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Lastly, as all things are only worthwhile in as much they are done in Christ, I sheepishly offer these meager words to God's glory. Thanks be to Him through whom alone all thmgs, even theses, can be made well. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

The Voyage of the Argonauts:
The Epic Hero's Journey from Homer to Apollonius of Rhodes

by

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Table of Contents

Introduction

This project began with a desire to understand the transmission of the classical epic genre from one distinct time and place to another. Studying the *Iliad* had provided me with some insight into how distant Homer's oral tradition was in practice from the written epic of later generations (Greek, Roman and beyond). My desire was to trace the path from one epic to another, in the hopes of learning what tradition preserved from one culture to another and what it transformed or abandoned along the way.

The obvious destination for such a journey was Virgil's Aeneid, whose eminent position in Western literature promised insight into medieval and Renaissance authors as well. Preserving the epic tone in another language alone seemed a feat worth investigating. I-Iowever, I soon found the tradition far more complex than I first imagined. Virgil did not pioneer the Latin epic, nor was there any dearth of epic writing between the 7th century B.C. and the 1st century B.C. My interest in the project seemed at least in part to have been founded on airy dreams.

Then came Apollonius of Rhodes. His *Argonautika*, neatly situated between Virgil and Homer, seemed to provide the perfect opportunity to examine how two very different and extremely talented poets went about performing the similar task of resituating the epic in their own backyard. Apollonius' epic was especially appealing because its poetry was so clearly dominated by clever and self-conscious literary allusions.[1] Moments such as when Herakles breaks his oar while rowing the *Argo* alone (1.1167-71) or the omen where a hawk impales itself upon the stern of the ship (III.540-43) can be delightfully tongue-in-cheek without interrupting the flow of the story. Eventually, the Aeneid had to be left for another day in order to give the *Argonautika* the

[1] Hunter has a nice brief discussion of this aspect of Alexandrian poetry (Hunter 1993, 3-4).

attention it demanded—although the Roman epic's importance and influence on the discussion will be obvious.

The problem of writing epic lies in the conflict between the debt to Homer's Iliad and *Odyssey* and the distance between those two works and current poetry. While Homer sets the bar, his standards are grounded in a past time with its own distinct set of cultural and poetic assumptions. The epic poet in the classical tradition needs not only to incorporate Homeric elements into his poem, but to translate them as well. As Edward Young put it so succinctly, "to imitate... the Iliadis not to imitate Homer."

In the *Argonautika*, Apollonius consistently deals with Homer's influence by degrading his models. His gods are less &vine, his battles fewer and less pitched, and his heroes less grand. Carspecken calls attention to the "limited heroism" of the Argonauts, questioning whether they ought to be termed heroes at all (Carspecken 124). However, whatever one may think of its protagonists, the epic works: the story flows, and their lack of heroism does not impede their role as heroes in the poem. This project focuses on Apollonius' treatment of these characters (and in particular Jason), and how the poet retains their heroic standing within the epic even while undermining the Homeric foundation on which they are formed.

In a recent overview of scholarship on the *Argonautika*, Reinhold Glei laments the dominance of tired old arguments that inflate the question of Jason's heroic status (Glei 12-13). His point is well tali-en, since it is clear from even a cursory readmg of Apollonius' poem that his treatment of the heroes is very different from that of Homer or even Virgil. The epic does not hang upon Jason or any other Argonaut. Accordingly, the temptation to read Jason as an Achilleus or Odysseus must be resisted. Yet his role is nonetheless deeply significant to the poem, and the contrast with Herakles as well as the

purposeful parallels with Homeric heroes are undeniable—see, for instance, Jason's cloak (I.720 ff.) or his parting with Hypsipyle (1.888 ff.).[2] I hope that I have avoided here leaning too heavily on the helpful and studied readings of other scholars, and that my portrayal of Jason's role is first and foremost faithful to Apollonius' composition.

The difficulty of pinning down the importance of the hero in the *Argonautika* is typical of this poem. Sandwiched between the great epics of Homer and Virgil, it demands to be read against the other classic epics. Yet it also resists easily falling into place between them—much to the disappointment of many generations of readers who wished for a more recognizable epic. There is something quite different about what Apollonius does in his poem, a flavor and style that set him apart from his poetic predecessors and descendents. Although my study could never expect to be comprehensive, it has its share of interpretations meant to locate the hero more accurately on the epic map. I hope that they will not mask the value and joy of the *Argo*'s journey.

[2] Jason's cloak is discussed on p. 42 ff. and 66 ff.; his departure from Hypsipyle's island on p. 51 ff.

Chapter 1: Between Homeric and Virgilian Heroes

Since great feats must be attempted by those worthy and able to accomplish them, the protagonists of ancient epic are often great heroes. The *Iliad* in particular provides the perfect stage for heroes to prove their might in great deeds. But while the poem features various instances of great *aristeias* and tragic choices, it also produces a sense of awe regarding the combatants portrayed. For instance, during Diomedes' *aristeia* in books IV and V, the audience is consistently made aware of the exceptional caliber of the hero. He wounds the immortal Aphrodite and defeats even Ares, the god of war (*Il.* V.846 ff.). Though Diomedes' prowess is enhanced by Athene's aid, the fact that he is allowed to invert the natural order by attacking the gods reveals his great distinction among men. Later in the course of the battle, Athene steps "...into the chariot / beside brilliant Diomedes, and the oaken axle groaned aloud / under the weight, carrying a dread goddess and a great man" (*Il.* V.837-9). Here the axle of his chariot serves as a neutral measure of 'weightiness' of the two riding upon it.

The encounter between the Greek hero Diomedes and the Trojan hero Aineias captures the sense of this heroic weight:[3]

> But Aineias sprang to the ground with shield and with long spear,
> [...]
> holding before him the perfect circle of his shield and the spear
> and raging to cut down any man who might come to face liirn,
> crying a terrible cry. But Tydeus' son in his hand caught
> up a stone, a huge thing which no two men could carry
> such as men are now, but by himself he lightly hefted it.
> He threw, and caught Aineias in the hip, [...]
> It smashed the cup-socket and broke the tendons botli sides of it,
> and the rugged stone tore the skin backward, so that the fighter
> dropping to one knee stayed leaning on the ground with his heavy

[3] I've used the following translations for the texts: for the Iliad, Richmond Lattimore; for the *Odyssey*, Robert Fitzgerald; for the *Argonautika*, R.L. Hunter (*Jason* and *the* Golden Fleece); for the *Aeneid*, Edward McCrorie; for Homeric hymns and fragments of the Epic Cycle, Hugh G. Evelyn-White.

> hand, and a covering of black night came over both eyes.
> Now in this place Aineias lord of men might have perished
> had not Aphrodite, Zeus' daughter, been quick to perceive him,
> his mother, who had borne him to Anchises the ox-herd;
> and about her beloved son came streaming her white arms,
> and with her white robe thrown in a fold in front she shielded him,
> this keeping off the thrown weapons lest some fast-mounted Danaan
> strike the bronze spear through his chest and strip the life from him.
> (*Il.* V.297-317)

Homer again emphasizes Diomedes' special status with a direct comparison between the strength of the hero and two men "such as men are now" (V.305). Even Aineias, though he is a brave and dangerous opponent (V.297-302), is readily defeated. However, the manner of his failure also highlights his particular worth. By virtue of his divine mother Aphrodite, his life is saved in a manner remarkable even among the other great heroes of the *Iliad* (311 ff.). The goddess' care for his preservation suggests that he shares a measure of heroism with the victor Diomedes.

Due to the influence of his epic predecessor, the adoption of the Argonauts' quest for the golden fleece as an epic theme compelled Apollonius of Rhodes to accept the difficult task of portraying convincing heroes. The earlier and less effective imitations of Homer, such as those in the Epic Cycle, demonstrated how one might imitate epic action without harnessing epic's power. Composing a successful poem within the confines of a culture with chfferent priorities and sympathies compounded the difficulty. Apollonius' project was further complicated by a paradoxical chronology: although he was writing after Homer, the feats that he chose to include were performed by the generation immediately preceding that of the heroes at Troy. Figures such as Jason (Od. XII.69-72), or Herakles (Od. in XI.601 ff.) were considered by even the greatest Homeric warriors to be matchless heroes. Achilleus makes the point that all men must die by remarking that "not even the strength of Herakles fled away from destruction"

(XVIII.117), while early on in the action of the *Iliad* Nestor refers to the previous generation to admonish the quarreling leaders of the Argive army: 'Yes, and in my time I have dealt with better men than / you are, and never once did they disregard me. Never / yet have I seen nor shall see again such men as these were" (1.260-62). The difference between the generations of heroes complicates the task for a poet writing an epic equally in the shadow of its great predecessor.

Apollonius' decision to set his epic before the Trojan War confronts his age's preoccupation with its own origins. Alexandrian poetry is constantly reflecting on the source of names, rituals and even poetry itself.[4] Thus Apollonius frequently digresses into clever etymologies or presents the beginning of a custom (e.g. 1.1345-57). The *Argonautika* also draws heavily on Homeric poetry for its form. Apollonius incorporates structural elements, vocabulary and allusions to specific moments from older poems into his own work. In this manner he links his epic closely to the prominent figures of Greek poetry, joining them to an Alexandrian tradition (Hunter 1993, 153-54).

The Alexandrian interest in origins was more than academic; in the third century B.C., Greek identity was ripe for redefinition. The residual Greek-speaking empires that dominated the Mecbterranean after Alexander's death had imposed Greek culture further and more efficiently than ever before. Though the library at Alexandria collected the works of the traditional Greek world, including the tragedy, lyric poetry and epics had longed formed the backbone of Greek literary culture, most of its curators and scholars would have spent their entire lives far from the oldest centers of Greeli culture. Regions quite different from one another were united by a common culture and language. A poem composed in a place as specific as Smyrna could now be read as easily in Egypt as

[4] Callimachus' composition of the Αἰτία (*Origins*) seems particularly in line with this trend.

in Athens. As a result, the nature of this commonality and the relationship of the broader Greek culture to its origins were particularly important.

The imitation of the foundational Homeric epics thus invited a daunting comparison to the touchstone of Greek literature. In the literary circles of Alexandria, where Apollonius and many fellow poets lived and worked, contemporary attempts at producing epic poetry were represented as inevitably inferior. Callimachus famously opined that epics of his time were like broad rivers that carried large amounts of mud in their waters (*Hymn to Apollo* 108-112).[5] Surviving epic poems well known in Apollonius' time[6] suggest this skepticism was based on more than snobbery. The Epic Cycle featured various attempts to continue or fill in the gaps in the story of Troy that Homer's works had left. Although they closely followed Homer in meter, vocabulary, and even subject matter, they lack the sophistication characteristic of Homer.

A comparison can illustrate the challenge faced by an Alexandrian poet who wished to emulate Homer. The quality of Homer's integration of plot with the imagery and structural elements of epic becomes evident when measured against a fragment of the cyclic epics. Although the remaining accounts of the Trojan war in the Epic Cycle often record entertaining myths that could serve as the basis for a Homeric epic, they rely more heavily on plot than poetic ingenuity. As Aristotle noted, the amount of material in works such as the *Kypria* or *Iliou Persis* compress enough drama to serve as the basis for eight tragedies into one work, where the *Iliad* did not produce more than a

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[5] The passage in question comes at the end of the hymn:

> Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλά
> λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἕλκει.
> Δημοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,
> ἀλλ' ἥτις καθαρή τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει
> πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβὰς ἄκρον ἄωτον. (Williams 1978)

[6] There is no conclusive evidence that might date Apollonius very precisely; speculations range over the entire third century B.C. (Green 1). Hunter argues that one may cautiously date his tenure as curator of the Library of Alexandria from 270-245 B.C. (Hunter 1989, 4).

handful (Poetics XXIII). The difference in the use of the material becomes clear in a contrast of one author's treatment of Astyanax with that of Homer.[7] In the *Iliad*, Hektor's son never suffers the piteous death that Andromache fears for him (XXIV.726-38). However, his infrequent appearances always complement the link between his father's life and Troy's survival. All men call him his son Astyanax, οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἕκτωρ[8] ("Since Hektor alone saved Ilion," *Il.* VI.403). When Hektor falls to Achilleus, Andromache's lament typifies the mourning for a husband, her cries rising above the wailing of the other Trojan women (XXII.476) as she leads them in tears (515). A large portion of her speech bewails the fate of Astyanax, whom she imagines reviled by the community in the absence of his father (484-507). The miserable estate she imagines for him at the hands of his countrymen is moving, but also prepares for the even more pitiful prophecy of his doom. Although none of the terrible things imagined by Andromache actually takes place in the course of the poem, the image of a pitiless death that tradition confirms outside of the poem makes the moment more tragic. What is only a sad scenario imagined by a grieving mother will soon be a greater and real sorrow. With this Homeric precedent, one might expect the portrayal of Astyanax's death in the *Ilias mikros* to be all the more affecting; however, in reality the scene is rather blunt:

> αὐταρ Ἀχιλλῆος μεγαθύμου φαίδιμος υἱὸς
> Ἑκτορέην ἄλοχον κάταγεν κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας·
> παῖδα ἑλὼν ἐκ κόλπου ἐυπλοκάμοιο τιθήνης
> ῥίψε ποδὸς τεταγὼν ἀπὸ πύργου· τὸν δὲ πεσόντα
> ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή. (frag. 14)

Then the bright son of bold Achilles led the wife of Hector to

[7] I am indebted to Patrick Finglass of All Souls College, Oxford, for first outlining this comparison for me during his lectures on the *Iliad*, Hilary term of 2004.
[8] Text: Willcock (1996, 1999).

> the hollow ships; but her son he snatched from the bosom of his rich-haired nurse and seized him by the foot and cast him from a tower. So when he had fallen bloody death and hard fate seized on Astyanax. (trans. Evelyn-White)

Where Homer elicits a sense of tragic irony in the Iliad without ever narrating the boy's end, the author of the *Ilias mikros* does not make the actual gory demise more than a matter of factual statement. There are certainly any number of instances where Homer is just as cold; in fact the final line of the fragment is lifted directly from Homer. Kleoboulos' only appearance in the *Iliad* is over in a matter of lines:

> Αἴας δὲ Κλεόβουλον Ὀιλιάδης ἐπορούσας
> ζωὸν ἕλε, βλαφθέντα κατὰ κλόνον· ἀλλά οἱ αὖθι
> λῦσε μένος, πλήξας ξίφει αὐχένα κωπήεντι.
> πᾶν δ' ὑπεθερμάνθη ξίφος αἵματι· τὸν δὲ κατ' ὄσσε
> ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή. (*Il.* XVI.330-34)

> Aias, Oïleus' son, in an outrush caught Kleoboulos
> alive, wliere he was fouled in the running confusion, and there
> unstrung his strength, hewing with the hilted sword at the neck,
> so all the sword was smoking with blood and over both eyes
> closed the red death and the strong destiny.

This passage, however, occurs in the context of a pitched battle. The density of such passages within the narrative during *androktasai* creates an altogether different effect from that of the Astyanax's death, demonstrating the callous brutality of war (Weil 50). Homer also makes the passing of the dead particularly poignant by affixing descriptions of their former homes and families, hinting at other stories and lives that the battle has indifferently brushed aside (e.g. IV.527-39).[9] Although the immediate context of the death of Astyanax is not completely clear from the remaining lines of the fragment, enough survives to suggest that the narrator does not dwell long on the implications of this significant death.

[9] Griffin's discussion of this is particularly good: see his chapter IV but especially p. 121ff.

Apollonius would scarcely repay study if he did not offer a more sophisticated development of the epic tradition. Like the authors of the Epic Cycle, he imitates Homer's tone by including words and scenes typical of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in his poem. However, Apollonius frequently uses these standard features of epic to miscue his readers. His Homeric allusions prompt an expectation for a characteristic treatment of a characteristically epic moment, only to introduce a substitute that does not meet it. Thus while many parts of the *Argonautika* emulate traditionally Homeric scenes, Apollonius uses them in novel ways that do not rely on Homer's ingenuity, but on his own.

The Catalogue of Heroes at the beginning of the *Argonautika* represents just such an attempt to put a particularly Homeric trope to a different use. Apollonius recalls the high standard for heroes in epic through the catalogue's structural features, but the heroes he represents are different from their Homeric models. In the second book of the *Iliad*, the narrator recounts the catalogue of the ships and the kings that sailed to Troy for war (*Il.* 484-760). Apollonius in turn begins his epic with an account of the heroes who come to assist Jason on his quest for the golden fleece (*Arg.* I.20-228). Like Homer, Apollonius mixes accounts of their homelands, parents and circumstances to hint at a broader family of stories that lie behind this particular account. Histories of one hero's divine ancestry or the accomplishment of another's adventure are interrupted for this particular quest. The names of the renowned heroes the poet marshals thus lend their fame to the mission they undertake.

