Theokritos, Menander, and probably Kallimachos as well. In *Idyll* 15 (80–86), Theokritos' mime about two Alexandrian housewives at the festival of Adonis, a tapistry over the bower in the palace of Ptolemy and Arsinoe depicts the dead Adonis on a silver couch. This may well be a feature borrowed directly from the actual cult.²¹

¹⁸ Περὶ θανμασίων ἀκονσμάτων 96.

¹⁹ For the later date: Paul Jacobsthal, "A Sybarite Himation," *JHS* 58 (1938) 205–16; for the early date: D. S. Robertson "A Sybarite Himation," *JHS* 59 (1939) 136.

²⁰ See Norman Davis and Colin M. Kraay, *The Hellenistic Kingdoms* (London 1973) figs. 13–47.

²¹ On the setting, and the placing of the tapestries, see A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* II

In two fragments of Menander's *Perikeiromene*, it appears that several garments are produced on the stage, as tokens of the girl's maternity: one bearing an embroidered stag, winged horse, and probably other figures (633–50); and a girdle with a chorus of maidens decorating it (698–99).²²

A tantalizing fragment of Kallimachos' *Hekale* (253.8–12 Pf.) contains what might be the first lines of a cloak *ekphrasis*:

τὸν δ' ἀπ' Ἀφιδνάων ἵπποι φέρον ἢ βασιλεῦσιν
εἶκελον, οἳ τ' εἶεν Διὸς νιέεις, ἢ θεῶ ἀντῶ.
μέμνημαι καλὴν μὲν αἰ
ἄλλικα χρυσεῖησιν ἐργομένην ἐνετῆσιν,
ἔργον ἀραχνάων...

Probably the old woman Hekale is speaking to her house guest, Theseus, and recounting an episode from her earlier life. We cannot tell who the man from Aphidna is, who is likened to the Dioskouroi, possibly Theseus' father Aegeus, as a young man. The purple cloak (ἄλλιξ) fastened by golden clasps recalls the golden brooch on Odysseus' cloak described by Homer in some detail (*Od.* 19.226 ff.). "Ἔργον ἀραχνάων" calls to mind Ovid's Arachne and his description of the competing scenes woven by Athena and her mortal challenger (*Metam.* 6.5 ff.). It seems to me likely that what followed our fragment was an *ekphrasis*, put in the mouth of Hekale, of the scenes on this garment. If, as ancient commentators assert, Kallimachos was forced to write the *Hekale* to prove he could write an epic poem, an *ekphrasis* was a standard epic feature which he might have felt obliged to include.

I have not so far tried to suggest that Apollonios borrowed particular elements for Jason's cloak from each or any of these earlier embroidered textiles. I would only propose that his choice of a cloak for his one *ekphrasis*, rather than a shield or other object, was motivated by a consideration apart from its symbolic meaning for Jason's character which Lawall, Levin and others have rightly pointed out. Apollonios was strongly influenced by a long literary tradition, starting with Homer, and even more by the recent interest in the manufacture of such woven objects, especially, but not exclusively, in Alexandria. Jason, as most writers on the *Argonautica* have agreed, is a modern, up-to-date Hellenistic hero, in comparison with his early

(Cambridge 1952) 287.

²² See T. B. L. Webster, "Menander: Production and Imagination," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 45 (1962–63) 262–63.

Archaic predecessors. How appropriate, then, that he should be outfitted by his patroness Athena in the very latest Alexandrian fashion.

As if to underscore Jason's role as the poem's hero, his cloak is grander and receives far more attention than the several other garments referred to *en passant*. Akastos wears a fine δίπλαξ, given him by his sister (1.325–26). Polydeukes was given an ἐύστιπτον φᾶρος λεπταλέον by one of the Lemnian women (2.30–32). Another recipient of a cloak on Lemnos is Jason himself. In Book 3, he puts on the φᾶρος κνάνεον, given him by Hypsipyle as a token of their love-making, to perform sacrifices before his great labor, the plowing of Aeëtes' field (3.1204–06). This must be the same cloak that reappears later in a sinister context, as a gift to lure Medea's brother Apsyrtos to his death (4.421 ff.).

This cloak is described in some dozen lines and though it shares some features with Jason's other cloak, for the sake of *variatio* the description is in almost entirely different terms. Both are purple and both are of divine manufacture, Hypsipyle's gift the work of the Charites (4.425). But while the cloak of Book 1 had been described strictly in terms of its appearance—colors, brightness, and embroidered scenes—we hear about this one not so much as a delight to the eye, as to the nose and to the touch. Of particular appeal is the divine odor with which it had become impregnated from the love-making of Dionysos and Ariadne that took place upon it (4.430–35). There is clearly an erotic element in all the garments in the *Argonautica*, made most explicit here, as well as in that potential garment, the golden fleece, which becomes Jason's and Medea's marriage bed (4.1141–43). And, as C. R. Beye has shown, it is the erotic element which separates Jason from the heroes of earlier epic.²³

To return to the cloak made for Jason by Athena, it should be stressed again that the poet's concern is strictly with what the garment looked like, for that is the essence of *ekphrasis*. He of course felt free to draw on the most famous *ekphraseis* of other kinds of objects in earlier epic, particularly Achilles' shield and the pseudo-Hesiodic shield of Herakles. But along with these individual Homeric and Hesiodic borrowings, and within the framework of a Homeric genre, I would suggest that he incorporated an artistic

²³ See C. R. Beye, "Jason as Love-Hero in Apollonios' *Argonautika*," *GRBS* 10 (1969) 49–54.

perspective and aesthetic standards reflecting the major concerns and interests of Late Classical and Early Hellenistic painters and sculptors.²⁴

In order to demonstrate this, we must examine briefly the ancient view of the art of this period, a subject for which our primary source is the history of Greek sculpture and painting in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. Underlying Pliny's account is the concept of a gradual evolution in Greek art, finally reaching perfection at the end of the Classical and beginning of the Hellenistic period, the last few decades of the fourth century.²⁵ He does not discuss art in the lifetime of Apollonios, for in the year 292 B.C., in Pliny's puzzling and much-disputed phrase, *cessavit deinde ars*.²⁶ In terms of particular artists, the acme in sculpture was reached with Lysippos, in painting with Apelles, both of whom flourished under and made portraits of Alexander the Great.

Much of Greek art can reasonably be seen in terms of the continual striving toward a more accurate and naturalistic rendering of the human body and other forms in the natural world. From the earliest times, the ability to make lifelike representations was highly prized. It was said of Daedalus, the prototypical sculptor, that his statues were exactly like living beings, could see and walk, and had the correct disposition of the whole body.²⁷ Other celebrated, early and quasi-mythological artists, the Telchines on Rhodes, were said to have been taught by Athena, so that they produced sculptures ζωόισιν ἐρπόντεσσι θ' ὁμοία.²⁸

Starting from the late fifth century, when the art of mural and panel painting had reached a high level in Athens, we have numerous anecdotes, recorded by Pliny, indicating that the chief standard for success in art was the achievement of a verisimilitude so great it could fool the viewer into thinking a figure was alive.

Perhaps the most famous of these stories concerns the contest between Zeuxis and Parrhasios. For his entry, Zeuxis painted grapes

²⁴ The fullest discussion of the relation of the cloak and the scenes on it to extant works of art is that of E. Peschies, *Quaestiones philologicae et archaeologicae de Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticis* (Diss., Königsberg 1912) 6–32.

²⁵ See J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art* (New Haven 1974) 74–75. Pollitt suggests that the origin of this view lay in the writing of Xenokrates, who belonged to a Sicyonian school of art and art criticism.

²⁶ A good account of what Pliny may have meant by this is provided by Pollitt (above, note 25) 27.

²⁷ Diodoros 4.76.1.

²⁸ Pindar, *Olympian* 7.50 f.

that birds flew at. When his rival painted a linen curtain, Zeuxis asked that the curtain be removed and the picture shown. He then conceded defeat, because he himself had deceived only birds, while Parrhasios had deceived an artist.²⁹

By the time of Apelles, such stories have proliferated. His portraits were so exact that *metôposkopoi* could tell the subject's future from them.³⁰ Not unlike the contest of Zeuxis and Parrhasios is the story of a competition which Apelles entered in painting horses. Upset that the other contestants were bribing the judges, he brought in live horses, who neighed only at the ones painted by Apelles.³¹ Again, the point is that this was accepted as a valid test of artistic merit.

Recently John Onians has argued that with Lysippos and Apelles interest in this kind of naturalism, which sought to deceive the viewer, began to wane and was replaced by a form of expressionism. Attention to detail and the creation of a "speaking likeness," according to Onians, were not as important as capturing a subject's inner nature, with deliberate altering of natural proportions sometimes employed to compensate for optical distortions.³² Thus, for example, Lysippos alone was said to have captured Alexander's manly, leonine quality.³³

Undoubtly Lysippos and Apelles must have added new elements, new dimensions to their respective art forms in order to earn the unequalled status accorded them by ancient critics, and successful experimentation with expressionism was perhaps one achievement which had a lasting influence. But in popular taste, extreme naturalism and *trompe l'oeil* remained, if not the only or essential goal of art, still a quality that was much admired.

In the third century, this attitude is most fully and colorfully expressed in Herodas' fourth *Mime*, which relates the visit of two women to an Asklepieion, perhaps on the island of Kos.³⁴ They admire and exclaim repeatedly over the works of art displayed in the sanctuary, which include sculptures by the sons of Praxiteles and paintings by Apelles.

²⁹ Pliny, *N.H.* 35.61. J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Greece, 1400–31 B. C.: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs 1965) 155, suggests that Zeuxis' grapes were painted on a stage scene.

³⁰ Pliny, *N.H.* 35.88.

³¹ *N.H.* 35.95.

³² John Onians, *Art and Thought in the Hellenistic World* (London 1979) 40–42.

³³ Plutarch, *Alexander* 243.

³⁴ The usually assumed location on Kos is doubted by I. C. Cunningham, *Herodas, Mimiambi* (Oxford 1971) 128.

Among the sculptures is one of a boy strangling a goose. You would say he will talk, says one of the women, if he weren't made of stone (31–33). There is a painting of a naked boy, his flesh warm and throbbing on the tablet; he would be wounded if you pricked him (59–62). A painted ox would make a woman scream from fear, because of the way it glares (69–71). Theokritos' women at the Adonis festival display the same enthusiastic tastes and particularly marvel at the lifelike quality of the embroidered Adonis on his silver couch (15.83–86). A neat little phrase described the effect of the figures: ἔμψυχ', οὐκ ἐνυφαντά.

Naturalism is but one important feature of fourth and early third century Greek art. The manner in which Apollonios expresses his interest in naturalism and other related qualities can best be appreciated in a close examination of the scenes on Jason's cloak, to which I now return.