Apollonius emulates the Catalogue of Ships very closely. He even follows Homer in mapping out a feasible journey about Greek-speakmg lands in the order by which the

heroes' cities are mentioned." Nonetheless, his catalogue is not as grand: it comes upon the reader comes upon it too suddenly to reproduce the dramatic effect of its model. In the *Iliad,* the extensive Catalogue of Ships comes in contrast to the particular problems raised by the conflict between Achilleus and Agamemnon, and is preceded by the call to arms and three impressive similes describing the massive army of the Achaians (*Il.* II.455-73). Apollonius launches into his list almost immediately after opening his poem. Instead of listing whole ships of solders and the kings who led them across the sea, Apollonius recounts the crew for a single ship before it has set sail."[10] The reasons for which heroes come to help Jason are often kept unclear, and only a few of the short biographies reveal the hero's motivations, in one case, ἵνα θρασέεσσι μεταπρέποι ἡρώεσσι ("to win glory among the bold heroes," 1.100) or in another, μή οἱ δῆμος ἐυκλείης ἀγάσαιτο ("so that his people would not begrudge him his glorious reputation," 141). These reasons sound Homeric; but whereas in the *Iliad* the drive for glory is produced by and in the community, these heroes leave their obligations in order to pursue their honor among others. Glory is not won by fulfilling a debt of loyalty or duty, but sought out for private reasons. In contrast, Homeric heroism has a very practical feel. Heroes seek glory in battle, but most go to war under compulsion of fidelity to family or lords. Before entering into the fray in book XII, Sarpedon famously reminds Glaukos that their preferred treatment as kings makes it their duty to fight valiantly in the front lines (XII.310-328). His willingness to fight, moreover, depends on

[10] Both catalogues feature an impressive number of 'layers' of material that has been carefully organized for poetic effect (names, cities of origin, stories involving the heroes, etc.). This phenomenon has been far more carefully examined in Homer than in Apollonius; see Kirk 168-74 and Willcock 205-15 for an overview, Beye 1993 96-97 and 118-19 for some helpful remarks. Apollonius' catalogue is discussed generally in Carspecken 38-58, while Clauss gives a reading of the organization of the heroes (26-36).
[11] It is tempting to read the dramatic reduction in scope with respect to the Catalogue of Ships and the more detailed attention to the crew and their roles on the ship as a metaphor for the difference between Homeric and Callimachean poetry.

the inevitability of death for mortals—one might as well go with glory if one must go in the end: "But now, seeing that the spirits of death stand close about us / in their thousands, no man can turn aside nor escape them, / let us go on and win glory for ourselves, or yield it to others" (XII.326-28). Given their circumstances, glory serves as a compelling alternative to life for these men; the actions they take from these convictions embody an ideal of heroism that orders the *Iliad.* This order is conspicuously missing in Apollonius' catalogue and throughout the *Argonautika.*

Apollonius draws his audience's attention to Orpheus' first position among the heroes listed (Πρῶτα Ὀρφῆος μνησώμεθα, "First let us recall Orpheus," 1.23); indeed, the poet receives the longest entry among all of Jason's companions. His ability to move inanimate rocks, streams and trees with his song suggests great and even supernatural power, but he is no obvious choice for the mission. There is little concerning his cunning or prowess in battle, and Jason only takes on the poet at Cheiron's urging (32-34). If Orpheus contributes, it will not be with his actions but with his words, which are enough to persuade even the trees to follow him (1.28-31). The prominent place of Orpheus grants his fellow poet Apollonius a measure of the legendary bard's authority. But Orpheus' power and reputation are transmitted by stories that are reported by others (ἐνέπουσιν, "Men say that..." 1.26); even this greatest poet's power is only known by the accounts of others. Likewise, the power of the heroes depends upon Apollonius' account of them. This signals to the reader from the outset the importance of poetry both to the mission of the Argonauts and to that of Apollonius himself: these heroes are not to be noted simply for their prowess, but rather for the author's powerful and sophisticated portrayal of them.

The care with which Apollonius plays the significance of the epic elements of his poem against their actual use in the narrative is itself characteristically Homeric. Homer himself used typical epic scenes to evoke certain expectations that he would later dismiss, foreshadowing or imitating important moments still to come in the epic. For instance, the grand build-up that includes the Catalogue of Ships in the Iliad should lead up to a great battle, but instead the audience is confronted with a duel between two of the most inept heroes on either side of the war, Paris and Menelaos (*Il.* III). As the protagonists of the quarrel that led to the war, they serve as representatives of either side—at Hektor's prompting their fight even gains the added importance of settling the war (III.86-94). However, both Paris' cowardice (III.30-37) and Menelaos' ineptitude in battle (he is reduced to attempting to strangle his opponent after his spear misses and his sword breaks—111.355 ff.) make the battle a mockery. It is explicitly meant to settle the war, but the great battle that Homer has cued gives way to a failure. Instead, it acts as a foil to the great duel between the two greatest warriors at Troy, Achilleus and Hektor, whose fatal encounter serves as the climax of the epic and ends Troy's hope to avoid destruction.

Another instance where Homer sets one entire storyline in contrast to another is the *Telemacheia*, the four book opening to the *Odyssey* that details the coming of age of Odysseus' son[12]. Telemachos in a very literal way must stand in his father's place. In structural terms, he inaugurates the poem about his father's journey home with his own travels, whde in the plot his role as heir to Odysseus is prominent. While his father is gone and his fate is uncertain, his own legacy is in doubt. He himself expresses doubt over whether he is his father's son (Od. I.) to the disguised Athene, and the suitors are concerned over the same question (I.384-87). The journey he undertakes to meet his

[12] This theme is picked up again towards the end of the epic (see book XV onwards)

father's former companions parallels his father's own journey home. It also puts him into contact with the past that defined his father. During these travels, Nestor wonders at how Telemachos speaks like Odysseus (III.122-25), while Helen and Menelaos both note how he looks very much like his father (IV.138 ff.), confirming his heritage. In chastising suitors or rebuking his mother, he begins to play the role of his father. His readiness to take on that mantle is finally demonstrated immediately before his father's great victory, where Telemachos must refrain from stringing his father's bow, which heretofore only Odysseus himself might string (XXI.124-29).

This concern with fathers and sons is likewise present in the Iliad. Achilleus' concern for his father Peleus (e.g. XXIV.511, 534 ff.) is the strongest expression of the tragedy of a father outliving his son. Better things are hoped for a new generation, the continuation of the parent's life. Hektor's prayer that Astyanax become a greater man than he was is among the most poignant statements of a father's desire for his child: "as I am, pre-eminent among the Trojans, / great in strength, as am I, and rule strongly over Ilion; / and some day let them say of him: 'He is better by far than his father'" (*Il.* VI.477-79).The fame Hektor wishes for his son is not so different from that which brings a warrior glory among future generations. As his valor earns him some form of immortality, so a man's offspring imbues his life with a meaning that extends beyond his death.

In the *Argonautika*, Apollonius plays the Homeric theme of sons growing to be like their fathers against his own interest in his literary heritage. Although the Argonauts represent the best of a greater past generation, their mythological pedigree was not matched by their literary history. Their children, the Homeric heroes, received the greatest and earliest poetic treatment of any generation. As a result, even poetry about

their illustrious predecessors must respond to Homer's heroes. The generation of the Trojan War depends especially upon the Argonauts, among whom are the fathers of some of the greatest heroes of the war: Telamon (*Arg.* 1.93, etc.), Oileus (1.74, etc.), and Peleus (1.94, etc.), among others. But since their sons have been immortalized by Homer, these heroes are overshadowed by their progeny's fame.[13] Patronyms such as Αἰακίδαι (1.90) identify them more closely with the sons who share those names than with their own fathers. When Telamon angrily (χόλος, 1.1289) accuses Jason of abandoning Herakles at Mysia because τὸ κείνου κῦδος ἀν' Ἑλλάδα μή σε καλύψῃ (('you didn't want his glory to overshadow yours throughout Greece," I.1292), the scene recalls his son's far more famous dispute with Odysseus over the armor of Achilleus.[14] At the moment when Telamon asserts his place in the center of the action, his behavior depends on his son's character rather than his own.

Due to Achilleus' prominent role in the Homeric tradition, Peleus is singled out for particular attention. At the outset of the *Argo*'s journey, the narrator notes that "the gods looked from heaven upon the ship and the generation of demi-gods who sailed the sea, best of all men" (*Arg.* 1.547-48). The nymphs of mount Pelion also watch the ship from a &stance, followed by the centaurs. The child Achilleus is even held up by the arms of the centaur Cheiron's wife to see his father. The echo between these ἀνδρῶν... ἄριστοι ("best of all men") and Achilleus' claim to be ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν (e.g. "best of the Achaians," *Il.* 1.412) is further emphasized by the appearance of the young Achilleus

[13] Even within the *Iliad,* Diomedes claims have better honor (τιμή) than the previous generation, since the *Epigonoi* successfully captured Thebes where their fathers did not (*Il.* IV.404-410, Nagy 162-63). Nagy's discussion of generational differences in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (151-73) is a useful resource for a more careful analysis of Apollonius' treatment of this theme.

[14] Although not recorded in the *Iliad* itself, Aias' angry reaction and eventual suicide over the honor denied him were a well-known part of the Epic Cycle and the basis for Sophocles' play *Aias.*

himself. Furthermore, Achilleus is not grouped with the mortal heroes in the *Argo* but rather is a part of a progression of important mythical figures, dwelling in a world apart from his father. His coming legacy haunts the mission of the Argonauts from its start.

Peleus proves to be one of the more efficacious of the heroes on the *Argo*, settling disputes (II.878-884), giving apt counsel (11.1217-1225) and showing bravery in difficult circumstances (III.504-14) (Carspecken 116-17). Nevertheless, his heroism is compromised by one of the most thorough humiliations that any character experiences during the epic. Continuing their long voyage home after Jason and Medeia have met with Kirke, the Argonauts spend time amusing themselves with athletic games on the Tyrrhenian shore (Italy) (IV.851-52). They will soon have to pass through the straits of Skylla and Charybdis, and so Hera intervenes on their behalf, asking the sea goddess Thetis to guide the ship through safely. Thetis next comes to Peleus, her mortal husband, to speak with him concerning the journey.

The scene is based loosely upon Kirke's own words of warning to Odysseus in *Odyssey* X and XII concerning his passage through both the Underworld and those same maritime dangers as the Argonauts face. Kirke is fresh on the minds of Apollonius' readers, who have just heard her rebuke to Medeia (IV.739 ff.), and the parallel between two powerful females warning lovers about the same fantastic sea dangers is fairly explicit. But the unusual influence these two figures have as women is also remarkable. Odysseus' encounter with Kirke is filled with struggles between the two for control of the situation. Odysseus requires divine assistance and cunning to avoid being transformed by the witch, but following this victory he almost immediately concedes to her suggestion that they go to bed (Od. X 300s)—despite his own concern that, "now it is myself you hold, enticing / into your chamber, to your dangerous bed, / to take my

manhood when you have me stripped" (*Od.* 382-84). Eventually, this strong man must approach his hostess as a suppliant to allow him to leave (X.530 ff.). Odysseus' cunning and manhood is thus matched against Kirke's wiles and &vine magic, each threatening to overturn the proper place of the other.

Peleus is not able to negotiate the tension between his wife's authority and his own as Odysseus does with Kirke—he simply submits to her. In Hera's words, Thetis has been given Peleus as husband because he is τὸν ἄριστον ἐπιχθονίων ("the best of those upon the earth," IV.805).[15] He has been rewarded the status of a husband of an immortal. However, he enjoys no special privilege for this honor—rather, he is embarrassed by his wife's condescending behavior. Thetis comes and speaks without addressing him or even recognizing that he is her husband. She orders him to leave, rather than counseling him sympathetically. So too, while she and other Nereids will be protecting the ship, she expressly forbids him to point her out to the other Argonauts. Not only is he denied respect from the goddess, but he may not seek distinction even among the other heroes on account of his wife. As in Kirke's case, Thetis' status as a goddess interferes with the traditional roles of husband and wife.

Following this encounter, Apollonius uses the reprimand Peleus suffers to portend the inevitable death his son Achilleus will face. The narrator recounts the reason for Thetis' anger towards her husband (IV.864): the goddess had been anointing the child Achilleus with ambrosia and placing him amidst flames to make him immortal, but one night Peleus witnesses her actions and cries out in fear. As a result, Thetis leaves without a word and does not see him again until the meeting recorded by Apollonius. This story is very similar to a passage from another work traditionally ascribed to

[15] My own translation.

Homer, the *Hymn* to *Demeter* (Evelyn-White xxxiv). The goddess Demeter, her daughter having been kidnapped by Hades, disguises herself as a mortal and becomes a nurse for a family. She takes a liking to the boy Demophoon and attempts to make him immortal by the same means that Thetis used with Achilleus. As in Apollonius' adaptation, the goddess abandons the child and its family upon being discovered by a parent who cries out in terror. The actions taken by the characters are nearly identical: both goddesses anoint the children with ambrosia by day (χρίεσκ' ἀμβροσίῃ,[16] *Dem.* 237, and ἀμβροσίῃ χρίεσκε, *Arg.* IV.869—both phrases fitting into the same metrical position in their respective lines) while placing them in flames by night (239, IV.870). The cries of each parent anger the goddess nursing the chdd and cause her to cast him upon the ground (ἦκε πέδονδε, 253, and χάμαδις βάλε, 876).

This close relationship extends to thematic elements of the passages. In a continuation of the reversal of roles between husband and wife, Peleus' counterpart in the Homeric hymn is Metaneira, the mother of Demophoon. Within the hymn, Metaneira herself fills a role parallel to that of Demeter: the goddess has lost her own chdd to the god of the underworld, whose rape of Persephone represents the closest an immortal might come to death. In molding Demophoon into an immortal replacement for her lost daughter, Demeter reveals that she is willing to inflict the same type of separation between child and mother that she had experienced upon Metaneira. In this case, rather than forcing an immortal to die, she will make a mortal live forever—but the loss will be the same. Demeter nonetheless does not acknowledge that Metaneira's potential loss is equivalent to her own wronged state. A different morality governs the actions between gods and men as opposed to gods with their equals.

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[16] Text: Evelyn-White *(2000)*.

Apollonius' imitation of the hymn sets his hero in contrast to another Homeric model. The differences between gods and mortals and the inevitability of death are both key themes of the *Iliad.* Achdleus himself is at the center of the questions posed concerning death, having been promised great glory if he should die young without a homecoming (1.505, IX.410-16). That Achdleus should serve as double to Demophoon is even more appropriate given the promise Demeter makes in her rebuke:

> ἀθάνατόν κέν τοι καὶ ἀγήραον ἤματα πάντα
> παῖδα φίλον ποίησα καὶ ἄφθιτον ὤπασα τιμήν·
> νῦν *b'* οὐκ ἔσθ' ὥς κεν θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξαι·
> τιμὴ δ' ἄφθιτος αἰὲν ἐπέσσεται, οὕνεκα γούνων
> ἡμετέρων ἐπέβη καὶ ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσιν ἴαυσεν. (*Dem.* 260-64)
>
> I would have made your dear son deathless and unaging all his days and would have bestowed on him everlasting honour, but now he can in no way escape death and the fates. Yet shall unfailing honour always rest upon him, because he lay upon my knees and slept in my arms.

Apollonius' reference to Demeter's blunt assertion of &vine authority serves to reiterate the message: these heroes, unlike their Homeric counterparts, cannot strive with the gods. The allusion to a story that itself emphasizes the differences between gods and men sets Peleus in contrast with Homer's heroes. Homeric figures such as Achdleus, Diomedes, and Patroklos are consistently described as godlike (δῖος). They frequently test the limits of the interactions between mortals and immortals in ways that require divine interference: Diomedes wounds Aphrodite with the help of Athene, while Patroklos' rush against Troy and the will of the gods is cut short by Apollo. But ultimately, they cannot prevail against the will of the gods. In Apollonius, however, although Peleus has been judged worthy to be yoked with a goddess in marriage, he does not match the Homeric model of a hero. Thetis' disparaging words and commanding

presence overwhelm Peleus, crushing his mortal will before he can even attempt to contest hers.

Virgil's *Aeneid* provides a great foil for Apollonius' project, as the Roman poet inherits many of the sensibilities and problems of hts Alexandrian counterpart. Virgil also models himself closely upon Homer, and so must rework the Homeric hero into his Roman poem. Virgil's extensive influence on later Western literature makes his a more familiar adaptation of epic style to a different time and culture. As a result, his resolutions of the tension between the heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and Aeneas often illuminate Apollonius' variations on the same theme.

Virgil offers another recreation of epic, responding primarily to Homer, but also responding to Apollonius and the tradition of Latin epics that had begun to take form in Roman literature. Virgil's careful allusions and reworkings of the Homeric epics demonstrate an Apollonian sensibility for creating structural parallels. The broadest and most obvious are frequently observed, as in the opening lines of the epic:

> arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
> Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
> litora.. *(Aeneid* I.*1-3)*
>
> My song is of war and the first man from a Trojan coast to arrive in Italy, forced by Fates to Lavinian shore...

The opening references of *arma virumque* to the warfare of the *Iliad* and the "man" that begins the *Odyssey* immediately establish the poet's relationship with Homer even as he refashions the two themes into a new work quite distinct from that of his Greek predecessor. The self-confident *cano* in turn maintains the conceit of the singing poet while declaring a much more independent sort of author from the one who asked the muses to sing the song through him (*Il.* 1.1, *Od.* 1.1). Broadly speaking, the first six

books on the voyage to Italy parallel the *Odyssey*, the last six the war in Latium the *Iliad*[17] (cleverly reversing the usual order suggested by the opening words). Virgil, however, is often much more explicit about his debts to Homer than Apollonius is. While the Cyclopean figures of the *Argonautika* such as the bronze giant Talos clearly draw on Odysseus' meeting with Polyphemos, in the third book of the Aeneid Virgil records his hero's encounter with the exact same monster as Odysseus, the Kyklops' wound still fresh from his encounter with his Greek opponent (111.641 ff.). Likewise, Apollonius recounts the Argonauts' travels simultaneously with the narrative, often crossing over the same territory Odysseus traveled. Aeneas follows that traditional path around the Mediterranean too, but his situation mimics Odysseus' more closely. He even goes as far as to recall his travels while attending a banquet put on by a host he encounters in the middle of his journey, just as the Greek hero did.

As part of his transformation of Homeric themes, Virgil also recreates the epic hero. The character of Virgil's Aeneas is consistent with that of the Homeric Aineias at the beginning of the *Aeneid*. Like his counterpart, Virgil's hero is less powerful than the greatest heroes of Homer's poems. For all his purported greatness, Aineias never accomplishes much for the Trojans during the Iliad, but must rather be saved from battle by the gods on two occasions (*Il.* V.311 ff., XX.309 ff.). So too this Aeneas fails at most of what he attempts to do. He is repeatedly told to avoid fighting, but does not (Aen. 11.292, 355 ff.; 619-20,664-70); he cannot convince his father to come with him without a sign from the heavens (11.692 ff.); moreover, he saves neither Troy, nor his wife. Thus, although he often follows in the footsteps of Achilleus and Odysseus, Aeneas must be a very different kind of hero if he is to be one at all.

[17] This observation, for all its history, demands a certain wariness. There is much in either half of the epic that demands close comparison to both its Homeric forebears.

Aeneas, like the other two heroes, is also oppressed by difficulties brought upon him by the will of the gods. Yet Juppiter promises that he will be glorified rather than destroyed by the fulfillment of these trials (I.258-60). In his retelling of the fall of Troy and the more fantastic parts of his voyage (bks. II and 111), Aeneas recasts himself as the hero of an Iliadic and Odyssean tale respectively (Beye 1993 236-37). In both cases, he fails to fill the role properly. In Aeneas' defeatist Iliad, the hero hardly fights at all as the city he defends is destroyed (II.506-558); meanwhde in his shorter and anticlimactic *Odyssey* every danger is either avoided or else vanquished before his arrival on an unsuccessful journey home. His epithetpius is neither a dynamic physical characteristic like "swift-footed" nor an expression of mental acuity like "man of many turns," but rather a moral qualification (Beye 1993 239). In the Iliad, Achilleus declares to Odysseus, "I detest that man, who / hides one thing in the depths of his heart, and speaks forth another" (*Il.* IX.312-13). Aeneas, however, demonstrates his virtue as a leader when he very purposefully hides his feelings from his crew while trying to encourage them: *Talia voce refert curisque ingentibus* aeger / *spem vultu simulat, premit altum* corde *dolorem* ("With such words, sick with great cares, he pretended hope with his face, he pressed deep pain in his heart," *Aen.* I.208-9).[18] Aeneas does not quite measure up to the Homeric standard, but he is destined to fulfill a more difficult and more complex role as a Roman leader.

Similarly, the remnants of defeated Troy would need to be remolded into the new glories of Rome. To do so, Virgil looks to previous accounts of Troy with an eye on the future as well as the past. Unlike the *Argonautika*, whose setting before the Trojan war is in tension with its composition after the Iliad and the *Odyssey*, the events and poetry of the *Aeneid* alike come after Homer. Rather than abandoning or competing with

[18] My own translation.

the past, Virgil uses the Homer's cultural weight to lend his own poem strength, enriching and expanding that inheritance.[19] Just as Rome is not the dregs of Troy replanted, so Virgil is not content to be another failed imitator of a master. According to Juppiter, Rome is neither destined to fall nor to be a mere restoration of Trojan glory: rather, he promises, *his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono: / imperium sine fine dedi* ("I set no time or wealth limits on Romans: / I give them endless rule," 1.278-79).

This glorious Rome would be difficult to found, as Virgil's opening theme recounts, and would test Aeneas with hardships (1.1-7). But it is not the inevitable outcome of an escape from Troy. Virgil repeatedly presents the alternative and easier path to a new home before his hero and his audience alike. In her impassioned plea to Juppiter on her son's behalf, Venus complains that Antenor was allowed to escape the Achaians and found Patavus in Italy, while Aeneas was forced to wander the seas (I.242-52). That there is already a successful settlement in Italy founded by a Trojan hero removes some of the exotic flavor from Aeneas' journey from Ilium. If Rome's foundation is unique, it will have to be for some other reason. In book III, Aeneas and his crew encounter Buthrotum, another city founded by Trojan refugees, populated by Homeric figures such as Helenus and Andromache. They have come into possession of land formerly belonging to the son of Achilles, and have refounded "a little Troy that resembled / the great one, [with] a near-dry brook they'd labeled the Xanthus, / the threshold and frame of a Scaean gate" (III.349-51). The desperation and confusion of Andromache (111.310 ff.) and the almost compulsive imitation of her homeland suggest

[19] Virgil owed this self-confident reinvention of epic as a Roman art to early Latin epic poets, Livius Andronicus, Naevius, and particularly Ennius. In his *Annales*, Ennius told the story of his encounter with Homer, who greets him as a poetic son (Dominik 40). Ennius' further claim that he is the reincarnation of Homer is among the most audacious declarations made by Roman poets that they are the true inheritance of the Homeric tradition (Dominik 41).

that though the inhabitants of the city have escaped death at Troy, they have not escaped being defined by Troy's fall. They are Trojans in exile rather than citizens of a new city. Andromache herself serves as a tempting but ultimately poor model for Aeneas and his crew, dwelling forever in the past. Book V adds a Sicilian settlement of Trojans to the list, to which Aeneas flees from the more alluring charms of Carthage. After the hardships faced on the journey thus far, the offer of a powerful and established city, where he might rule with a loving queen is very enticing—it requires the intervention of the gods to turn Aeneas back to the harder road. Even the settlement of the Greek hero Diomedes in Italy (VIII.9-17, XI.239 ff.) seems to offer another possible end for veterans of the war: though he was the more powerful warrior in Troy, he rejects the opportunity to war against Aeneas again, preferring to avoid further troubles beyond those that were faced on the return journey from Ilium. Although Diomedes was a victor at Troy, he does not seek the greater glory promised to Aeneas and his people. He and Aeneas share a common past, but not a common future.

Unlike Apollonius, who takes his heroes on a tour of the Homeric world, Aeneas must sail past his models and further onwards (Hunter 1993, 172). Much as a son must emulate but also surpass his father to become a man, Virgil's epic must go beyond its predecessors.[20] The importance of inheritance, especially with regards to the relationship between fathers and sons, mirrors this concern with epic and is consequently a major theme of the poem. At the center of the work is Aeneas, who is both son to Venus and the Trojan Anchises as well as father to Ascanius. On the one hand he honors his father by following his lead and remembering him after his death; but on the other he must set an example for his son: *sis memor et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum / etpater Aeneas et*

[20] Ennius has a more explicit version of the same transformation (Dominik 40). See note 13.

auunculus excitet Hector ("Remember: keep in mind parental example. / Your father Aeneas and uncle Hector should stir you," XII.439-40). This injunction to remember his forebears is all the more significant because it is Aeneas' only direct speech to Ascanius, who will become the first king in Italy (1.268-71) and whose very name denotes a shift from Troy (*Ilus*, 1.268) to Rome (*Iulus*, 1.269). The Aeneas who is *natus* dea (child of the goddess, Venus) must be reconciled with *Pater Aeneas*, the father of the Roman people to come.

The importance of filial relationships to the narrative becomes clear even in a superficial view of the text. The catalogue of the forces opposing the Trojans in Latium provides a good example. Virgil's focus on the Italian army shifts the focus of the catalogue from the winners (as in the Iliad,) to the losers of the war—and far less well-known ones as well. As Virgil himself admits, "hardly an air or wisp of their glory has reached us" (VII.646), and many of the soldiers mentioned are explicitly farmers or shepherds who have taken up their farm tools to defend their land. As a result, the catalogue of the Italian forces serves a somewhat different purpose from the grand Homeric account that focused on the prowess and merit of the soldiers. Homer's catalogue would be compromised by the introduction of warriors as anything but soldiers; here the majority of the great heroes call up bands of farmers to the defense of Latium. The greater characterization of the far less famous heroes of Latium also turns attention onto the peoples who would eventually join their races into the Roman people. That the descendents of the two sides will be united in one state gives the conflict the flavor of civil war.[21] The nature of the catalogue likewise encourages attention to

[21] W. R. Johnson's "Imaginary Romans" (*Poets and Critics Read Virgil*, ed. Spence) takes a helpful look at how the union of these different peoples was glossed over by politicized histories and Virgil's awareness of these divisions.

posterity, as traditionally catalogues recount the names of sons and fathers. Virgil's imitation is quite Apollonian in how he fills each reference with allusions to other works or themes. Mezentius, mentioned first, is a called a "god-scorner," (VII.647), though his son, the noble Lausus, is decidedly better than he: "He hardly deserved a sire like Mezentius" (VII.654). Here the son is morally superior to the father, much as Aeneas must become morally superior to his "parents" in Greek epic. Hercules has a son present among the Greeks ranks, just as he did at Troy (*Il.* 11.653 ff.). This move suggests an army comparable to the one at Troy; but then Virgil introduces the son of Agamemnon into the battle (VII.723 ff.). The poet thus puts a twist on the theme of fathers and sons that Apollonius used: rather than dealing with parents whose accomplishments cannot match their children's, here he uses the name of a famous father to turn attention to a son whose defeat is notable precisely because of his inheritance. Although the reference to Agamemnon apportions Halaesus some measure of Homeric grandeur, but also recalls his father's death: to be a son of Agamemnon is to invite tragedy.

There is also a telling reference to "Twin brothers who'd left the city of Tibur / (their city and people named for a third brother, Tiburtus)" (VII.670-71) named Catillus and Coras. These names could readily be replaced metrically by two other alliterative names of brothers, Romulus and Remus. The origin of these twins in the region of the Tibur and even the mention of naming a city after a brother recalls this other founding legend of Rome, and underscores the irony that many of those battling against Aeneas will later give rise to the Roman race despite their defeat. Perhaps most notable among those ancestors-to-be is the case of Virbius, who is introduced as, *Hippolyti proles*, ("the offspring of Hippolytus," VII.761). The narrative, however, suggests that Virbius is not so much the son of Hippolytus as a reincarnation of the same man. He himself may

serve as an analogy for the task of Latin epic in reviving rather than repeating Homeric models, as in this case another tragic Greek mythic hero has been revived into a Roman form.

Apollonius has also tied his recreation of epic to the relationship between fathers and sons.[22] The Argonauts, although they are the fathers of the Homeric generation, are unable to match the heroic grandeur of their sons. Apollonius' portrayal of these Alexandrian heroes enacts the inability of his poem to match the grandeur of Homer's epics. Aeneas likewise constantly falls short of Homer's standards for a great epic hero. However, his move from Troy to Italy also announces a transformation from one kind of heroism to another: the inadequate Homeric hero Aineias becomes the successful founder of Rome, Aeneas.

During the Virgilian counterpart to Thetis' visit to Peleus, Aeneas turns decisively from Homeric Troy towards his history in Rome. At the end of the fifth book, Aeneas is again vexed by a difficult problem. The Trojans had returned to Sicily, the site of yet another Trojan colony. There they held funeral games held in honor of his father Ancluses, which Virgil closely models on the games for Patroklos in book XXIII of the *Iliad.* After a parade of the armed youth, many women, having been excited by the goddess Iris, then attempted to burn the ships on which they had come, in order to force Aeneas and his men finally to settle down. Thus Aeneas must again answer the question: does he remain, or continue towards Rome (V.702-3)? Guidance comes in the shape of his father, whose spirit instructs him to continue to Italy but first to enter the underworld to see him (V.724 ff.). This is the last time of many that the doubtful Aeneas

[22] *See* p. 11 ff. above.

is unsure of the path he must take to the Tiber (Nelis 197-98). The descent into the underworld will mark his move from the death of Troy to the birth of Rome.

The visit of Thetis to Peleus in the *Argonautika* draws Achilleus into the storyline again and alludes to the losses of Demeter and Metaneira; Ancluses' visit likewise emphasizes the relationship of children to their parents. Immediately before Anchises' spirit appears to him, an older man named Nautes counsels Aeneas to leave behind those who are tired or weak and continue onwards. He refers to the hero as nate dea ("child to a goddess," V.709).[23] When his father does appear, the *facies… parentis / Anchisae* ("form of parent Anchises," V.722-23) addresses him as nate three times in less than ten lines (V.724, 725, 733) and promises that when he comes to Avernus (the underworld) he will learn *genus omne tuum* ("all your descendents," V.736). Once more the transformation of the characters into something more than their Homeric counterparts looms large: Aeneas is not to settle for yet another would-be Troy, because there are generations of Romans destined to come from his h e . Although he is nate to Nautes and his father, nevertheless he is meant to be a father. Likewise, Anchises himself has been transformed from a mortal hero to the object of worship. The appearance of a snake omen at the celebration at his funeral mound (V.80 ff.), the celebration of games in his honor and the appearance of his shade to Aeneas all give the impression that Anchses has moved beyond the world of men and now serves an important role guiding and being worshipped by these men.

Anchises' new position is also associated with the gods because his role is parallel to those of Thetis and Kirke in their respective instructions to heroes. As with Odysseus and Kirke in the *Odyssey*, instructions as to how one descends into the underworld are

[23] All translations in this paragraph are my own.

accompanied by some tension as to what role is to be played by whom. The imitation, however, is more closely related to the scene shared by Peleus and Thetis in the *Argonautika*, where the separation between mortal and immortal plays a crucial role. As the Argonauts do prior to Thetis' visit, the Trojans are holding games (*Arg.* IV.849-52, Aen. V.58 ff.). These games are themselves associated with cleansing oneself of blood guilt, much as Jason and Medeia must do after slaying her brother Apsyrtos, and which the inadvertent death of Dido requires following the sudden departure of Aeneas and his crew from Carthage (Nelis 190 ff.). Thetis' disappearances in both the past and contemporary encounters recorded by Apollonius feature imagery suggestive of airy dreams that are also echoed in Anchises' exit: et *tenuis fugit ceu fumus* in auras ("and [he] retreated like thm smoke in a crosswind," V.740; Nelis 201).

Because of these similarities the scene recalls the imagery of its Apollonian incarnation. Though there is no tension between men and women in the scene, there is still an exchange of roles. As Aeneas himself laments, their encounter is very brief—not because his father does not wish to see him, but because they are violating the boundary between the living and the dead. Aeneas is also presented as both child speaking to his father and the father of many to come. The tension between these two roles captures well the problem of Rome's foundation: it must be rooted in the past figures and glories that brought its founder to Italy, and yet it must transcend that beginning to become somethmg new, even as Aeneas himself must cease to be a son of Troy to be the father of Rome.

Whereas Peleus' inferiority is sealed by his encounter with his divine wife, Aeneas' father pushes him on to a higher end. The dreamlike quality of Thetis' departure from his life (IV.877) highlights Peleus' inability to touch the divine as the Homeric

heroes do. But Aeneas' father, who was once a mortal hero, has become a hero worthy of a cult. As Anchises has been integrated into a greater divine order, so too Aeneas' failure at Troy has been subsumed into the larger history of a city fated to succeed. The *tenuis auras* in which Anchises disappears and on which the wisps of fame of former ages are carried (VII.646) have solidified into the account of Rome's founding in the *Aeneid.*

This recasting of a failed Trojan hero as a successful Roman one also points to the transformation that Augustus Caesar had worked with the Roman republic. Virgil associates his hero with the new emperor by bringing him through politically charged locations such as Actium (III.274-91), where Augustus won the battle that gave him the empire, as well as by placing him at the end of a history that begins with Aeneas and will culminate in a golden age (1.257-96). Thus the transformation of Aeneas corresponds to the transformation of Rome itself: the end of the founder's wanderings and battles forecasts the end of the civil wars that had plagued Rome, and the fulfillment of an empire even greater than its legendary forbears.

The melding of the mythical elements of epic into the political and historical reality of Rome infuses Aeneas' tragic story with a new meaning. When a character like Telamon emulates his son, who has become famous through another epic, he declares his own inferiority. As a father, he is the original of his son; but in fact that originality has been stripped from him and he instead is subservient to his son's model. But when Aeneas is subsequently revealed as a model for Augustus, the emperor's great success raises the hero's prestige.

In Virgil's solution to the problem of bringing the epic hero to Rome, the history of the city is essential to the character's heroism. Aeneas would not be a great hero if he were not so directly connected to such a great state. The heroes of the *Argonautika* lack

this kind of conspicuous redefinition. Their inferiority is not compensated by any explicit link to glory outside literature. Yet their voyage is not unsuccessful: their mission is accomplished, and their poem is no artless copy of Homer. Apollonius' Argonauts, and particularly Jason, must travel a slightly Qfferent path in order to prove themselves heroes worthy of the epic tradition.

Chapter 2: Heroes in Love

Critics have often found Jason to be a deficient epic hero. He lacks either the heft or charm of an Odysseus or even an Aeneas. He does not dominate the action of the *Argonautika* with his grand manner, but often relinquishes his preeminence to other characters. Compared even to Homer's lesser heroes, he appears as unimpressive as the four books of the Argonautika stacked next to the twenty-four of the Iliad or *Odyssey*. Carspecken is among the most blunt in his judgment:

> Jason... chosen leader because his superior declines the honour, subordinate to his comrades, except once, in every trial of strength, skill or courage, a great warrior only with the help of magical charms, jealous of honour but incapable of asserting it, passive in the face of crisis, timid and confused before trouble, tearful at insult, easily despondent, treacherous in his dealings with the love-sick Medeia but cowering before her later threats and curses, coldly efficient in the time-serving murder of an unsuspecting child, reluctant even in marriage.
> (Carspecken 101)

These accusations are not vastly exaggerated, but they are somewhat unfair. As Carspecken himself notes (102), Homer's most prominent heroes are far from perfect: Achilleus can burst into tears at insults himself (*Il.* I.349-51), and his reckless behavior leads to the death of many, including Patroklos. Odysseus frequently lies to win his advantage in both epics (*Il.* IX.382-89, 446-457; 0dXIV.191 ff.), delays his journey in the comfort of Kirke's isle, and loses all the men he was to bring back to Ithaka. Jason demonstrates a greater concern for his responsibilities to his comrades than either of these heroes (Hunter 1993, 24-25). He is also the most prominent of the Argonauts. Jason is chosen to be leader (I.345-50), and indeed the narrative repeatedly forces him to the front of the action, whether for good or ill. It is Jason who gathers the heroes for a quest in his interest, Jason again who is brought to the bed of queen Hypsipyle at Lemnos (I.853-54), and he who kills Kyzikos in the battle against the Doliones (I.1030-

36); likewise it is his good deed that earns Hera's favor (III.66-75), and his *aristeia* that earns the Argonauts the opportunity to get the fleece (111.1191 ff.). The quest, certainly, is not a failure: despite any weaknesses or losses in the group, Jason successfully carries the golden fleece back to Iolkos. Why then do his faults seem so much more exceptional and his exploits so much less significant?