T. B. L. Webster wrote that "Jason's cloak . . . is a rich Hellenistic textile."³⁵ He also remarked, of the poem as a whole, that "Apollonios saw with the eye of a contemporary painter,"³⁶ because of his interest in reflected light, which is expressed in many places in the poem, including several of the similes.³⁷ Others have observed that often the poet will "paint" a scene, rich in color,³⁸ that we could imagine spread out on the wall of a villa, as later at Pompeii and Rome. If this much is true of passages where Apollonios is *not* consciously describing a work of art, I believe we should be able to detect more specific allusions to contemporary art and aesthetics in the embroidered scenes on the cloak.

The poet prefaces his description of the seven scenes with an introduction (1.721–29), which serves three purposes: (1) to explain the origin of the garment; (2) to praise its extraordinary splendor; and (3) to describe very generally its appearance.

The feature of the cloak which is singled out for extravagant praise is the dazzling brightness of its red hue: it outshines the rising sun (725–26). The conceit is picked up again at the end of the *ekphrasis*, when Jason, dressed in the cloak, is likened to a shining star (774).

³⁵ *Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (London 1964) 80.

³⁶ Webster (above, note 35) 160.

³⁷ 4.124–26: the golden fleece like a cloud catching the rays of the rising sun; and of course Jason, wearing the cloak, appearing like a shining star to love-sick maidens (1.774–80).

³⁸ Edward Phinney, "Hellenistic Painting and the Poetic Style of Apollonios," *CJ* 62 (1967) 145–49.

Both passages are illustrative of the interest in reflected light which Webster has pointed to in Apollonios, but the image is again in origin Homeric. Odysseus describes a chiton which was shiny like onion skin and gleamed like the sun (*Od.* 19.232–34). Only Apollonios must outdo the expected simile: the cloak does not shine *like* the sun, for it is brighter.

The central portion of the cloak is red (727), but a purple border runs around the edge, and in this border the scenes are embroidered (728–29). The scenes on the cloak are arranged *διακριδόν* (729), that is, they occupy the entire border, but each is separate and self-contained. A somewhat different arrangement, but one which also illustrates the sense of *διακριδόν*, is found on a woven garment translated into stone, of the Middle Hellenistic period about a century after the time of Apollonios. I refer to the well known “veil” of Despoina, found at the rustic sanctuary at Lykosoura and now in the National Museum in Athens.

This carved garment carries decoration in low relief on the upper and lower borders. These consist of superposed zones, or friezes, each marked off by a raised relief line. Hence the panels are *διακριδόν*, marked off and separate. Figured scenes, such as Nereids riding on Tritons and dolphins and Nikai carrying censers, alternate with abstract patterned friezes. That the sculptor did have an actual woven garment in mind was cogently argued by A. J. B. Wace.³⁹

In contrast to the arrangement of scenes on both Achilles' and Herakles' shields, among the seven scenes that comprise Jason's cloak there are no connections, no obvious contrasts (such as the city at peace and the city at war on Achilles' shield), and no meaningful transitions.⁴⁰ The effect is that of a series of panel paintings, of the

³⁹ “The Veil of Despoina,” *AJA* 38 (1934) 107–11.

⁴⁰ This has not prevented several recent critics from discovering “hidden” connections and patterns. For example, J. F. Collins, *Studies in Book I of the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (Diss., Columbia University 1967) 66 ff., divides the seven scenes into three groups, 2–3–2, noting that the first of each group is concerned with a major divinity—Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo—and that the last of each group receives more verses than the others. For Lawall (above, note 8) 157, the third and fourth scenes form a diptych, love and war, each of five verses; these are flanked by two seven-verse scenes representing two modes of efficient action, charm and treachery; these in turn are flanked by short divine scenes; and the last falls outside the pattern. Both these schemes strike me as desperate attempts to manipulate hidden symbols and verse-counts to arrive at some form of symmetry, though I find Lawall's theory about the didactic purpose of the scenes (summarized above, p. 265) illuminating. I would like instead to see a symmetry based on a compositional arrangement (below, p. 276).

type which had become standard by the late fifth century in Athens. The evidence of Roman and Pompeiian painting suggests that the Hellenistic period also favored panel compositions.

The order of the scenes on the cloak appears to be random, except that the one pertaining to Zeus (represented by his thunderbolt) comes first, and the only one directly relevant to the story of the Argonauts (Phrixus and the ram) comes last.⁴¹ If, however, we consider them not for their mythological content, but as pictorial compositions, their ordering may be seen to reflect artistic considerations of symmetry and balance. As Friedländer pointed out, the scenes in general have much greater simplicity and clarity than those in the Homeric and Hesiodic shield *ekphraseis*,⁴² owing principally to a reduction in the number of figures. With one exception, we can count or very closely estimate the number of figures in each scene, and it never exceeds four. The exception is the battle of the sons of Elektryon with the Taphian pirates over a herd of cattle, in which the cast of characters is indeterminately large: πολέες δ' ὀλίγους βιόωντο νομῆας. Of the seven scenes, this is the fourth and central one. In a linear series of seven panels, it would form an appropriately grand centerpiece. In a field consisting of the border of a quadrilateral surface, it could perhaps occupy most of one side, leaving the remaining six to share three sides, as in this reconstruction, which is offered strictly *exempli gratia*.

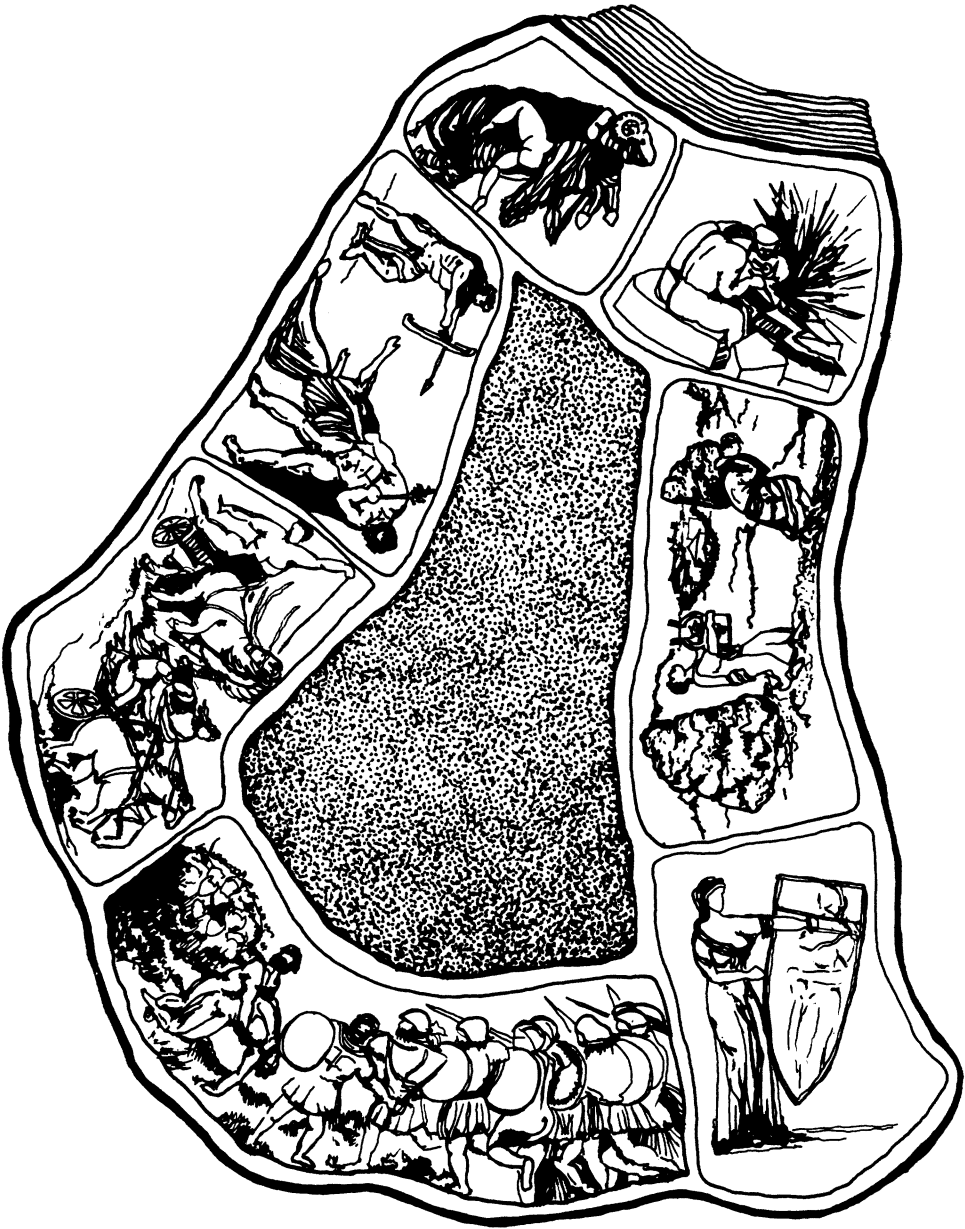
The scenes move clockwise, beginning at the upper right. On either side of the long center scene, we find an interesting progression, in which each scene has one fewer or one more figure than the adjacent ones.⁴³ The overall effect is one of balance and of a sequence of nearly uniform panels, matching the nearly uniform series of seven descriptions, all varying between four and seven lines.

Let us now look briefly at each scene in turn.

⁴¹ This was first recognized by Friedländer (above, note 2) 12.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ In the first scene, the number of Cyclopes represented is not specified, but I think three is a likely guess. There must be more than one, since the plural is used, and should be more than two, since the dual is not. Any more than three would become unnecessarily crowded.



Ἐν μὲν ἔσαν Κύκλωπες ἐπ' ἀφθίτῳ ἥμενοι ἔργῳ
 Ζηνὶ κεραυνὸν ἀνακτι πονεύμενοι· ὃς τόσον ἤδη
 παμφαίνων ἐτέτυκτο, μῆς δ' ἔτι δεύετο μούνοιν
 ἀκτῖνος, τὴν οὔγε σιδηρείης ἐλάασκον
 σφύρησιν, μαλεροῖο πυρὸς ζείουσιν ἀντμήν.

Apollonios begins with the Cyclopes forging Zeus' thunderbolt, a scene with which he acknowledges at the start the derivation of Jason's cloak, as of all *ekphraseis*, from the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*. We are meant to recall, I think, that prior to the actual description of Achilles' shield, Homer has a long account of Thetis' arrival and reception at the forge run by Hephaistos and staffed by the Cyclopes and by the god's golden handmaidens, who move as if alive (18.369–423), like Daedalus' statues. The goddess finds the master smith putting the finishing touches on a group of golden tripods, fitting on the ears (378–79).⁴⁴ Likewise, Zeus' thunderbolt on Jason's cloak lacks one final ray at the moment Apollonios' "snapshot" captures the scene. The motif of observing work in progress, the act of artistic creation, which is stressed throughout Homer's account of the shield, as it is created before Thetis' eyes, was not available to Apollonios within the dramatic structure of the poem. The first we hear of the cloak is when Jason is ready to wear it. But we get a reflection of this idea, at one remove, in the scene of strenuous activity in the forge.