Just as Jason cannot equal Achilleus' prowess in battle, neither can he match his influence over the Iliad. Achilleus is the focal point for both the plot and the moral content of Homer's epic. The poetic power of the *Iliad* rests as solidly upon his shoulders as the fate of Hektor and Troy. The reader or listener of the Iliad consistently feels the absence of Achilleus, waiting for his climactic return—it is not a matter of whether, but when he will reengage the Trojans (Hunter 1993, 12). Similarly in the *Odyssey*, the difficulty of the return is matched against a certainty that Odysseus will come home and successfully accomplish his vengeance. In both cases, the poet uses the audience's familiarity with the traditional stories to increase the significance of a character, and so structures the poem around the hero's actions. Thus the *aristeiai* of Diomedes and Patroklos earlier in the *Iliad* point to the coming attack of Achilleus, and the journey of Telemachos prefigures the one that will take up much of the narrative. Apollonius' Jason laclis many of these advantages. The significance of the *Argonautika* does not hang upon the story of Jason or his rivalry with Pelias. Instead, the poet limits his poem to the *Argo*'s actual journey, beginning his epic at the voyage's outset and finishing with the first step onto shore at Pagasai (IV.4.1781). Many of the adventures of the Argonauts are distractions rather than stepping stones toward the accomplishment of the mission. Whereas Odysseus is harassed by Poseidon and driven by forces beyond his control to and from the islands of Kirke, the sirens or straits of Charybdis, the

Argonauts' wanderings often seem somewhat inconsequential accidents. Jason's preeminence does not offer a focus for the epic. For Jason this may be just as well; Achilleus won the glory he sought, and Odysseus finally reestablished his rule at home. Both heroes had sons to succeed them. But Jason's story was a decidedly less successful one; his terrible break with the same Medeia who is herself featured prominently in the epic concludes his myth with a tragic loss of children, wife and city alike. Jason's failure is as extravagant as his success, and as a result he is not as glorious a character as his Homeric counterparts.

Heraldes is an inevitable competitor for Jason's role as the most important hero of the *Argonautika.* This hero's abilities are so great that his joining the crew must change the story significantly—a realization shared by the entire crew and particularly by Jason when they find that they have left behind τὸν ἄριστον... σφωιτέρων ἑτάρων ("the best of all the heroes," I.1284-89). Sources concerning the voyage to Kolchis disagree as to whether Herakles was counted among the Argonauts, more than one author suggesting that he was too heavy to be born by the *Argo* (Mooney 102-3), and thus in some sense too great for the legend. Apollonius makes reference to this tradition when the ship's keel sinks under his weight (Hunter 1993, 26), a mark of greatness reminiscent of the heft of the hero and goddess that weigh down the chariot of Diomedes (*Il.* V.837-9, see above). Heraldes is overmatched to the task, because he can perform feats on his own that the entire crew of the *Argo* cannot achieve together. After he is abandoned, the Argonauts continually face hardships which the audience is often told outright would not hinder Herakles in the least. Polydeukes must substitute for him in a boxing match (II.1-97) that everyone imagines would not have taken place were it not for the loss of their shipmate (II.145-50); likewise, upon approaching the island of the birds of Ares, the

Argonauts adopt a strategy devised by the now-absent hero to protect themselves (11.1050 ff., Hunter 1993, 32). Aietes' arming scene before Jason's *aristeia* includes the observation that το μὲν ου κέ τις ἄλλος ὑπέστη / ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων, ὅτε κάλλιπον Ἡρακλῆα / τῆλε παρέξ ο κεν οἷος ἐναντίβιον πτολέμιξεν ("none of the heroic men could have withstood it, once they had left Herakles far behind, who alone could have clashed with him in battle," III.1232-4). Perhaps most impressively, Herakles is found to have visited the Libyan desert that nearly destroys the Argonauts immediately before they themselves do (IV.1432-14549). Not only does he overcome the dangers of the desert that nearly destroyed the crew single-handedly, but along the way he kills a dragon guarding golden apples (μῆλα), in contrast to the difficulties faced by the Argonauts in stealing the fleece of a golden sheep (μῆλον) from another serpent (Hunter 1993, 29).

Herakles' individual power and his eminence in traditions outside Apollonius' epic is a continual challenge to Jason's prominence. His self-sufficiency recalls a seemingly undefeatable Achilleus or Odysseus while his power deprives him of the strong sense of obligation that possessed these Homeric heroes. Herakles serves as a visible reminder of a kmd of heroic excellence apart from Jason. This is made clear at the start of the voyage, when Jason calls upon the crew to elect a leader, askmg: τὸν ἄριστον ἀφειδήσαντες ἕλεσθε / ὄρχαμον ἡμείων ("choose the very best man as your leader," 1.338-39). The selection of Heraldes is notable because it is as obvious to the crew that he is the best man as it is to the audience that Jason is supposed to be selected as the leader. His refusal seems to acknowledge that the tasks that Jason sets out for the leader are best suited for one who gathered the heroes together (1.332-40). However, even in turning down the offer he takes control to prevent others from choosing a leader

apart from Jason: 6 5 δὲ καὶ ἄλλον ἀναστήσεσθαι ἐρύξω ("I shall not allow anyone else to put himself forward," 1.346). His individual solution to the collective problem presented at once honors Jason and imposes a plan characteristic of Heraldes on the whole crew.

The contrast Heraldes strikes with the captain of the Argonauts suggests that what is at stake in this expedition is not merely whether Jason accomplishes his task, but also what sort of figure he cuts while doing it. This in turn reflects the influence of the epic tradition on the *Argonautika* itself. Apollonius can no more be applauded for simply writing an epic than Jason can be for merely achieving his goal. Heraldes raises the question of what kind of hero Jason should be, just as the project of the *Argonautika* asks what an epic should be.

The adventure on Lemnos is the first stop on the way to Kolchis that Apollonius dwells upon, and thus one might expect the first opportunity to see the Argonauts and particularly Jason and Heraldes in action. However, the account subtly but continually breaks with the audience's expectations as to what that action may be. The patterns of the epic predecessors that the narrative follows demand conclusions the plot does not provide.

The story of the women on the island serves as a shock to an otherwise smooth travel narrative. A passage of relatively calm and detailed travel leads the Argonauts from one stop to another: the shadow of the peak of Athos stretches out to Myrina, and the heroes let out the sail until the rays of the sun vanish before rowing to Lemnos (592-608). The description of the natural play of light creates a peaceful atmosphere. "Eve', the narrator continues, ἄμυδις πᾶς δῆμος ὑπερβασίῃσι γυναικῶν / νηλειῶς δέδμητο παροιχομένῳ λυκάβαντι ("There, in the year just passed, the whole people

had been pitilessly killed at one stroke by the wickedness of the women," 1.609-10). Apollonius suddenly breaks the gentle flow of the story with a terrible crime. He cleverly continues using light imagery in the phrase παροιχομένῳ λυκάβαντι ("during the traveling of the light's course," i.e. in the past year),[24] but now the reference is to years rather than days and provides the backdrop for murder rather than travel.

The Lemnian women go through a series of perversions of their societal roles. Aphrodite has punished the women[25] because μιν γεράων ἐπὶ δηρὸν ἄτισσαν ("they had for a long time denied her due honors," 615), causing the men to find to conceive a τρηχὺν ἔρον ("violent desire," 613) for their slave girls. The first perversion thus begets more and more of the same, as the Lemnian women destroy their trusting husbands and then begin to take on the roles that belonged to them. Finding that the work of men is easier than that of women (627-30), they plough the land, arm themselves to defend the island (633-7), and gather for counsels (653 ff.) similar to that one called by Telemachos in *Odyssey* I (Clauss 118).[26] The frequent use of Hypsipyle's patronym (621, 712) particularly emphasizes the adoption of her father's role. By wearing Thoas' armor (637), and by taking his throne (667, 718), Hypsipyle also establishes herself as queen as he was king. She even puts her father to sea in a chest, much as fathers would traditionally dispose of unmarried daughters guilty of sexual indiscretion (Clauss 113).

Apollonius compares the women warriors rushing to the beach at the Argonauts' arrival to Θυιάσιν ὠμοβόροις ("bacchants who devour raw flesh," 636), and their

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[24] My own translation.

[25] There is some ambiguity as to whether the men or the women suffer punishment, but a scholiast's explanation of what sort of affliction the women suffered (Mooney 108) seems to match the more common reading of the story. See Green 214 for a good discussion of the likelihood of the alternative reading.

[26] Clauss notes that several details match quite closely between Od. II.14-22 and *Arg.* I.667-74, including even the number of old Aegyptus' sons and the elderly virgins by Polyxo.

murder and role reversals suggest a dangerous atmosphere for a group of male heroes. The plan to seduce the heroes joins them into a category of epic dangers faced by Odysseus, including Kirke, Kalypso and the Sirens, all of whom attempt to lure men to their islands by their desires. As discussed earlier, the &vine power of a woman such as Kirke threatens to disrupt the role of Odysseus as a strong male hero. Usually the promised sexual pleasure in these situations comes at a price, but in this case the men seem to have little to regret save the scolding Herakles gives them. The women likewise accomplish exactly what they had decided to do. Neither the potentially dangerous situation for the men nor the possibility of the men Qscovering what truly took place on the island play out as the narrative's epic cues would lead the audience to expect.

The continual disappointment of the audience's epic expectations is matched with an emphasis on the limitations of knowledge. Odysseus is often protected from the dangers of the isles he visits because he receives special knowledge that saves him from Qsaster: Hermes gives him a drug and instructs him on how to avoid Kirke's magic; Kirke herself warns him about how to best escape the sirens and Skylla and Charybdis. On Lemnos the heroes are protected by their ignorance. The story Hypsipyle offers hides the guilt that the Argonauts might otherwise have to revenge. The women likewise are helpless before their lack of knowledge and inability to predict what the future holds. They must be constantly vigilant for Thracian men, and confuse the Argo for an enemy (630-39). Polyxo alone among them looks to the troubles of the women's future old age in addition to their present concerns (683-88). Similarly, Hypsipyle does not know that her father will survive to beget more of the potentially avenging children who were killed (618-19, 623-26).

The episodes involving messengers underscore these limitations. In the *Iliad*, Odysseus smoothes over Agamemnon's entreaty to Achilleus for prudence's sake, omitting some of Agamemnon's more offensive words from the message he delivers (IX.115-161,225-306). Given the situation, his emendation is clever rather than unfaithful. In a corresponding scene, Hypsipyle's messenger Iphone changes the tone of Hypsipyle's original words, κέκλεο θαρσαλέως ἐπιβαινέμεν εὐμενέοντας ("Bid [his comrades]... to disembark... without fear, provided that their intetions are friendly," 707) to the more eager κέκλεται αὐτίκα νῦν ἐπιβαινέμεν εὐμενέοντας ("[Hypsipyle] bids [his comrades]... to disembark... straightaway now" 716). Iphone's change is unnecessary; it reveals a lack of discipline rather than a control of words. Even in a carefully crafted message delivered as part of a plan to fool the men, Iphone is unable to prevent herself from revealmg her feelmgs.

Through the story of Aithalides, another herald, Apollonius uses the limitations of the heroes to draw attention to limitations of the poem. Aithalides serves for the crew in the same function as his father Hermes does for Zeus. Upon recognizing the hero's parentage, Apollonius digresses on the gift of undying memory that perseveres even after his death (643-44). As a mortal, he must die and go to Hades, where even the memories of past lives are erased in the river Lethe. But Aithalides keeps his memory even after death and so gains a strange semi-immortal status: ἄλλοθ' ὑποχθονίοις ἐναρίθμιος, ἄλλοτ' ἐς αὐγάς / ἠελίου ζωοῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσιν ("[his spirit] is at on time numbered among the dead beneath the earth, and at another it emerges to the light of the sun to be among the living," 647-48).

This limited afterlife makes an effective allegory for the role of memory in Homeric epic. Although the hero must die, he achieves some measure of continued

existence by being remembered. In the Iliad, Sarpedon makes the clearest argument for the need to win glory in battle:

> νῦν b' ἔμπης γὰρ κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο
> μυρίαι, ἃς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βροτὸν οὐδ' ὑπαλύξαι,
> ἴομεν, ἠέ τῳ εὖχος ὀρέξομεν ἠέ τις ἡμῖν. (*Il.* XII.326-28)
>
> But now, seeing that the spirits of death stand close about us
> in their thousands, no man can turn aside nor escape them,
> let us go on and win glory for ourselves, or yield to others.

Given the inevitability of death, one should at least earn the honor and respect of other men (310 ff.). Achilleus' situation is particularly blunt: εἰ μέν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι, / ὤλετο μέν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται ("if I stay here and fight bedside the city of the Trojans, / my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting," *Il.* IX.412-13). It is the possibility of undying glory that makes the battle attractive; to be remembered past one's death is to be as successful as one may be in a mortal life.

The glory of heroes is preserved by poets in particular. In the *Odyssey*, the bards Phemios and Demodokos both sing of the heroes of Troy (1.325-27, VIII.499-520), while Homer himself remembers their deeds in verse. Apollonius declares himself in the same tradition of recalling glories of past generations in his poem's opening line: Ἀρχόμενος σέο Φοῖβε παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν / μνήσομαι ("Taking my star from you Phoibos, I shall recall the glorious deeds of men long ago," *Arg.* I.1-2). As in Homer, the theme of memory in the *Argonautika* is closely related to the success of its heroes. When the entire crew seems about to perish far from home in the Libyan desert, the narrator remarks that they would have died νώνυμνοι καὶ ἄφαντοι ἐπιχθονίοισι ("leaving no name or trace by which mortal men might know of them," IV.1306). Likewise when the quest is completed at the end of the poem, the narrator makes the

wish: Ἵλατ' ἀριστῆες, μακάρων γένος, αἵδε δ' ἀοιδαί / εἰς ἔτεος ἐξ ἔτεος γλυκερώτεραι εἶεν ἀείδειν / ἀνθρώποις (('Be gracious, heroes, children of the blessed gods, and may these songs be from year to year ever sweeter for men to sing," IV.1773-75).[27]

However, if the narrator of the story is not reliable, then the exercise of remembering past glories is compromised. Apollonius' narrator is the audience's guide to the heroes and deeds that are worth remembering. But when he mentions Aithalides' undying memory, Apollonius takes care to note that the herald remembers the journey even now (ἔτι νῦν, 1.644)—that is, while it is being retold by Apollonius. By drawing Aithalides into the present, Apollonius emphasizes his own &stance from the past events he recounts. Immediately following this, he suddenly notices that he has strayed from his intended path: ἀλλὰ τί μύθους / Αἰθαλίδεω χρειώ με διηνεκέως ἀγορεύειν; (('but why should I tell at length these stories concerning Aithalides?" 648-49). The very narrator who has emphasized his own role in preserving the memory of the heroes has told their story incorrectly. Although Aithalides' perfect memory may preserve the Argonauts permanently, the narrator's error throws into doubt his ability to recall the story. For all his memories, the shade of Aithalides remains only half alive (I.646-48). The tale of the heroes likewise provides an inconstant existence for the Argonauts, dependent on the narrator's ability to recount the story correctly and well.[28]

I distinguish so carefully between Apollonius and his narrator because the same errors that demonstrate the narrator's fallibility also serve to draw attention to the poet's

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[27] In a sense, Apollonius remembers Homer himself and preserves that poet's κλέος ("fame, glory") by his constant allusions to his epics. See also note 27 immediately below.

[28] The hero who continues a strange half-alive, half-dead existence while still remembering things perfectly also recalls Homer: he 'lives' in some fashion through his poems, while still providing an inimitable account of what came before. The honoring of a poet by allusion likewise has parallels to the honoring of a hero by recounting the story of his κλέος.

control of the medium. A mistake narrated in meter is hardly accidental, just as an author's recognition of forgetfulness following a digression on memory must be purposeful. Other moments in the *Argonautika* make the same distinction between the art of the poet as opposed to that of the storyteller. Orpheus' song at Pagasai, for instance, fits snugly in the plot, recalling a story of authority and peace after a fight has broken out between Idrnon and Idas (I.492-95, etc.). The narration by a poet of another poet's song is enough to make the audience conscious of the author. As mentioned above,[29] Homer himself performed a similar trick in the *Odyssey* through the bards Demodokos and Phemios. The allusion itself makes the poet's interest beyond the account itself evident. He is telling a story about heroes, as Homer did; but he is also writing a poem whose style is fashioned specifically in response to Homer's.

Apollonius frequently incorporates Homeric models into the story but uses them in unexpected ways. Few are so directly in the epic tradition as the long ekphrasis describing Jason's cloak. The consensus of critics through the ages has been that Jason's donning of the cloak is a kind of arming scene with particularly prominent roots in the Iliad's shield of Achilleus (Shapiro 264). The account the Homeric shield being forged by one artisan draws attention to the poet behind the narrative itself.[30] Apollonius similarly uses the images on Jason's cloak to make the reader aware of the author's artifice. In the second image (742-46), Aphrodite gazes upon her own reflection in a shield as a representation within a representation and an allusion within an allusion. The last illustration of Phrixos upon the golden ram declares that the audience would listen intently to the ram: ἐλπόμενος πυκινήν τιν' ἀπὸ σφείων ἐσακοῦσαι / βάξιν, ο καὶ δηρὸν περιπορπίδα θηήσαιο ("you would expect to hear some wise utterance from

[29] p. 37 above.
[30] For a more detailed account, see chapter 3

them. With this hope you would gaze long upon them," 766-67), much as they might ponder the eliphrasis itself to ascertain some allegorical significance (Hunter 1993, 56). Again the poet directs the audience towards the making of the poetry through its content.

Apollonius emulates Homer in making his audience aware of his artifice, but he goes beyond his predecessor in providing a coherent link between moments where the audience is confronted with the poet's art. Orpheus' song (1.496-511) tells the story of Zeus' rise to power, finishing with the Kyklopes: οἱ δέ μιν οὔπω / γηγενέες Κύκλωπες ἐκαρτύναντο κεραυνῷ, βροντῇ τε στεροπῇ τε· τὰ γὰρ Διὶ κῦδος ὀπάζει ("the earth-born Kyklopes had not yet armed him with his blazing bolts, his thunder, and his lightning—weapons which guarantee Zeus his glory," 509-11). The next lengthy departure from the narrative, the ekphrasis of the cloak, continues this account precisely where Orpheus left off: Ἐν μὲν ἔσαν Κύκλωπες ἐπ' ἀφθίτῳ ἡμμένοι ἔργῳ, / Ζηνὶ κεραυνὸν ἄνακτι πονεύμενοι ("Upon it were the Kyklopes seated at their ceaseless task, fashioning a thunderbolt for Zeus their king," 730-31, Hunter 1993, 53-54). This continuity remains completely independent of the plot, only surfacing at these two self-conscious allusions. The poet draws attention both to himself and to an alternate structure to his poem aside from the plot. The author seems to invade his own narrative with a separate record of his authorship that continues through the epic.