The poet's fascination with bright light is most obvious in this first scene. The bolt is *παμφαίνων*, and the hammered ray emits flashes of flame. Fire, its evanescent brilliance and glow, must have had a special fascination for painters. The fourth century artist Antiphilos was admired for his painting of a boy blowing on a fire, because of the way in which the boy's face and the entire room were illuminated (Pliny, *N.H.* 35.138).

Pliny wrote of Apelles that he *pinxit et quae pingi non possunt* (35.96), and gave as examples thunder and lightening bolts. Apparently the suggestion is that these objects, which are all light, motion, and energy without substance, were especially difficult to render convincingly in a static medium. This notion enhances our wonder at the divine skill of Athena's handiwork.

⁴⁴ The "ears" are apparently the ring handles of the type of one-piece tripod cauldron made in the Greek Geometric period, before 700. See Bernhard Schweitzer, *Greek Geometric Art* (London 1971) fig. 208.

“Thetis in the workshop of Hephaistos” is the subject of a painting most likely created in the Early Hellenistic period and known to us in several Roman copies, including a famous one in Naples.⁴⁵ I shall argue below that this painting was probably a source for Apollonios’ picture of Aphrodite holding a shield. But certain affinities between the painting and this first scene on the cloak also suggest that Apollonios may well have known it. Both painter and poet display the same Hellenistic interest in bright light.⁴⁶ In the painted scene, we can see the metallic glint of a helmet and corselet, the reflections of light from Thetis’ garment and from Hephaistos’ face, shiny with sweat. The by now familiar motif of work in progress is employed in the foreground, where a workman puts the finishing touches on the shining helmet.

Ἐν δ' ἔσαν Ἀντιόπης Ἀσωπίδος νιέε δοῶ,
 Ἀμφίων καὶ Ζήθος ἀπύργωτος δ' ἔτι Θήβη
 κείτο πέλας, τῆς οὔγε νέον βάλλοντο δομαίους
 ἰέμενοι. Ζήθος μὲν ἐπωμαδὸν ἤέρταζεν
 οὔρεος ἡλιβάτοιο κάρη, μογέοντι ἐοικώς·
 Ἀμφίων δ' ἐπὶ οἱ χρυσέῃ φόρμυγι λιγαίνων
 ἦμε, δις τόσση δὲ μετ' ἔχνηα νίσσето πέτρη.

The second scene on Jason's cloak, Amphion and Zethos building the walls of Thebes, has no direct parallels in contemporary art⁴⁷ or models in earlier epic, though there are verbal reminiscences of Homer and pseudo-Hesiod. Amphion, who walks *φόρμυγι λιγαίνων*, recalls the scene on Achilles' shield of a boy in an orchard playing *φόρμυγι λιγείῃ* (18.569). The phrase with which Apollonios describes Zethos shouldering a mountain peak, *μογέοντι ἐοικώς*, echoes a formula used occasionally by Homer and, with much greater

⁴⁵ Naples, National Museum 9529; C. M. Havelock, *Hellenistic Art* (London 1971) pl. X. Mrs. Havelock (p. 250) believes the Greek model may have been by Theon (or Theorus) of Samos, who Pliny (35.138) says painted *bellum Iliacum pluribus tabulis*. Pollitt (above, note 29) 220 thinks Theon probably belongs to the Early Hellenistic period.

⁴⁶ Webster (above, note 35) 160 calls attention to this feature in Apelles' painting of a shining silver toaster described by Herodas' women (4.62), comparing it to a painted silver bowl on a Hadra ware hydria in New York: Blanche Brown, *Ptolemaic Paintings and Mosaics and the Alexandrian Style* (New York 1957) pl. 36 and p. 64.

⁴⁷ Pliny (36.33–34) mentions a statue group of Amphion and Zethos by the sculptors Apollonios and Tauriskos of Tralles, without further description. In a much later period, the second or third century A.D., Philostratos the Elder describes a painting of Amphion playing his lyre, as the attentive stones come together to form a wall (*Imagines* 1.10).

frequency, by the poet of the *Aspis*. A very similar formula to Apollonios' occurs in Theokritos' *ekphrasis* of the scenes carved on a wooden bowl: an old fisherman stands *κάμνοντι τὸ καρτερόν ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς* (1.41).

Apollonios uses such expressions sparingly. On Jason's cloak, where the scenes have been drastically simplified and almost anything beyond the scope of representational art eliminated, this formula (which occurs only a second time at 764: *ἐξελέποντι ἐοικώς*) serves a slightly different purpose. It is reserved for those figures who transcend not simply the limits of art, but of natural life, viz. a man lifting a mountain and, later on, a talking ram. Such scenes of wonder (*θαῦμα*) complement the wonderful workmanship of the garment, its colors and luminosity, to reinforce the impression of its unique splendor.

Critics have long recognized the relevance of this scene to one of the central themes of the poem, the advantage of civilization and culture over brute force.⁴⁸ Music, as the most refined and exquisite of the arts, can have even a magical power, as here to move mountains, just as Orpheus' music moved rocks, oak trees, and the course of rivers (1.26–31). As a crew member of the *Argo*, Orpheus demonstrates the civilizing power of song by putting an end to a bitter quarrel between Idmon and Idas (1.492–518). But what *visual* effect might Apollonios have had in mind in choosing this particular scene? The great challenge of this scene for the artist would be, on a quite restricted surface to render realistically the great difference in scale among the different elements of the composition: a man carrying a mountain top and another leading a stone twice as large.