Rather than returning directly to the main plot, following the description of Jason's cloak Apollonius continues into another interruption. A short passage of equivalent length to those describing the different images on the cloak tells the story of how Jason acquired his spear (769-773). The audience has already read through seven such accounts, so that an eighth falls in stride with the rest; but the story is decidedly not

part of the ekphrasis that has set the rhythm for this last part of the poem. Rather, the account of Jason's previous visit to Atalanta and her desire to join the trip would be more at home as part of the catalogue of heroes at the beginning of the poem (1.23-227). Because it fits the pattern of short descriptions but not their content, Atalanta's story seems to indicate a confused use of epic models. The only link between the two kinds of passages is their common source, as if the poet had conflated the two because both had Homeric antecedents. Thus on one level Apollonius has produced an incongruent passage; but on another, he once again points towards the poet's judgment. The failure of the narrator to match the smoothness of his Homeric predecessor is evident—but it is also under direct control of the author.[31]

Since these epic features of the *Argonautika* tend not to measure up to their Homeric counterparts, the failure of the heroes to fill the shoes of Homeric heroes is not surprising. However, Apollonius' distinction between the narrator and the poet also extends to his portrayal of Jason as his protagonist. Jason fails to measure up to Homeric standards, but in Jason's entry into the action on Lemnos, Apollonius provides a different rubric of success for his hero.

Jason's exploits are characterized by romantic love rather than battle.[32] In the second panel described on Jason's cloak, Apollonius provides an allegory for his reworking of the Homeric into his own epic. In the image, Aphrodite uses Ares' shield, a σάκος like that of Achilleus, as a mirror in which to gaze upon her reflection. Instead of being covered with scenes of war or of the world, the only image upon it is the one that

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[31] The passage concerning Atalanta and its place next to the ekphrasis is certainly less prominent than the link between Orpheus's song and the cloak. My reading may thus seem to stretch the evidence some. Even so, I would at the very least maintain that the passage reflects the closeness of the two sorts of allusions in Apollonius' own mind.

[32] This aspect of Jason's character has been discussed usefully by Beye (1969; 1982, 88-99) and Pavlock among others.

she herself gives it. Where Achilleus was given an instrument of war, this shield is an aid to beauty. Apollonius reappropriates the epic shield for the goddess of love in the same manner as he turns the epic hero into a romantic figure.

The story of Atalanta that immediately follows his arming exhibits a blend of romance and martial prowess that is characteristic of Jason's heroism. The most famous tradition concerning Atalanta tells that she would race potential suitors in armor, the prize being marriage for a victor or death for a loser (see Gantz, 335 ff.). The spear that Jason wields at the end of his arming scene (778) is a guest gift Atalanta once gave him while he was recruiting heroes for the *Argo*. Atalanta wished to join the expedition, but Jason had his concerns: οοον αὐτὸς ἑκών, ἀπερήτυε κούρην / δεῖσε γὰρ ἀργαλέας ἔριδας φιλότητος ἕκητι (("but of his own accord he refused to accept her, as he feared the terrible conflicts which love causes," 772-73). Jason is worried about what love may bring, and so rejects Atalanta. But although she is not present, her spear is: in taking it up, he assumes a weapon charged with romantic significance. His rejection of love actually introduces romance as a possible motivation for the hero. Atalanta, it turns out, fits a pattern of Jason's involvement with women. Later in the epic,[33] the same word used to note Atalanta's gift of the spear (ἐγγυάλιξεν, 1.770, 111.1205) is used to describe Hypsipyle's gift of a cloak to Jason, ἀδινῆς μνημήιον εὐνῆς ("to remind him of their sweet love-making," I.1206).[34]

Jason's strange arming scene presumes that the hero is preparing himself for some unusual feat. The ekphrasis on Achilleus' shield is part of a poetic crescendo

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[33] As in the case of Atalanta's misplaced catalogue entry, again the narrator introduces a story that would have fit into the sequence of the narrative quite smoothly at a point where it must be narrated in the past rather than the present.

[34] In addition, the people at Pagasai use it praying that Aietes should hand over (ἐγγυαλίξῃ, I.245) the fleece to the Argonauts.

leading up to the hero's entrance into battle for the first time in the *Iliad*. Jason, on the other hand, goes not to do battle but to make love. Rather than a warhke shield made by Hephaistos, he bears a cloak woven by Athene (721). In the Iliad, such δίπλακα πορφυρέην ("a double cloak of purple," 722) are only found with women, such as Hektor's dutiful wife Andromache (*Il.* XXII.441) and Helen (*Il.* III.126), an erotic figure in her own right. Jason's garment seems more appropriate to a mission concerned with the matters of Aphrodite. The narrator hints that this is not a failed *aristeia*, but rather that Jason fulfills his role as a hero through romance. At Jason's approach to the city, he is compared to a rising star (φαεινῷ ἀστέρι ἶσος, / ον... ἀντέλλοντα, "like a bright star... rising," 774-76). Achilleus too is compared to an ascending star (παμφαίνονθ' ὥς τ' ἀστέρ' ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο, "as he swept across the flat land in full shining, like that star..." *Il.* XXII.26), but it is during his rush towards Hektor to engage him in their final encounter (Beye 1969 43).[35] The nod to the Iliad's usage of the image imbues Jason's journey with a similar significance. Jason, who is specifically referred to as a ἥρως ("hero," 781), must make his way through a throng of common women (781-84). The romantic qualities that win the adoring attention of the women are comparable to the battle skills that instill fear into the hearts of a warrior's enemy. However, as befits a great hero, his 'battle' will be with their leader, Hypsipyle. The queen's account of why there are no men on Lemnos features the clearest allusion to the Iliad yet: οὐλομένη δὲ θεᾶς πορσύνετο μῆνις / Κύπριδος, ἥ τέ σφιν θυμοφθόρον ἔμβαλεν ἄτην ("But the wrath of Kypris, a baneful goddess, was at work, for she cast mind-destroying folly on

[35] Beye also notes elsewhere (1969 43) the allusion to the simile comparing Diomedes to the dog star Sirius in *Il.* V.5-6 when Jason first meets Medeia (III.956-61). See chapter 3, p.64-65.

them," 802-803)[36] must immediately recall the μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά, Πηληιάδεω Ἀχιλῆος, / οὐλομένην ("Sing, goddess, the wrath of Peleus' son Achilleus, baneful..."[37] of the opening lines of the *Iliad.* Hypsipyle's tale should not be taken at face value, since she is unquestionably lying (794-96, cf. 609-10). Nonetheless, she is repeating the same sentiment expressed by Apollonius himself some lines earlier concerning Aphrodite's χόλος (614-15). Her anger, as is appropriate, is not manifested in wars but in hostile relationships between the sexes. The conflicts of love have been raised to the same epic levels of those of war.[38]

The comparison of Jason to a star also introduces an extended simile that emphasizes the disordered state of affairs for the women of the island. Jason is likened to a star that is watched by young maidens chastely hidden from the world. The young women wonder at the star's καλὸν ἐρευθόμενος ("red brilliance," 778), much as the considerably less chaste women of Lemnos will also rejoice at the sight of Jason (784), who wears an ἔρευθος ("red") cloak which is brighter than the sun (725-26). A particular maiden is singled out: γάνυται δέ ἠιθέοιο / παρθένος ἱμείρουσα μετ' ἀλλοδαποῖσιν ἐόντος ἀνδράσιν ("the virgin rejoices in her desire for the young man who is among a foreign people," 778-80).[39] The proper behavior of this young woman brings out the unusual nature of the situation at Lemnos. At the start of the epic, Pelias is said to send off Jason ὄφρ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ / ἠέ καὶ ἀλλοδαποῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσι νόστον ὀλέσσῃ ("so that either on the sea or among a foreign people he might lost all chance of safe return," 16-17). Jason thus fits the role of the groom, while Hypsipyle's interest in

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[36] I have adapted this passage to bring out the parallels in the translation.
[37] I have adapted this passage to bring out the parallels in the translation (see note 36 above).
[38] For a similar discussion on the use of similes to set love in contrast to war, see Effe 166-68.
[39] I have adapted this passage's translation.

Jason makes her like the young bride. However, as the leader of the murdering, man-like women, her behavior is in stark contrast to that of her counterpart. Likewise, while the maiden waits for a man to come home from foreign lands (a theme soon to be picked up by Herakles), Jason is described as a ξείνος in Lemnos ("a stranger," 784), where all the local men have been killed. Thus from all angles, the simile seems to hghlight the disorder of the island's society by the contrast between the exemplary behavior of the maidens and their Lemnian counterparts.

Substituting love for battle as the ground on which the epic hero proves himself could easily lend itself to parody, but Apollonius is not satisfied with degrading his Homeric model. Aphrodite's wrath thrusts the Lemnian women into male social roles far different from their usual ones due to the murder of all the island's men. The goddess seems to be disrupting the norms of society in just the way Apollonius disrupts the norms of the epic. However, much as Zeus famously accomplishes his plan through the wrath of Achilleus (Διὸς δ' ἐτελείτο βουλή, "and the will of Zeus was accomplished," *Il.* I.5), so as the narrative progresses Aphrodite is also revealed to have a special purpose in mind for the events on Lemnos:

> ... Κύπρις γὰρ ἐπὶ γλυκὺν ἵμερον ὦρσεν
> Ἡφαίστοιο χάριν πολυμήτιος, ὄφρα lcev αὖτις
> ναίηται μετόπισθεν ἀκήρατος ἀνδράσι Λῆμνος. (850-52)
>
> ...as Kypris roused sweet desire in them;
> she did this for the sake of Hephaistos, the god of many wiles, so that once again his island of Lemnos might be duly populated by men.

Aphrodite now seeks to restore the island to its previous order. Moreover, she does it as a favor to her own husband (851), emulating the very sort of dutiful wife whose role she previously encouraged the Lemnian women to cast off. Now the women of the island follow the goddess in submitting themselves to their new 'husbands'. This

plan is particularly atypical for a goddess who frequently and famously cheated on her spouse (e.g. Od. VIII.266 ff.). The shift from battles to love was not a change from order to chaos, but an alternate way of restoring the community that had been destroyed. Neither Jason nor the Argonauts take up shields and swords to battle the women who killed their husbands and assumed male roles. On the contrary, ignorant of that crime, they are manipulated by the women. Nevertheless, they suppress the women's uprising by their trysts. Thus when the women rush out (προχέοντο, 883) to meet the departing men with tears and prayers, they take on much more traditionally female roles (878-85) as opposed to the warlike pose they took when they first rushed out (προχέοντο, 635) to meet the Argo (633-37).[40] The return to order is confirmed by the restitution of Aphrodite's rites (857-60), whose neglect had originally brought Kypris' wrath (614-15).

Herakles' reluctance to join his companions in the festivities (855 ff.) is uncharacteristic of a hero notorious for a strong sexual appetite.[41] However, his unusual restraint seems prescient in a situation that shares the same tell-tale signs of danger encountered by epic heroes in Homer. As noted earlier, the Lemnian women share important characteristics with several perilous females met by Odysseus and his crew. Herakles is the only Argonaut named who resists the naive impulse to accept such unexpected hospitality so freely given. Just as Odysseus repeatedly proves a more astute reader of events than his crew, on the face of things Herakles appears to have better sense than the rest of the heroes.

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[40] There are other layers to this discussion which I cannot enter into now, but I must stress that it would be incorrect to read this as a simple return to womanly roles. At various moments Apollonius seems to imply the ultimate control of the situation by women and the female goddess Aphrodite. See p. 18 for a brief discussion with regard to Hypsipyle.

[41] Some critics have interpreted this as an example of Herakles as the stoic saint, ruling over his passions (Feeney 1986; Hunter 1993, 35). While this seems plausible here, Clauss raises good questions as to the viability of this claim in light of Herakles' uncontrolled behavior at the end of book I (Clauss 139-140).

However, Herakles' censure of the group reveals a very different set of concerns. He does not suspect the women any more than the rest of the crew does. For him, the danger of Lemnos is not physical, but moral. Herakles gathers the heroes because the delay of the mission from day to day (861-62) frustrates him (Hunter 1993, 34). The first questions he asks the Argonauts set a patriotic tone, as he wonders aloud whether their actions indicated that they were at Lemnos to avenge crimes against their own people or preferred the island to their own women and fields.[42] The comparison of the seductive pleasures in one place to one's home is a recurring theme of the *Odyssey*, especially in the episodes with Kirke and Kalypso, suggesting that Herakles' concerns are well-founded in such a situation as that faced by the Argonauts. He continues in a similarly traditional vein, demonstrating a greater interest in κλέος ("fame, glory") than in romance: ou μάλ' ἐυκλειεῖς γε σὺν ὀθνείῃσι γυναιξίν / ἐσσόμεθ' ὧδε' ἐπὶ δηρὸν ἐελμένοι ("We will not win glory shut up here interminably with foreign women," 869-70). The problem Herakles sees is precisely that there is no danger. The Argonauts are not delayed along the way to Kolchis but choosing to delay themselves at no gain to their honor. This is no light matter for one for whom the trip interrupts the greater task of accomplishing his twelve labors (I.123-27, Hunter 1993, 34).

Herakles' decision to remove himself from the women sets him in opposition to Jason's leadership of the excursion and again encourages comparison between the two. The former's concern for honor leads him to disparage Jason in particular, suggesting that they leave him to repopulate the island with his children until μεγάλη τέ ἑ βάξις ἔχῃσιν ("he has won great renown by filling Lemnos with his sons," 874). It is ironic

[42] Beye has pointed out that there may well be a sexual double-entendre intended here (Beye 1969 44), which would characteristically split the hero's words between a high-minded epic concern and a crude joke.

that the promiscuous and virile Herakles should chastise another hero for his dalliances with women (Hunter 1993, 34). Furthermore, Herakles' judgment runs counter to that of the narrative, deriding the very act of love that is treated as the proof of Jason's heroism (Clauss 138). Accordingly, where the allusions to Homeric models support Jason's romantic advances, those in Heraldes' account undermine his scolding. His recollection of the need to avenge the shedding of kindred blood specifically brings to mind both the dead kinsmen of the Lemnian women and the failure of the Argonauts to deal appropriately with their murder. Heraldes' decision to remain on the shore recalls Odysseus' crewman Eurylochos (*Od.* X.443 ff.), who fearfully wished to remain behind upon returning to Kirke's island (Clauss 136-38). Moreover, his taunting criticism of Jason is very much in the style of Thersites (*Il.* 11.229 ff.), who also encouraged the men to sail home and allow Agamemnon to enjoy what he had taken for himself in Troy (Hunter 1993, 35; Clauss 139). Although his motives seem to be those of a Homeric hero, Heraldes' words and actions link him with figures who are decidedly unheroic.

Although Herakles targets Jason for criticism in his rebuke, he does not confront the captain directly. The mocking suggestion that the rest of the Argonauts leave Jason δ' ἐνὶ λέκτροις / Ὑψιπύλης εἶᾶτε πανήμερον ("to wallow all day in Hypsipyle's bed," 872-73) implies that their leader is not present among his crewmates when they are upbraided. As a result, although Herakles forces the Argonauts to move on, Jason is allowed to justify his departure to Hypsipyle on his own terms.

Many an epic hero seeking to leave a woman's company might have wished for so calm and accommodating a response as that of Hypsipyle. Certainly Medeia and Dido are only the most prominent examples of women who did not merely assent, Νίσσεο ("Go," 888). Hypsipyle does not try to keep Jason from leaving, but wishes for him what

he himself desires: to get the fleece and return it to Pelias (888-890). As before, she offers him the kingdom, but adds, ἀλλ' ou ouye τήνδε μενοινήν / σχήσεις, οὔτ' αὐτὴ προτιόσσομαι ὧδε τελεῖσθαι ("but you will not want to do this, nor do I imagine that these things will be fulfilled," 894-95). Her words have no sting to them, nor does her rhetoric appeal to a sense of responsibihty that might bring him back. Even with regard to the possibility of a son, she merely asks hum submissively for instruction rather than suggesting that he return to see him.

Hypsipyle's strangely muted behavior may be attributed in part to the order Aphrodite has sought to reestablish on Lemnos. However, her thoroughly docile attitude is suspicious in a woman who was so ready and able to deceive the men earlier in the tale. There are a number of instances that point towards the continued dominance of the women on the island. They are never punished for the crime they have committed. Although they seem to return to womanly roles and act quite submissively while the Argonauts take their leave, they are described by a simile that recalls a contemporary understanding that bees collected their young out of flowers (879-82; Clauss 141-42). The corresponding reproductive passivity of the flowers and the men reaffirms the earlier dominance of the women. Ultimately, another female figure, Aphrodite, controls even the reordering of the island. While Apollonius provides no direct clues in Hypsipyle's words, the possibility remains that the queen who lied to Jason before is now manipulating him. Her offer of the same kingdom that he had rejected so vehemently at their first meeting (839-41, 891-92) may easily be an attempt to drive him away once and for all.[43]

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[43] There is a theme of role reversal running through the adventure on Lemnos that I have not emphasized. Hunter for instance discusses the relationship of Hypsipyle and Jason to Paris and Helen in book three of the *Iliad* (Hunter 1993, 49-50).

Jason's decision to leave appears heroic due to the structural correspondence between Jason's farewell to Hypsipyle and its Homeric models in the *Odyssey*. However, his reluctance to leave Lemnos belies the similarity of their positions. Jason abandons his foreign lover on her island as Odysseus left Kalypso and Kirke, and Hypsipyle's request that Jason remember her (*Arg.* 1.896-97) alludes to Nausikaa, who asks that Odysseus remember her much as Hypsipyle (Od. VIII.461-62). However, the heroes' motivations for leaving are quite different. Odysseus must beg both Kirke and Kaplypso to let him go (the second only acquiescing under divine coercion) and turns down Alkinoos' offer of his daughter's hand in marriage. In all three instances, Odysseus sets his mind on the journey home and cannot be persuaded to stay. In contrast, Jason only leaves Lemnos because of his crewmates' actions.