Archaic and Classical art generally resolved such problems by ignoring them, reducing everything to more or less the same, human scale. When in Attic vase-painting Atlas is shown supporting the heavens, the object he holds is not larger than a boulder.⁴⁹ Giants are rarely much larger than their human or divine opponents.⁵⁰ But by the fourth century, artists sought ingenious solutions, as an anecdote in Pliny suggests. Timanthes of Kythnos painted a sleeping Cyclops on a small panel. In order to convey a sense of the Cyclops' great

⁴⁸ A scholiast on 1.740–41 says the scene illustrated *τὴν τῆς μουσικῆς καὶ τὴν τῆς εὐπαιδευσίας ἀρετὴν*. See also Lawall (above, note 8) 155.

⁴⁹ E.g., a white-ground lekythos of about 480, Athens N. M. 1132; John Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases* (London 1974) fig. 252.

⁵⁰ Only when a giant lies prone does he sometimes appear significantly "giant-sized," as in many versions of Herakles' encounter with Alkyoneus. See Bernard Andreae, "Herakles und Alkyoneis," *JDAI* 77 (1962) 130–210, especially the vases illustrated on pp. 133, 161, 163, 169, 178, and 180.

size, he put in satyrs measuring the Cyclops' thumb with a thyrsus (35.74). What clever device Athena might have used for her scene we are not told, but the new understanding of perspective in the painting of the fourth century surely must also have contributed to the solution of such problems.⁵¹

Ἐξείης δ' ἤσκητο βαθυπλόκαμος Κυθήρεια
 Ἄρεος ὀχμάζουσα θοὸν σάκος· ἐκ δέ οἱ ὤμου
 πῆχυν ἐπὶ σκαῖον ξυνοχή κεχάλαστο χιτῶνος
 νέρθεν ὑπὲρ μαζοῖο· τὸ δ' ἀντίον ἀτρεκές αὐτῶς
 χαλκείη δείκηνον ἐν ἀσπίδι φαίνεται ἰδέσθαι.

In the third scene, Aphrodite is depicted holding her husband Ares' shield, again a nod at *Iliad* 18, where the same word, *σάκος*, is used for the shield of Achilles (478). It has been shown that statue types of an armed Aphrodite occur in Greek art and on coins from about the time of Alexander and that representations of her holding a shield are not uncommon.⁵² In fact they probably begin even earlier. A statue from Epiraurus derived from a High Classical type has been persuasively identified as Aphrodite armed with shield and spear.⁵³

On the cloak, however, the goddess is not, strictly speaking, armed, but rather is using the polished surface of the shield as a mirror. In the Pompeiian painting in Naples referred to earlier, Thetis looks in the shield newly wrought for her son, and her reflected image fills the metal surface. Mrs. Havelock suggests that this particular feature may have been part of the Early Hellenistic original by Theon of Samos, citing as a parallel the face of a warrior reflecting in his shield in the foreground of the Alexander Mosaic.⁵⁴ The derivation of Apollonios' Aphrodite from Theon's Thetis finds some support in one other detail which the poet describes. Aphrodite's garment has slipped off her left shoulder and down her arm, below the breast (743–45). Two of the copies of Thetis depict her garment in much the same manner, slipping from the left shoulder, though the breast

⁵¹ See John White, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space* (London 1957) 243–47.

⁵² Peschies (above, note 24) 20–21.

⁵³ Athens National Museum 262; M. Collignon, *Histoire de la sculpture grecque* II (Paris 1897) 463, fig. 242. This is a copy of a Greek original dated c. 400 by S. Karouzou, *National Archaeological Museum Collection of Sculpture* (Athens 1968) 157. The thin chiton has slipped off her shoulder to expose one breast, as on Jason's cloak.

⁵⁴ Havelock (above, note 45) 250. Onians (above, note 32) 45 notes the scientific interest in catoptrics (reflections) in the early third century, when Euclid wrote a treatise on optics.

is not exposed.⁵⁵ Such a style would not suit the staid mother of Achilles.

It may well be true that the symbolism of Aphrodite with a shield has some bearing on the method that Jason the “love-hero” will use to attain his ends.⁵⁶ But we can also say with some certainty that the poet had seen many versions of the subject in different artistic media and was probably attracted to it in part by the phenomenon of the reflected image.

Ἐν δὲ βοῶν ἔσκειν λάσιος νομός· ἀμφὶ δὲ βουσὶν
Τηλεβόαι μάρναντο καὶ νιῆες Ἥλεκτρύωνος·
οἱ μὲν ἀμυνόμενοι, ἅτᾳρ οὔγ' ἐθέλοντες ἀμέρσαι,
ληισταὶ Τάφιοι· τῶν δ' αἵματι δένετο λειμῶν
ἐρσήεις, πολέες δ' ὀλίγους βιόωντο νομῆας.

The central scene, the battle of the Taphian pirates with the sons of Elektryon, is perhaps the most Homeric in inspiration and execution. Its model is an excerpt from the city at war on the shield of Achilles, in which two herdsmen and their cattle are ambushed by a band of the enemy (18.520 ff.). The only major change, in keeping with an essential difference between Achilles' shield and Jason's cloak, is that Apollonios has turned Homer's generic scene of battle into a specific mythological engagement by naming the participants.

The bloodshed in this encounter is described not, as we might expect, in terms of its color, but instead in terms of the way it makes the ground look wet: τῶν δ' αἵματι δένετο λειμῶν ἐρσήεις (750–51). This was probably a much sought after effect in the painting of the period. One of Parrhasios' paintings, of a man in an armored race, was thought noteworthy because it showed the man running so hard that he appeared to be dripping with sweat.⁵⁷

Eutychides, the Sicynian sculptor who made the famous Tyche of Antioch, still preserved in many copies, about 300 B.C., also made a statue of the River Eurotas. The latter work was renowned in antiquity, as two ancient sources attest, because he made the bronze “wetter than water.”⁵⁸ To create the illusion of a wet surface in woven fabric would be a similar, if not greater challenge. We may get

⁵⁵ See G. Lippold, *Antike Gemäldkopien* (Munich 1951) 130–32. He notes that in one of the five extant versions Thetis' whole upper body is nude, which would be unthinkable in the Greek original.