Jason does not spend any time on regret in his speech to Hypsipylc. Rather, he seeks to excuse his exit with a combination of traditionally Homeric motivations: longing for home and dire necessity. As in his first speech (836-41), he accepts her good wishes and turns down the responsibility offered him. As in the case of Odysseus and even Herakles, his homeland plays a key role in his decision to continue his journey: ἐπεὶ πάτρην μοι ἅλις Πελίαο ἔκητι / ναιετάειν, ("since it is enough for me to be allowed by Pelias to live in my homeland," 902-3). Thus Jason presents his decision to leave Lemnos as the result of the same concerns that motivated the departure of other epic heroes from pleasing islands. He follows his second rejection of Hypsipyle's kingdom immediately with another mention of the λυγροὶ ἄεθλοι ("grievous trials," 841)[44] that he had claimed forced him to hurry onwards before. In both cases, his point is that the matter is out of his hands. μοῦνόν με θεοὶ λύσειαν ἀέθλων ("my only prayer is that

44 I have adapted this passage's translation.

the gods deliver me from my trials," 903): his wish implies that gods alone could deliver him from the mission he must accomplish.

Apollonius, however, implies that had Herakles not intervened, δηρὸν δ' a v ἐλίνυον αὖθι μένοντες ("They would have wasted a great deal of time remaining there," 862). Jason and the other Argonauts might well have forgone the ἄεθλοι before them. Even though Hypsipyle has not laid any burden upon him, Jason goes out of his way to portray his departure nobly. But since Hypsipyle has not provided any resistance against which he might make his plea of necessity, his excuse merely confirms his own decision to do what he wishes. Even if he were released from these ἄεθλοι, he would not change any of his plans for Hypsipyle. Although Jason dresses himself as a hero after the mode of Odysseus, compelled to flit from island to island as he seeks home, Hypsipyle's lack of resistance and his empty apology reveal his selfish motivations.

Aeneas' departure from Carthage and Dido in the fourth book of the *Aeneid* provides a helpful counterpoint to Jason's parting with Hypsipyle. The similarity of the two stories suggests that the Argonauts' stay at Lemnos was one of the inspirations for Virgil's account of Dido and Aeneas' love affair (Nelis 180-81). Both women are rulers of foreign lands at which the traveling heroes pause during their mission, both invite the heroes to stay and rule at the advice of a female counselor (Polyxo and Anna, respectively), and both are abandoned after male figures of authority have urged the heroes to move on (Nelis 180-81). In the *Aeneid,* the role of the chastising Herakles is filled by three figures: the Libyan warlord Iarbas, Juppiter and his messenger god Mercury. In his complaint about Aeneas, Iarbas disdains the Trojan as another Paris: *ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu* ("Now even a Paris attended by eunuchs..." *Aen.* IV.215). In the Homeric tradition, Paris is among the weakest of the heroes, easily distracted from battle

by love (see *Il.* III.428-47). Such a comparison does not speak well of one who will later be matched against (or perhaps even become) a new Achtlles (VI.89-90). Moreover, Juppiter himself notes Aeneas' changed character: *non illum nobis genetrix pulcherrima talem / promisit Graiumque ideo bis vindicat armis* ("you're not the man promised to God by your lovely / Mother who saved you twice from Greeks and their weapons," 227-28). Not only does he charge that Aeneas has forgotten better glories (*oblitos famae melioris amantis*, "lovers now had forgotten their better name," 221) but he implies that his hopes and plans are oriented in the wrong manner:

> quid struit? aut qua spe inimica in gente moratur
> nec prolem Ausoniam et Lavinia respecti arva?
> naviget! haec summa est, hic nostri nuntius esto. (IV.235-37).
>
> What do you plan and hope for dawdling with hostile
> people, ignoring Lavinian land and Ausonian children?
> Sail: that's the point. Give him that message.

The greater honor promised him no longer moves Aeneas; Juppiter even tells Mercury to coax him by reminding him of his duty to his son, trying to achieve through shame what glory could not do (232-34). These same complaints with regard to his hope in a foreign land and his neglect of his son's future kingdom are the concerns most clearly emphasized by Mercury (271-76). They are also preceded by a reminder that the message comes directly from the gods: *ipse deum tibi me claro demittit Olympo / regnator* ("The Gods' ruler himself dispatched me from brilliant Olympus," 268-69). Aeneas is bound by a necessity far clearer than that which Jason claimed. This time it is a god, not his lover, who says νίσσεο: *naviget.*[45]

[45] It is interesting that the two exhortations share an emphatic position at the start of the line, Hypsipyle's at the beginning of her speech and Juppiter's at the end of his, (Juppiter's summary almost serves to capture the effect of Hypsipyle's words on Jason as well.)

When Mercury finds Aeneas, not only his position at Carthage but even his clothing recalls Jason at Lemnos: *Tyrioque ardebat murice laena / demissa ex umeris* ("the cape that hung from one shoulder a burning / Tyrian purple," *Aen.* IV.262) evokes ἀμφ' ὤμοισι... δίπλακα πορφυρέην περονήσατο ("around his shoulders [he] pinned a double cloak of purple," *Arg.* I.721-22) with its red coloring (ἔρευθος) shining brighter than the sun (725-26) (Nelis 158). Aeneas' response to the rebuke is, as it was for each of the Argonauts (1.875-78, ff.) to prepare for departure without alerting his lover (IV.278-295). Thus when Dido confronts him, she is structurally in a position quite similar to that of Hypsipyle, although with regard to the plot she is in an entirely different situation. Although she regrets his leaving, Hypsipyle has already gotten everything she intended from Jason: the community's problems of coming old age and protecting themselves have been solved. Dido, however, is under threat from her brother as well as Iarbas. Due to her affair with Aeneas, she loses the confidence of her people and the good name she had established (IV.320-23).As a result she has nothing left to sustain her when Aeneas leaves—not even the hope of a son (327-330).[46]

Dido raises the question about what sort of responsibilities are incurred by commitments that cannot be formally recognized. Hypsipyle twice offers the throne of Lemnos, going as far as to make an open-ended offer of the kingdom should Jason return at some time in the future (1.891-92). But Jason, although he shares her bed as a husband and king might, is satisfied to counter with the other tasks he must complete (the ἄεθλοι of I.840-41 and 903) and his own desire to dwell in his πάτρην (902-903). Dido, unlike Hypsipyle, does not accept her lover's dismissal of his obligations to her.

[46] Virgil makes reference to Dido as a Thyiad here (IV.301-303), much as the women of Lemnos were described upon seeing the Argo's arrival (*Arg.* I.636). The reversal is an interesting reflection of the opposite fortunes of the two queens at the time of the arrival and departure of the heroes.

Although she struggles to find a formal commitment on which to hang her argument (*cui me moribundam deseris hospes / (hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat?)*, "my guest, what death do you leave me? / Is 'guest' all that I have?" IV.323-24) she demands that he recognize that a significant and mutual obligation has been formed between them:

> per ego has lacrimas dextramque tuam te...
> per conubia nostra, per incepts hymenaeos,
> si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam
> dulce meum, miserere domus labentis et istam,
> oro, si quis aduc precibus locus, exue mentem. (Aen. IV.314-19)
>
> ...My tears and the hand that you gave me
> implore you...
> our marriage rite, the wedding we started together,
> if I've deserved well of you, think of the pleasure
> I gave you, if any, pity a house that is shaken:
> change your mind. If prayer has a place then I pray you.

Now Dido holds the same opinion that Juppiter did earlier: Aeneas is no hero, but is driven by his own desires rather than duty and honor (*dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum / posse nefas...?*, "You actually hoped to hide the extent of this malice?" 305).[47] Dido's rebuke is fit for an Aeneas who acts like Jason.

The Trojan hero's response, however, proves him to be a different sort of hero than either Hypsipyle or Dido would expect. As in the first book, when Aeneas' persuasive and valiant speech to his weary men contrasts with the emotion he hides in his heart (I.198-209), so too here Aeneas makes a remarkable distinction between heart and duty, while again *obnixus curam sub corde premebat* ("He deeply repressed his emotion," IV.332).

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[47] Virgil follows Dido's speech with the word *dixerat* ("she spoke," IV.331), as he concluded Juppiter's own criticism of Aeneas not a hundred lines earlier (238). Although the word itself is not an uncommon manner of expressing speech, the similar rhythm of the line *(dixerat. ille patris...* and *dixerat. ille Iovis...*) and the reference to Juppiter's warning *(Iouis...monitis*, 331) immediately following the latter passage suggest that the reader may read this as a cue to the words' significance.

Like Jason, Aeneas calls on the necessity of his mission to excuse himself for abandoning his lover. However, unlike his Apollonian counterpart, he distinguishes his desires from his duty very clearly:

> me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
> auspiciis et sponte mea componere curas,
> urbem Troianam primum dulcisque meorum
> reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,
> et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis. (340-344)

> If God's word had allowed me to live out my life there,
> freely arranging my own concerns and my omens,
> I'd live in the city of Troy first and care for a precious
> remnant of people. Priam's high roof would be standing,
> I'd try to restore Troy myself for the losers.

What Aeneas wants above all is to be a loser in Troy, rebuilding the city and leading the *victis*. But he has not been permitted to do so; his ties to his fatherland have been severed. Neither will he be allowed to pursue the love he desires, but must put his hope in Italy: *hic amor, haec patria est* ("there's my love and homeland," 347). He does not leave because he longs for home, as Odysseus does, but by the gods' command. Likewise he cannot stay simply because he loves Dido. *Italiam non sponte sequor* ("I don't pursue Italy freely," 361).[48]

Aeneas' words offer no solutions to Dido's problems. His appeal to a higher duty has the same effect as Jason's empty words: he will disregard his commitment (338-39) and leave her suffering. The promise that he will remember her (335-36) cannot satisfy Dido as it does Hypsipyle (*Arg.* 1.896-97). Aeneas would prove his love to his queen by remaining at Carthage, defending and honoring her as she had him in his time

[48] Aeneas' care for his son's future (admittedly at Mercury's prompting) distinguishes him again from Jason, whose callous request that Hypsipyle send their son to his father's house to comfort his parents (*Arg.* 904-909) reveals little paternal love.

of need.[49] Much as the leader of the Argonauts, Aeneas concentrates upon excusing himself, providing reasons for his departure rather than comfort for the queen. But if his lack of pity (*num fletu ingemuit nostro? non lumina flexit?* "Did you sight at my tears, lower your vision...?"369) is reminiscent of Jason, his motives are higher.[50] Mercury's descent owes much to the *Odyssey*, where Zeus sends Hermes to Kalypso to order the release of Odysseus (Williams 351). In the Homeric model, all the characters are moved by necessity. Odysseus can say sweet things about Kalypso (V.211-227) precisely because he is no longer in danger of being kept upon her island. But Mercury must appeal to the hero who keeps himself captive rather than a jealous goddess (Williams 351), and as such he must demonstrate an inner strength foreign to his Homeric model.

Both heroes part from the precedent of Odysseus. Ultimately, they are not forced from their lovers by the gods but by their own decision. For Aeneas this means failure in the eyes of those who would judge him by Homeric standards. For Dido, the duty to the future that impels her lover is too immaterial to compare to the protection and companionship she requires. But the choice was between one Homeric failure and another: either he would be like the AlexandrianJason, or he would be the Roman Aeneas. The virtue of such a hero is to bear the option of duty as a necessity.

As Virgil suggests, Jason too fails to match the standard of Odysseus or to fit Herakles' concerns. Although he appeals to the dire necessity that Homeric heroes must

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[49] The dramatically different circumstances of each queen upon the heroes' departures may also reflect a difference between the two authors regarding the consequences of a woman's rule. Apollonius is decidedly more light-hearted than Virgil, who portrays another queen—Cleopatra—as the leader of the forces opposing Rome on Aeneas' shield (683-88,697-713).

[50] Alternatively, one could say that the allusion to Jason renders the sincerity of his expressed motives doubtful. I lean towards trusting Aeneas' intentions here; he is in fact commanded to leave, and the strength of his resolve parallels the dogged determination of Odysseus to return home. However, just as Odysseus' determination does not stop him from making mistakes (or keeping company with goddesses while away from his wife), so Aeneas' resolve is not blandly positive. He does hide his departure from Dido, and he does break an implicit marriage vow. Tlzere is an inescapable tragedy here, and Virgil certainly does not shy away from making Aeneas carry the burden of his abandonment of Dido.

endure in his parting words to Hypsipyle, he is neither oppressed by the gods (Od. I.19-21, etc.) nor forced to fill a role worthy of a king (*Il.* XII.326-28). Jason has called together the heroes of his own accord (*Arg.* I.347), and faces an ἄεθλος imposed on him by a mere human, Pelias, who is not even powerful enough to control his own son (1.15-17,321-23). Even when forced to move on from Lemnos, he is not among those shamed by Herakles, but is given an opportunity to defend the decision for himself. Ultimately, he leaves Lemnos because he wants to. His vain attempts to explain himself to Hypsipyle, selfish as they are, only draw attention to a curious lack of any sense of obligation.[51] Jason's break from Hypsipyle lacks the divine intervention that sends Odysseus home and justifies Aeneas, but it offers in its place the freedom for a hero to choose his battles.

Jason's departure from the Homeric model introduces a new standard of success. His unwitting restoration of order to Lemnos and provision for Hypsipyle and the Lemnian women validates his untraditional behavior. His greatest success, however is overcoming a danger that does not exist in the Homeric tradition. Jason does escape loss of life or honor in leaving Lemnos, but the temptation of choosing an insignificant end. Were Jason to accept Hypsipyle's offer of her kingdom, he would trade his place in a great epic for a role in the queen's story. Instead he decides to continue the path that will make his own story one worthwhile to recount: the ἄεθλοι that will lead him to his own kingdom and make him famous."

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[51] This autonomy from social obligation is also what Dido recognizes in Aeneas, although she does not acknowledge the other duties that bind him—those same duties a hero such as Jason lacks.

[52] Jason's freedom to decide is a distinctly unHomeric trait, but there are exceptional cases in Homer as well. Most notably, Achilleus is also allowed some measure of freedom to choose between two destinies (*Il.* IX.410-416). However, opting out of battle can only be considered because of an unusually dysfunctional relationship between warrior and army (Griffin 99-100), and Achilleus returns to battle due to Patroklos' death rather than of his own accord. Moreover, this condition is unique to the greatest

Chapter 3: Apollonius' Aristeia

Apollonius' *Argonautika* redefines the notion of heroism. In the process, the poet also reinterprets the role of the epic author in the Homeric tradition. In the course of the epic, Jason remains largely unharried by the necessity that drives the heroes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The disparity between the heroes reflects a more radical departure Apollonius takes as an epic poet. In Homer's poetry, the close relationship between the imagery, structure and narrative enfolds heroes into their role within the poem. Apollonius' hero is no less immersed in his author's project; Jason's *aristeia* provides an excellent example of how the success of the poet may be wrapped up in the success of his hero to play a convincing epic part.

Understanding how Apollonius manipulates epic tradition to his own ends requires a careful examination of Homer. Due to Homer's centrality to the greater part of ancient epic traditions, characteristic passages and conceits of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* became emblems of the epic genre itself. Meter, vocabulary, formulaic scenes and subject matter were all chosen with reference to Homer. As a result, an ancient author who wrote epic in some form or another was bound to imitate Homer's distinctive style. The strictures of the required allusions greatly influenced the poem's style and structure; as such, part of the art of a poet who would follow Homer was to maintain a Homeric style without compromising one's own poem.

Some of Homer's most distinctive passages and structural elements provide particularly important models for succeeding poets. Catalogues, arming scenes, similes, and other typically Homeric devices were adapted and reused. Alternatively, some poets

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fighter of the *Iliad*; the choice is significant because it is in such stark contrast to the necessity that drives all others around him, not least of all Hektor (XXII.98-130).(Griffin 92 ff.; Weil 41, etc.)

continued to tell the parts of the story of Troy that Homer neglected. Yet one does not continue the Homeric tradition merely by sprinkling one's poem with references to Achilleus or imitations of catalogues. The effectiveness of Homer's verse is not due to plot, imagery or structure alone, but to the happy marriage of the Qfferent elements of the poem. The narrator tends to apply similes at appropriate places where they add depth to the narrative, such as when the use of peaceful natural imagery contrasts with violent human death (*Il.* VIII.306-307, etc.). The structural elements may obliquely introduce the fate of characters which, although not narrated within the poem, are essential elements of the story.[53] The good imitator of Homer must retain not only the immediate effect of Homer's distinctive passages, but marry them to their own storyline.

The forging of the shield of Achilleus (XVIII.478-617) comes immediately prior to the climactic reentrance of Achilleus into the war. Exactly at this decisive moment in a poem concerning war, the poet chooses to put a strong emphasis on the skillful manufacture of a weapon. It has become clichéd to say that the shield somehow represents the world (Whitman 205, Taplin 11-12, Schein 140, Brann 80), but Hephaistos' work clearly demands recognition as a poetic accomplishment broad and deep enough for the task. Beginning with ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανον, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν ("He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water," 483) and the heavens (484-89) and then working his way through cities at peace and war, marriages, battles, agricultural and pastoral life and finally a celebratory dance, the poet forms a constant flow from a number of Qfferent scenes that mesh together into a single

[53] Consider the paralleled deaths of Patroklos and Hektor, each of whom has a parting prophecy of the doom of their conqueror (XVI.851-54, XXII.358-360), and each of whose souls flees protesting their death in the same manner (XVI. 855-57=XXII.361-63). Achilleus' impending death is thus anticipated, but does not occur within the *Iliad.* There are many similar situations: the Nereids' lament for Patroklos that prefigures the mourning for Achilleus (XVIII.34 ff.), the death of Hektor and the fall of Troy (VI.403, LXII.410-11), etc.

beautiful object. Parts of the shield reflect moments recognizable in the *Iliad* itself: the stubbornness of the man who refuses a blood price in compensation for another's death recalls Achilleus' own unwillingness to accept Hektor's death as sufficient payment for Patroklos' death (497-500);[54] likewise, Hektor's suggestion that the goods of Troy might be offered for peace is also under dispute in the city besieged by two armies (510-512, XXII.lll-21; Edwards 282). However, unlike the epic, the shield is not measured by the rubric of war. The images upon it are not the appropriate faces of panic, death and destruction, as on many other similar items in the epic (Edwards 278, Taplin 1-2), but rather a balance of the beautiful and the terrible (Schein 141). The shield is a miraculous object, and meant to illicit wonder from those who see it. The poet cannot show the object to his audience; but he can manufacture a sense of wonder akin to that its viewer would have. For this reason, the shield represents a particularly intimate moment for the reader, for it is a place where his reaction to the poem should be the same as that of one who is actually within it. το δὴ περὶ θαῦμα τέτυκτο (('Such was the wonder of the shield's forging," 549).