⁵⁶ The epithet is Beye's (above, note 23).

⁵⁷ Pliny, *N.H.* 35.67.

⁵⁸ *Anth. Pal.* 9.709; Pliny, *N.H.* 34.78.

some idea of how it was done from the use of highlighting in the shiny face of Hephaistos in his forge.⁵⁹

Ἐν δὲ δὺν δίφροι πεπονήατο δηριῶντες.
καὶ τὸν μὲν προπάροιθε Πέλοψ ἴθυνε, τινάσσων
ήνία, σὺν δὲ οἱ ἔσκε παραιβάτις Ἴπποδάμεια·
τὸν δὲ μεταδρομάδην ἐπὶ Μυρτίλος ἤλασεν ἵππους,
σὺν τῷ δ' Οἰνόμαος προτενὲς δόρυ χειρὶ μεμαρπῶς
ἄξονος ἐν πλήμνησι παρακλιδὸν ἀγνυμένοιο
πίπτειν, ἐπεσσύμενος Πελοπῆα νῶτα δαΐξαι.

The fifth and sixth scenes on the cloak are both familiar subjects in Archaic and Classical Greek art, probably known to Apollonios in several examples. The chariot race of Pelops and Oinomaos had been represented as early as the beginning of the sixth century, on the Chest of Kypselos at Olympia (Pausanias 5.17.7). The composition is already basically that on the cloak: two chariots, that of Oinomaos in pursuit of Pelops', who is accompanied by Hippodameia. Apollonios adds a fourth figure, Oinomaos' treacherous charioteer Myrtilos. A few Attic vases of the fifth century depict excerpts: Pelops and Oinomaos alone in their chariots on a late black-figure lekythos in Göttingen;⁶⁰ Pelops and Hippodameia victorious, on a beautiful red-figure amphora in Arezzo.⁶¹

But it is on several South Italian vases of the fourth century, probably inspired by Euripides' play *Oinomaos*, that the version on Jason's cloak finds its closest parallels. A krater and two amphoras, all of Apulian manufacture and all now in Naples,⁶² follow the same basic scheme: Pelops, in the lead chariot with Hippodameia at his side, holds the reins and looks back to Oinomaos in his chariot close behind. The latter holds a shield and a spear extended toward Pelops, a detail to which Apollonios refers (756: προτενὲς δόρυ χειρὶ μεμαρπῶς). Beside Oinomaos, Myrtilos has stepped down from the car, apparently about to jump off. He will save himself just as the axle breaks, sending Oinomaos to his death. The moment captured is just prior to that on Jason's cloak, where the wheel has swerved and Oinomaos is in the midst of falling (758: imperfect πίπτειν).

⁵⁹ Above, note 45.

⁶⁰ Göttingen J22; Paul Jacobsthal, *Göttinger Vasen* (Berlin 1912) pl. 6,21.

⁶¹ Arezzo 1460; Simon (above, note 12) figs. 224–25.

⁶² Naples 3255, 3256, and Stg. 697. See Louis Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique* (Paris 1926) 456–57. Fig. 132 on p. 457 illustrates the first of the three, which is closest to the scene on the cloak.

Ἐν καὶ Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος οἰστέων ἐτέτυκτο,
 βούπαις, οὐπω πολλός, ἐὴν ἐρύοντα καλύπτρης
 μητέρα θαρσαλέως Τιτυὸν μέγαν, ὃν ῥ' ἔτεκέν γε
 δῖ' Ἑλάρη, θρέψειν δέ καὶ ἄψ' ἐλοχέυσατο Γαῖα.

Apollo's punishment of Tityos for attempting to rape his mother Leto enjoyed a century of popularity in Attic vase-painting, from the mid-sixth to the mid-fifth.⁶³ About half the vases show Apollo accompanied by his sister Artemis, who was omitted from the cloak. Of the remaining examples, that closest to Apollonios' description is on an amphora in the British Museum of the first quarter of the fifth century.⁶⁴ Apollo is nude and very youthful: *βούπαις, οὐπω πολλός*. He reaches for a second arrow as Tityos falls, wounded in the thigh. His hands stretch up toward Leto, standing behind, holding the veil which in Apollonios' scene Tityos had grasped.

Apollo and Tityos do not occur in extant Greek art after the middle of the fifth century, though Tityos was well remembered for another reason: his eternal punishment in Hades, stretched out on the ground while two vultures devoured his liver. Thus is he represented on the Roman painting of Odysseus' descent to the Underworld, probably copying a Hellenistic original.⁶⁵ The Nekyia was also the subject of a celebrated painting by Nikiyas, an Athenian artist of the early third century (Pliny, *N.H.* 35.132), which may well have included Tityos. One indication that the slaying of Tityos was familiar to a Hellenistic audience is an epigram from the *Palatine Anthology*, one of a series said to have been inscribed on a Pergamene temple at Kyzikos of about 160 B.C. Above each epigram was a relief carving of the appropriate scene. Two couplets refer to Tityos' reckless attempt on Leto and his bloody reward (*Anth. Pal.* 3.14).

Ἐν καὶ Φρίξος ἔην Μινυήιος, ὡς ἐτεόν περ
 εἰσαῖων κριοῦ, ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἐξενέποντι ἐοικώς.
 κείνους κ' εἰσορόων ἀκέοις ψεύδοιό τε θυμόν,
 ἐλπόμενος πυκινὴν τιν' ἀπὸ σφείων ἐσακοῦσαι
 βᾶξιν, ὃ <τον> καὶ δηρὸν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι θηήσαιο.

⁶³ See Adolph Greifenhagen, "Tityos," *JbBerlin* N.F.I (1959) 5–32.

⁶⁴ London E278; Griefenhagen (above, note 63) 22, figs. 14–15, by the Eucharides Painter.

⁶⁵ See P. H. von Blanckenhagen, "The Odyssey Frieze," *MDAI (R)* 70 (1963) pl. 51, 1. Tityos' punishment is first mentioned by Homer (*Od.* 11.576).

In the final scene, Phrixos and the golden ram, Apollonios makes a clever transition back to the narrative of the poem by recalling to us the origin of the fleece in search of which Jason has come. He omits all detail concerning the configuration of the scene, though a long pictorial tradition, including Attic red-figure and South Italian vase-paintings as well as the Hellenistic ancestors of many Pompeiian frescoes, would suggest that Phrixos was shown riding on the ram across the Hellespont.⁶⁶ That famous ride is alluded to elsewhere in the *Argonautica* (1.256–59; 2.1143–45), and the cloak follows the great majority of earlier representations in picturing the scene without Helle, who we assume has already fallen off.

Apollonios is less interested in the compositional elements of this scene than in another aspect, namely that a conversation is taking place, Phrixos listening to the wise words of the ram. The ram's ability to talk is mentioned briefly later in the poem, when Phrixos' son Argos tells the Argonauts of how his father had sacrificed the golden ram on the advice of the animal itself (2.1146).

Apparently Apollonios was not the first to attribute to the ram the power of speech, but it was a detail which greatly interested him for obvious reasons. In Book 3 a talking crow rebukes the seer Mopsos (3.927–37), and other miraculous and supernatural occurrences are sprinkled throughout the poem. A talking ram is in itself a *θαῦμα*, but here it is doubly so because of another *θαῦμα*: the woven figures are so lifelike that the viewer would be convinced he could actually hear the ram's words. This is a fine example of the type of uncanny verisimilitude so much admired in painting and sculpture of the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic periods. To fool the viewer into believing the figures were alive was a sought-after effect, and the impression of speech was a favorite device. An epigram in the Greek Anthology (16.120) describes a statue of Alexander by Lysippos which seemed about to speak: *ἀνδασοῦντι δ' ἔοικεν*. Pliny (*N.H.* 35.98–100) speaks of a painting by Aristeides the Theban of a *supplicantem paene cum voce*, and one of the statues admired by Herodas' women, a boy strangling a goose, is so lifelike, says Kokkale, you would think he will talk until you get up close

⁶⁶ The Attic red-figure scenes are of the late fifth century, e.g., a cup by the Codrus Painter; Beazley, *ARV²* 1269,7; A. Greifenhagen, "Alte Zeichnungen nach unbekannten griechischen Vasen," *SB München* (1976) 3, fig. 4; and a small kantharos in the Cabinet des Médailles: *ARV²* 1361,28. The South Italian examples include a pelike, Athens N. M. 16023; *BCH* 61 (1937) 359; and a well-known calyx-krater by the Paestan painter Assteas: Naples 3412; A. D. Trendall, *Paestan Pottery* (Rome 1936) pl. 6b. For a listing of the many Pompeiian versions, see Karl Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis* (Berlin 1957) index, s.v. Phrixos.

(4.30–33). Apollonios addresses us, the viewers of the cloak, in similar wonderment: you would listen hard and long to catch a bit of conversation.⁶⁷ This sudden second-person direct address to the reader/viewer, like the one with which the *ekphrasis* had begun at 725–26, underscores the astonishing effect.

To sum up, each of the seven scenes on Jason's cloak may be seen to have, in one way or another, an aesthetic quality prevalent in the art of Apollonios' own time and that of the great age of Alexander which immediately preceded it. To the question, "Did the poet have in mind specific paintings or other works of art when he composed the verses?," we cannot offer a certain answer. I am inclined to believe that in at least a couple of instances (Aphrodite, Phrixos) he did, and there is no *a priori* reason to suppose that any of the seven subjects was not a familiar one in the visual arts of the time, even if in a few cases no example survives.

What is certain, however, is that the way in which the scenes are described consistently betrays an awareness of the aesthetic principles of contemporary art, and I would suggest that most of them were chosen not primarily for any symbolic meaning concealed in the myth, but because they illustrated especially well one or another of these principles: the realistic rendering of human (and animal) figures which seem to be alive (Phrixos); a fascination with bright and reflected light (Cyclopes, Aphrodite); the capturing of violent movement arrested on a static two-dimensional surface (Tityos, Pelops' race); and the illusionistic rendering of non-visual sense perceptions and supernatural phenomena in a conventional artistic medium (Amphion and Zethos, Taphian Pirates, Phrixos).

Apollonios was above all a devoted scholar as well as an aesthete with a sharp eye and often surprisingly keen insight and powers of observation. In imagining Jason's cloak he tried to create an artistic *tour-de-force*, one that would show off his intimate knowledge of and deep appreciation for the complex and dynamic movements which had in the previous century transformed the very essence of Greek art.

⁶⁷ These two lines (766–67) are beset with textual problems, which were most satisfactorily resolved by M. L. West, *CR* 13 (1963) 9. His emendation is printed here.