This unusual proximity of the reader to the characters makes the ekphrasis of the shield an excellent opportunity to explore the place of the poet in relation to his work. The parallel between Hephaistos' forging of the shield and the simultaneous 'forging' of the verse by the poet has not been missed (Brann 83, Edwards 285). The shield is decorated not only with Hephaistos' sophisticated art, but also by works by artists within the world he makes. Daidalos provides a dancing space for Ariadne (592), and the dancers are wearing well-fitting clothes and beautiful crowns and knives (595-98). The

[54] Interpretation of these lines is disputed (see Edwards 281 for a brief discussion), but it seems to me that the echo of Achilleus' own concerns cannot be accidental, especially in light of the other scenes on the shield that parallel parts of the epic proper.

poet even goes so far as to use the simile of an artisan testing his pottery wheel to describe the dancing of the images manufactured by the blacksmith in the poem he has composed. The meticulously arranged layers of different kinds of artistry grab the audience's imagination as firmly as the description of the layers of the slueld, subtly pointing to the ultimate creator of the scene.

A divinely manufactured gift featuring δαίδαλα πολλὰ ("many cunning things," *Arg.* I.729, *Il.* XVIII.482) must recall Hephaistos' shield and by extension Achilleus who receives it. This passage begins the crescendo that leads to the warrior's *aristeia*, his first involvement in battle during the poem. His reentrance into the war resolves a plot element beginning when he retired from the field at the poem's start and leads directly to his climactic confrontation with Hektor as well. To this end, the analogy between Hephaistos' creation of a weapon and the poet's creation of a war seems to produce an appropriate parallel between the carefully crafted arms Achilleus needs in order to avenge Patroklos and the carefully arranged plot elements that lead to the poem's conclusion. The shield seems even more significant in light of the cosmological unity it captures. It draws together the land and sky and sea, war and peace, marriage and death, harvest and ploughing season onto a single round surface. Achilleus thus carries a weapon covered with a representation of the world, as if his actions portrayed or even determined the fate of the world (Brann 86).

If Achilleus bears the whole Homeric world into a crucial battle, Jason brings a model of Hellenistic poetry with him to Hypsipyle's palace. Despite the similarities between the treatment of their divine gifts, Apollonius places Jason in an entirely different position within the plot. He is not a proven fighter on the cusp of a decisive return to battle, but an inexperienced hero embarkmg on his first adventure. Rather than

the warlike shield, he is dressed in an equally rich but purely decorative cape. Moreover, there is no equivalent sense of a 'world' that arises from the episodes on the cloak. Unlike the cities and peoples of the shield of Achilleus, the gods and men portrayed upon the cloak are most often specific characters in specific situations. In Homer's ekphrasis, the description itself seems more lifelike because the figures remain indistinct and general. One might recognize a god (*Il.* XVIII.516 ff.), or else which men are old (503) or herdsmen (523), but no more than would be possible on an actual shield. Apollonius, on the other hand, relies on literary allusions that could not be imitated on a real cloak. In order to know the significance of Thebes' foundation (*Arg.* I.735-41) or Pelops' escape (752-58), his readers must be familiar with the particular circumstances of each mythological tradition and how it relates to Jason's story. The very use of Achilleus' shield as a model continues a pattern of allusions that demands a thorough knowledge of Homer's poems. The first[55] of the seven panels, while mimicking Homer's attention to artistry, also portrays Kyklopes beating out a thunderbolt for Zeus (730-34). These divine blacksmiths are, just like Hephaistos, in the midst of creating a weapon (Clauss 123). However, Apollonius has shifted them to a place within the ekphrasis, where they are not the agents but the objects of the divine craftsmanship. Furthermore, as discussed earlier,[56] the description of the Kyklopes picks up where the song Orpheus sings before the Argonauts' departure leaves off (1.496-511, Hunter 1993, 53-54). Apollonius thus encourages his audience to link two accounts of different kinds of artistry, who share

[55] Much ink has already been spilled for little satisfaction in attempts to unite the various images of the cloak under one rubric (or demonstrate the impossibility of the task). I do not attempt here to make a thorough interpretation of this notoriously difficult problem. The individual images are for the most part more accessible and I have limited myself to those most relevant and concerning whose characteristics I am most confident.

[56] See chapter 2, p. 11.

little beyond their subject aside from a common status as digressions within his epic poem.

Whereas in the Iliad the shield is too wonderful to be real, in the *Argonautika* the cloak is too literary to be real. In the Iliad, Homer suggests that to loolr; upon the shield requires some degree of heroism—the Myrmidons cannot even turn their eyes to what delights Achilleus (XIX.13-19). Apollonius adopts a similar conceit, noting that τῆς μὲν ῥηίτερον κεν ἐς ἠέλιον ἀνιόντα / ὄσσε βάλοις ἢ κείνο μεταβλέψειας ἔρευθος ("You could cast your eyes more easily towards the rising sun than gaze upon the brilliant redness of the cloalr;," 725-26). Both authors emphasize the irony of unobservable visual art. However, while in the Iliad some characters cannot bear to turn their eyes upon what the poet describes to his audience,[57] in the *Argonautika* Apollonius explicitly declares the reader's inability to view the object with a verb in the second person (μεταβλέψειας). Homer's attempt to make his audience feel the same upon hearing the description of the shield as they would upon seeing it achieves a real response with a fictional object: the ekphrasis provokes the same response from his reader that the sight of the shield of Achilleus would were it real. In contrast, Apollonius constantly reminds the audience that the fictional object he describes can only be known by his special literary account.[58]

Apollonius ends the ekphrasis of the cloak with the image of Phrixos riding upon the golden ram (1.763-67). The figures represent a journey to Kolchis parallel to that of Jason and the Argonauts. Achilleus' shield contains elements of the *Iliad*'s plotline among its descriptions that make its scope seem broader than the poem itself. Apollonius

[57] It may also be noted that the audience has 'observed' the making of the shield but has not 'gazed' at the final product as it does through the eyes of Aeneas in Virgil (*Aen.* VIII.625 ff.).
[58] Compare Virgil's famous *enarrabile textum* (Aen. VIII.625), a weaving impossible to tell although it is recorded in poetry (!). Appropriately, Aeneas admires it despite his ignorance of its meaning (Putnam 6).

captures his own poem within the ekphrasis in a few lines, emphasizing the particular over the universal characteristic of Homer's description of the shield. Attempts to find a unity among the various images is discouraged by the poet's emphasis on the illusion of the passage. The image of the speaking ram seems so lifelike that if the audience saw it they would be deceived (ψεύδοιό) into listening to it (765-67); although they do not see it, they still run the risk of being deceived into believing a wise word (πυκινήν... βάξιν) contained within the text. In the legend, the ram did indeed speak to Phrixos, but the representation on Jason's cloak never will. So too, those who expect Apollonius' carefully composed ekphrasis to be crowned with allegorical significance have been fooled by appearances (Green 217).

While the shield's attention to craft privileges the author's voice, in the cloak the audience is turned towards their interaction with the artifice. Phrixos and the ram reveal an equal concern for observation and creation that reflects the poet's desire to privilege the art of poetry itself rather than its object. This emphasis serves as the organizing principle for Jason's greatest single accomplishment in the poem, his *aristeia.*

The climax of the third book of the *Argonautika* is Jason's completion of the impossible challenge[59] that Aietes sets before him in order to preserve his life and win the fleece (III.1225-1407.). Traditionally this passage is known as Jason's *aristeia*, a term usually applied to a sequence in the Iliad where a hero distinguishes himself with great feats in battle. Diomedes benefits from the aid of Athene in his *aristeia*, killing many men and even wounding gods (*Il.* IV.327 ff., 846 ff.). Athene's blessing of the fighter marks the beginning of this period of the battle:

There to Tydeus' son Diomedes Pallas Athene

[59] Aietes sets the terms for the challenge in 111.400 ff.

> granted strength and daring, that he might be conspicuous
> among all the Argives and win the glory of valour.
> She made weariless fire blaze from his shield and helmet
> like that star of the waning summer who beyond all stars
> rises bathed in the ocean stream to glitter in brilliance.
> Such was the fire she made blaze from his head and his shoulders
> and urged him into the middle fighting, where most were struggling.
> (*Il.* V.1-8)

An *aristeia* marks a period where a hero will gain honor. Their greatness in battle is synonymous with the gods' blessing—an attention that itself grants honor—by which they are made powerful enough to perform the great deeds that distinguish them. Strength is a physical characteristic, while daring describes a person's behavior, and the helmet's flashing is a superficial sign of greatness. Yet all are typical features of a warrior who fights bravely and gains fame through his prowess. Athene makes Diomedes a particularly valiant hero in order to win glory. Similarly, when Agamemnon begins his own *aristeia*, Hera and Athene thunder around him, τιμῶσαι βασιλῆα πολυχρύσοιο Μυκήνης ("doing honor to the lord of deep-golden Mykenai," *Il.* X1.46).

Jason's ploughing and battling with the earthborn men is not an obvious analogy to these heroic moments. In Homer, a hero is in direct competition with other heroes who are engaged in battle; he is better than all whom he defeats as well as those companions who accomplish less than he does. Jason competes only with Aietes, and even so merely to match his previous accomplishment. However, the scene has a similar effect to Homer's: during its course, Jason's power and skill become the focus of the narrative. At various times throughout the epic, Jason is struck ἀμήχανος ("helpless") by events (1.460, 1286, II.885, III.423, etc.). As a result, he often seems unable to handle the difficulties set before him, often relying on the help of his comrades (Carspecken 124). His completion of the task Aietes sets before him is one of the few occasions during the epic where Jason is openly triumphant on his own. He alone is eager and

undaunted by the task while the other heroes quake in fear: ἔδδεισαν δ' ἥρωες ὅπως ἴδον ("fear seized the heroes at the sight," 111.1293). Although he receives much counsel and assistance prior to the actual challenge, the most basic aspect of the plot remains untouched: Aietes sets a terrible task for Jason, and he accomplishes it. This in fact is Aietes' own perspective, since he is ignorant of all that happens between dinner with Jason and the yoking of the bulls. Apollonius intersperses the account of Jason's preparation for the contest with Aietes' own behavior (1225 ff. and 1275 ff.) and frames the hero's great deeds with the king's reaction (1314, 1372-73, 1403 ff.). As a result, the simpler view of Jason's great accomplishment predominates in the narrative, and his honor is increased in the eyes of the reader by the *aristeia* as that of Homeric heroes would be.

Numerous typical elements of *aristeia* also link Jason's actions to those of Homeric heroes.[60] Aietes and Jason both have arming scenes that mimic in different ways the beginning of most Homeric *aristeiai* (Finglass, lecture). Aietes (III.1225-45) in particular pulls his armor on piece by piece in the manner of a Homeric hero (cf. Il. XI.15 ff., XVI.130 ff.) and shares their splendorous appearance (*Arg.* 111.1228-30). The restriction on Jason's power to a single day (III.1049-50) recalls the similar restriction laid upon Hektor's invincibility by Zeus (*Il.* XI.200-209). The many similes used to describe the contest are most often modeled on the *Iliad* and frequently from battle scenes (e.g. 111.1293-94/Il. XV.618-21, 1351-53/ *Il.* XIII.471-75). The similes applied to the earthborn men in particular recall the tenor of Homer's treatment of dead warriors (Knight 113).[61] Likewise, the challenge is a climactic part of the narrative, as is fitting for

[60] Knight's analysis of the *aristeia* is particularly concerned with specific echoes (99-113).
[61] This point is developed in more detail below. (p.74 ff.)

an *aristeia.* Everything in the book following Aietes' proposal concerns the steps required to complete it, so that it serves as an appropriate resolution to the third book.

Not surprisingly, some of the very features that recall the Iliadic *aristeiai* also distinguish Apollonius' epic most clearly from Homer. Jason's victory, as those of Diomedes, Agamemnon, and others, is a direct result of supernatural intervention. However, where in Homer the gods' attention is the instrument by which their glory may be gained, in Apollonius the help is a result of Medeia's betrayal of her father for Jason (Hunter 1989, 31). Her human favor, although just as able to grant him ἀλκή... ἀπειρεσίη μέγα τε σθένος ("boundless might and great strength," III.1043-44) for the task, does not bring the glory directly achieved by a Homeric hero so esteemed by Athene or Hera.[62]

Jason's reliance on Medeia also places him back in his familiar role as a hero who substitutes romance for battle.[63] Just as Jason restores order to Lemnos through Hypsipyle's love rather than arms (albeit unknowingly), here he is able to complete the task Aietes sets before him because Medeia is infatuated with him. Both women are powerful daughters of kings, and both are natives of a foreign land. The first meeting between Jason and Medeia features a comparison of the hero to the dog star Sirius (III.956-61) similar to that which announces Jason's approach to Hypsipyle's palace (I.774-75), and both of these similes are modeled on Homeric counterparts (*Il.* V.5-6 and XXII.6 respectively; Beye 1969 43)

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[62] Certainly it is right to point out that Athene and Hera in fact do favor Jason (III.6f.), and that Medeia's assistance is precisely what they had planned to provide for him. Nonetheless, Medeia has usurped the direct involvement of the gods in the storyline, even receiving a mention during the *aristeia* as Homer might give to a god inspiring the warrior's prowess (cf. III.1305/*Il.* V.290 ff.). Knight (100) discusses the issue of the convoluted influence of the gods with regard to this scene, pointing out an instance where a verbal echo of Hektor being inspired by Ares (*Il.* XVII.210) is replaced in Apollonius with an impersonal 'mighty force' (III.1256).

[63] See chapter 2.

Apollonius develops the conceit of a warlike love more explicitly in Kolchis. As in the first books of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the third book of the *Argonautika* begins with an invocation. The narrator asks Erato to tell how Jason won the fleece by the love of Medeia: ou γὰρ καὶ Κύπριδος αἶσαν / ἔμμορες, ἀδμῆτας δὲ τεοῖς μελεδήμασι θέλγεις / παρθενικάς ("I invoke you because you also have been allotted a share of Kypris' power, and young girls, not yet mated, are bewitched by the cares you bring" III.3-5). In the Iliad, the group affected by the anger of Achdleus and particularly the quarrel between the two Achaian leaders is comprised of other warriors, who are slain: πολλὰς ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄιδες προΐαψεν / ἡρώων ("[the anger...] hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls / of heroes," *Il.* 1.3). Although not an epic concerning war, the *Odyssey* begins by asking the muse to recount Odysseus' struggle to arrive home with his companions. However, they do not survive the journey: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἑτάρους ἐρρύσατο ἱέμενός περ / αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασυαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο[64] ("But not by will nor valor could he save them, / for their own recklessness destroyed them all," *Od.* I.6-7). In the invocation to both Homeric epics, the actions of the main players will involve the death of many others. Here instead the love that overcomes Medeia is the actor, and the virgin maidens are the subjects of her power. The connection is made more explicitly at a later invocation:

> Reckless Eros, great curse, greatly loathed by men, from you
> come deadly strifes and grieving and troubles, and countless
> other pains on top of these swirl up. (IV.445-47)

[64] Text: Murray (1995).

The deadly strifes (οὐλόμεναί τ' ἔριδες) and countless pains (ἄλγεά... ἀπείρονα) recount the opening of the two Homeric epics again, reaffirming the substitution of battles and survival by the struggles love brings.

The violence of Eros' attack on Medeia likewise suggests strife comparable to war. Eros shoots her in the heart with an arrow and leaves the hall with mocking laughter (III.280-86). Aside from the obvious physical assault of the god, the πολύστονον... ἰόν ("an arrow destined to bring much grief," 279) sets off a number of images concerning fire. The arrow burns beneath her heart as a flame (287), and a simile is used comparing the manner in which οὖλος ἔρως ("destructive love,") blazes in her heart to a consuming fire kindled by an old woman (291-98). The passion that will continue to torture Medeia links to the madness of Herakles, the hero whose Homeric status could not save him from love's sting. When he discovers that Hylas[65] has been lost, Herakles is said to rampage any which way, like a bull bitten by a gadfly (ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τε μύωπι τετυμμένος ἔσσυτο ταῦρος, "As when a bull is stung by a gadfly and rushes off...," 1.1265). Eros is similarly likened to an insect swarming around the herds, upon his approach to Aietes' palace, also specifically named a gadfly (ον τε μύωπα βοῶν κλείουσι νομῆες, "which oxherds call *myops*," 111.277). The wild reaction of Herakles (1261-72 ff.) foreshadows the danger love's affliction may bring to Medeia and Jason. These romantic perils may jeopardize the success of his mission, just as they removed the most powerful hero from the Argonauts' company.

In the midst of her debate as to whether to help Jason or not, Medeia makes a telling assessment of his character: εἴθ' ὅγε πάντων / φθείσεται ἡρώων

[65] For a brief discussion of Hylas as Herakles' *erastes* (with further references), see Hunter 1993, 38-39. Of course, the connection between Medeia's love stupor and Herakles' panic strengthens the claim.

προφερέστατος εἴτε χερείων, / ἐρρέτω ("Whether he will die as the very best of all heroes or quite worthless, let him perish!" III.464-66). Medeia is so smitten by Jason that his heroism seems glaringly obvious; she is hard-pressed to convince herself to ignore it. Here again Apollonius demonstrates that whatever his worth as a Homeric hero, Jason's merits as a hero of love are indisputable.

As Medeia fills a role similar to Hypsipyle's, her father Aietes follows Herakles as a representative of traditional heroic values. After hearing the Argonauts' request for the fleece, Aietes debates whether to kill them immediately or to **try** their strength (III.396-400). The passage originates in the introspective debates held by several heroes of the Iliad, most notably Achilleus' decision as to whether he should kill Agamemnon (*Il.* I.188-92, Hunter 1989, 142-43).[66] The comparison to the greatest Homeric hero stresses Aietes' ruthless power. In contrast to his daughter's assessment, he is confident of Jason's inferiority, and challenges the Greek hero to prove himself as mighty as his host: δὴ γὰρ ἀεικές / ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν γεγαῶτα κακωτέρῳ ἀνέρι εἶξαι ("It would not be seemly for a man of noble birth to yield to an inferior," III.420-21).) Aietes is consistently characterized as too powerful a match for the heroes. His spear is described as δεινόν, ἀμαιμάκετον· το μὲν ου κέ τις ἄλλος ὑπέστη / ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων, ὅτε κάλλιπον Ἡρακλῆα / τῆλε παρέξ ὃ κεν οἷος ἐναντίβιον πτολέμιξεν ("his terrible spear, irresistible—none of the heroic men could have withstood it, once they had left Heraldes far behind, who alone could have clashed with him in battle," 1232-34). Having abandoned Herakles and the Homeric standard by which he was distinguished, no

[66] Hunter notes that Apollonius seems to have modeled his language most closely on *Il.* XIII.455-59, but the context of Achilleus' debate makes it a more significant model. Aietes, like Achilleus, is enraged by something the other person has said, and considers a particularly savage and immediate course of action. For other debates, *Il.* XIV.20-22, XVI.435-38 (Hunter 1989, 142).

Argonaut can withstand Aietes' epic strength. These contrasts are made particularly clear during the arming scene before Jason's *aristeia.* As we have seen earlier, a typical arming scene signals an upcoming battle for the warrior in question in which he will prove his great prowess (Finglass). Both Jason and Aietes arm themselves, albeit in very chfferent ways. Jason uses Medeia's potion to make himself magically invulnerable; but Aietes puts on his armor piece by piece, as warriors in the *Iliad* do, each weapon's virtues recounted in the Homeric manner. Apollonius even calls the horses of his chariot ὠκυπόδων ἵππων ("swift-footed horses," 1235),[67] recalling Achilleus' famous epithet, before finishing with a simile comparing Aietes to a god.

Since Jason is attempting to match a feat that Aietes has accomplished earlier, it seems appropriate that they should both prepare to meet head on. But although Jason distinguishes himself in the field, Aietes never gets an opportunity to prove himself within the epic itself. Every action of his following his arrival on the battle scene indicates a helpless frustration. When the Argonauts row up to the plain of Ares, he is pacing back and forth on the riverbank, mimicking the restless waters (1277, Hunter 1989,240). Jason's strength amazes him when the hero is bathed in the flames of the bulls (1313-14). While the Kolchians cry out when Jason hurls the shotput of Ares at the earthborn men, Aietes is struck speechless by the size of the boulder (1365-73, Vian 31). At the end of the challenge, Aietes' heavy heart is compared to that of a landowner who has lost his entire crop, helpless in the face of what Zeus has brought upon him (1402-404). The Kolchian king has become the victim of the helplessness typical of Jason in the rest of the epic, left to plot revenge rather than battle openly (1405-406). Although

[67] My own translation

Aietes is presented with the regalia proper to the heir of the Homeric heroes, he is ultimately frustrated as Herakles was before him. (Knight 108)

Aietes' similarity to Herakles extends to his supernatural superiority over the Argonauts. Aietes' fantastic challenge to Jason is beyond what even Homer's heroes are called to do (Vian 32-33). Similarly, the Kolchian king is himself depicted as more god than man (Green 286). Like Herakles, he is the son of a powerful god (Helios). He has associated with gods regularly, riding on his father's chariot (307-13), receiving the Theban dragon's teeth from Athena (1183-84), and wears a breastplate he took from Mimas, whom Ares himself[68] killed (1225-27). His lovers and consort are nymphs and goddesses (240-46), while the miraculous fountain in the palace courtyard, as well as the fire-breathing bulls and the adamantine plough that feature in Jason's task, are all the work of Hephaistos himself (215-34). The Homeric model for his poor welcome is Aiolos' harsh reception of Odysseus upon his return to his island (Hunter 1989, 131-32). Apollonius recalls these many links to the gods immediately before Jason's own arming scene, comparing the king's approach to the field where the task (ἄεθλος) will be performed to Poseidon's ride to the various games (ἀγῶνα) offered in honor of him (1240-45). In the aftermath of the catalogue of the many places that honor Poseidon, the large crowd of Kolchians almost seems to be his worshippers.

Aietes' similarity to the Kyklops Polyphemos is another manner by which Apollonius marks him out as a representative of the Homeric tradition. Aietes shares the cruelty of the Kyklops, echoing his interest in where the travelers' ship lies in hopes of destroying them (111.316, *Od.* IX.279; Hunter 1989, 134). Apollonius emphasizes the

[68] Knight (101) points out that Ares may simply be a case of metonymy here, but the inclusion of the name of the god nonetheless encourages a sense of Aietes' divinity.

connection between the two monsters with other verbal echoes: Jason's exhortation to the crew in imitation of Odysseus (III.176-81, Od. IX.l 72-76; Hunter 1989, 117), Aietes' accusation that the Argonauts are brigands (III.592-93, *Od.* IX.225-27,253-55; Hunter 1989,161-62), and a common emphasis on hospitality in both scenes (Hunter 1989,220) continually remind the audience of Odysseus' foe.

Aietes' opposition to Jason recalls the other king who seeks to destroy the hero, Pelias (Vian 34). The impositions Pelias has laid upon Jason come to the fore during his petition to the Kolchian ruler. Both seek to destroy Jason and force him to undertake an ἄεθλος hoping that he will perish (1.16-17,111.390; III.396 ff.). Both kings likewise have children who help Jason against their desires: Akastos (I.320 ff.) and Medeia (III.616-35, etc.). The two hostile rulers frame Jason's journey, their similarities suggesting that Jason's home is no safer than this kingdom on the far side of the world. Just as they are forced to sail at the behest of one king (III.389-90), so another oppresses them at their arrival. As a result, Jason's decisive victory will have particular significance as a victory over a king who symbolizes all the hazards that have plagued him.

Aietes' Homeric and godlike qualities both set bun apart from the Argonauts and emphasize his role as the vdlain or even monster opposing the heroes. As a more Homeric figure, his antagonism towards Jason extends to the more characteristic features of his non-Homeric heroism. Jason warns his crew that they should ply Aietes with words before relying on their strength: πολλάκι τοι ῥέα μῦθος, ο κεν μόλις ἐξανύσειεν / ἠνορέν τόδ' ἔρεξε κατὰ χρέος, ἦπερ ἐῴκει, / πρηΰνας ("In tight corners arguments (μῦθος) have often smoothed the way and achieved what manly strength could hardly accomplish," 188-90). But Aietes is clear from the first that such things have little value to bun. He recounts his journey with his father past Hellas, but

quickly dismisses the story: ἀλλὰ τί μύθων ἦδος; ("But what is the point of stories (μύθων)?" 314).[69] The ineffective petition that follows underscores the difference between the two men—Aietes is a man of deeds rather than words, and senses that Jason will fail if called to match the heroic standard the king represents. The resulting challenge subjects Jason to the necessity common to Homeric heroes but which he consistently shuns. Jason cannot see how to avoid the task, even if he dies (429), and so is forced to accept: ou γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλο / ῥίγιον ἀνθρώποισι κακῆς ἐπιμείρετ' ἀνάγκης ("for there is nothing worse for men than... cruel necessity," 429-30)

There is something innately epic in the sizable task the Argonauts have undertaken, and so the possibility that they would have to prove themselves has always loomed large. Argos' account of the gathering of the heroes for the voyage (τῇ δ' Ev, ἀγειράμενος Παναχαίδος εἴ τι φέριστον / ἡρώων, τεὸν ἄστυ μετήλυθε, "collecting in [his ship] all the best heroes of the whole Achaian land, he has come to your city," III.347-48) echoes the wondering words of each person watching the heroes at Pagasai:

> Ζεῦ ἄνα, τίς Πελίαο νόος; πόθι τόσσον ὅμιλον
> ἡρώων γαίης Παναχαιίδος ἔκτοθι βάλλει
> αὐτῆμάρ κε δόμους ὀλοῷ πυρὶ δηώσειαν
> Αἰήτεω, ὅτε μή σφιν ἑκὼν δέρος ἐγγυαλίξῃ
> ἀλλ' οὐ φυκτὰ κέλευθα, πόνος δ' ἄπρηκτος ἰοῦσιν. (I.242-46)
>
> Lord Zeus, what does Pelias have in mind? Where is he hurling such a great band of heroes, out from the whole Achaeian land? The very day they arrive they will raze Aietes' palace with the fire of destruction if he does not consent to give them the fleece. They must go, there is no way out from this terrible labour.[70]

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[69] Aietes' dismissal of the story he has just told is reminiscent of moments where the narrator catches himself in the midst of a digression (e.g. Aithalides, 1.640-49, discussed chapter 2 p. 7-9). This similarity may indicate a more nuanced understanding of the power of μῦθος ("word, story") than I allow Aietes (whose challenge does indicate some sort of appreciation for a careful word). Nonetheless, to read too much into this would run against the grain of the story, in whose climax Aietes' test of physical strength is foiled by a combination of magic and trickery.

[70] This translation has been slightly adapted to bring out similarities in passages.

Aietes sees what the people at the harbor do: one need not gather together the greatest heroes of Greece for an expedition unless one is prepared to use force to accomplish one's mission (372 ff.)—a reality which even Jason reluctantly acknowledges to his crewmates (182-84). The legend of the Argonauts is one worthy of epic, and the deeds attributed to Jason were great enough that he was considered a hero. For Jason's different style of heroism to be successful, his mission's most difficult tasks must be accomplished. Just as his unHomeric actions at Lemnos were justified by his 'conquest' of Hypsipyle and the reordering of the island, so will his unorthodox methods of accomplishing Aietes' challenge prove his worth as a hero.

While Jason is largely free from the impositions of responsibility,[71] a Homeric hero lives constantly under the burdens of necessity and impending death.[72] The Homeric *aristeia* is the most prominent moment where necessity is spun into a hero's glory. In the *Iliad,* for example, a hero like Diomedes is bound to fight for his community, and gains the glory that will live beyond him by besting other men so burdened. In his success he seems undefeatable, and even gains a sort of immortality; but the underlying need for those actions and the death he forces upon others throughout the *aristeia* underscore the severity of mortal doom. Jason, in contrast, submits to Aietes' task because he can find no better option for getting the fleece (500-501). It is a different sort of necessity, and as a result a different sort of task.

Although necessity forces Jason into the *aristeia* that Apollonius grants him, the nature of the task is hardly Homeric. The first half involves the yoking of bulls and ploughing the land (1278-1344), while the half that does involve battle (1345-1407), limits Jason's opponents to supernatural earthborn men rather than heroes on equal

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[71] Cf. the discussion of Jason's departure from Lemnos in chapter 2, p. 47 ff. 54-55.
[72] I have been heavily influenced in this line of argument by Griffin and Weil.

footing with him. Apollonius continually draws attention to how plant-like these men are by comparing them in similes to trees (1375-76) or else trampled vines (1399-1403) while emphasizing their emergence from the furrows (1381-85, 1391-92). Both in simile (1386-90) and in actual fact (1391) Jason is a reaper rather than a warrior. Even his weapons have been transformed into a farmer's tools: his helmet, however shiny, serves as a pouch to hold the dragon teeth 'seeds' (1280-81) and later a cup (1348-49); his spear is explicitly compared to the Pelasgian cattle prod used by a herdsman. His valor as a warrior is no more tested than a worker of the land would be during the harvest, since neither is in danger from his crop. Jason gains prestige as a Homeric hero though he does not do the same work.

Apollonius introduces this unusual agricultural flavor into the narrative from the tradition of didactic epic. In the Works and *Days*, Hesiod responds to the pressing necessity of proper management of domestic matters such as ploughing and planting in order to ensure prosperity. Survival is at stake, as in Homer, but on a strikingly more mundane level. Jason's agricultural *aristeia* removes the dangers of its Homeric predecessor and introduces in their place Hesiod's practical concerns with the land—albeit in an extremely impractical situation. Where Homer might use a technical word like κοτύλην (*Il.* V.306) to describe a specific joint smashed or some other gruesome detail of the fight, Apollonius uses a technical agricultural vocabulary to recount how Jason linked the plough's ἰστοβοεύς (1318, *WD* 431, 435) to its κορώνηι (1318).[73] The word for handle, or ἐχέτλης (1325), is used by Hesiod (*WD* 467), as well as the term for a plough constructed in one piece (αὐτογυόν, 232, 'WD 433). Moreover, Jason's

[73] The ἰστοβοεύς is the pole connecting the yoke to the plough; there is some debate as to whether κορώνη refers to a ring or a tapering end of the pole (Hunter 1989,244-45).

impressive management of the task at hand makes for a triumph beyond the Hesiodic norm. As Hesiod recommends (*WD* 391), Apollonius' hero confidently ploughs naked (1282),[74] which in the context of the challenge also demonstrates his power. The bulls are not simply the strong bulls who might fight in the field (*WD* 436-440), but brazen-footed, fire-breathmg ones; Jason sows not seeds but dragon's teeth, and his furrows leave man-sized clumps[75] (1333-34). The plough he uses is not an ordinary wooden one (*WD* 427 ff.) but divinely crafted from adamant (232).

A simple agricultural feat would not befit a hero; yet the supernatural character of the task makes it more than an ordinary Homeric hero could manage (Vian 32). West points out that ploughman and the epic warrior alike have but one meal for their day of work (West 270). Jason's lack of a meal during his break from the work (1346-1353) follows both models simultaneously. Similarly, Apollonius synthesizes these two completely dtfferent kinds of archaic poetry for his hero's *aristeia.* Realistic touches, such as the attention given to leaning the helmet against the spear so that it will not tip over (Green 287) or the restriction of the task to a single day (417-19, etc.) makes his ploughing seem more like the practical matters about which Hesiod wrote. But the helmet is filled with dragon's teeth, and the day's work includes the battle with the newly grown harvest. Apollonius employs Hesiod's imagery and language to emphasize his difference with Homer and to provide a contrast for the great feat that Jason actually performs. Hunter notes that although the sentiment expressed by the image of Jason prodding the bulls with a spear "as a labourer uses a Pelasgian goad" (1323) is archaic,

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[74] Although he notes Hesiod's advice, Hunter prefers to emphasize the association of a naked godlike figure to the nude portrayals of the gods and heroes in Greek art (Hunter 1989,241). I do not think that the interpretations conflict with one another; it is typical of Apollonius to twist an allusion to a different use in his own poem.

[75] Alternatively, Gerber has suggested that the words βώλακες...ἀνδραχθέες (1335) could mean "heavy with men," referring to the earthborn warriors (Hunter 1989,246, quoting Gerber).

the stylistic complexity of the sentence announces its Hellenistic origin (Hunter 1989, 245). The adaptation of this image to a new epic style is an excellent model of the manner in which Apollonius appropriates Hesiod's domestic epic to supplement the unHomeric aspects of his own poem.

The second half of the *aristeia* features Jason's battle with the earthborn men that grow from the teeth he has sown (1354-1407). Although this passage is filled with elements common to Homeric battles, Jason's triumph subverts the melancholy effect typical of Homer in such scenes. The use of short obituaries for fallen heroes increases the pathos of their death by setting it in the context of their families' suffering (Griffin 139). Likewise, the contrast effected by a simile comparing the felling of a tree to a man's death (cf. *Il.* IV.482-87, V.560, Hunter 1989, 251) emphasizes the death's significance. In falling, the man resembles an inanimate object cut down for some use. His life, though more valuable than the tree, has been treated just as callously. The loss of a meaningful existence stirs pity in their audience (Griffin 143).

In Apollonius, such similes are reserved for the earthborn men. From their first appearance, these men are characterized by distinctly Homeric epithets such as ἀμφιγύοις ("sharpened,")[76] and φθισιμβρότου ("man-destroyer," 1355-58, Knight 106). Their arms flash through the air to Olympos much as those of the Achaians and Trojans do at different points of the *Iliad* (II.457-58, XIII.339-343, XIX.363-63). In addition, as more affirmation of their similarity to an army in Homer, they are granted their own extended simile to describe their shining (1359-63). Even when Jason attacks them, it is as Hektor or Aias might have done—with a large stone (1365-69, cf. *Il.* VII.264-72). The earthborn men are firmly encamped in Homer's territory.

[76] The precise meaning of this word is uncertain.

Apollonius likewise uses several distinctly Homeric similes to describe the deaths of the men Jason kills. The army's Homeric character encourages the reader to read the similes in a pathetic tone. The poet evokes the comparison of dying warriors to trees discussed above (1375-76), and compares Jason's attack to a landowner making an early harvest, where the men would be the mercilessly cut crop (1386-90; Hunter 1989, 252-53). Their blood runs in the furrows like a fountain, as in Homer the ground flows with blood (1391-92, Knight 107). The final set of images in the *aristeia* begins with an allusion to the famous description of Gorgythion in death:

> μήκων δ' ὥς ἑτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἥ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ,
> καρπῷ βριθομένη νοτίῃσί τε εἰαρινῇσιν
> ὥς ἑτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κάρη πήληκι βαρυνθέν (*Il.* VIII.306-308).
>
> He bent drooping his head to one side, as a garden poppy
> bends beneath the weight of its yield and the rains of springtime;
> so his head bent slack to one side beneath the helm's weight.

This image is striking not only because the young warrior is compared to a trivial inanimate object, but because Gorgythion is as beautiful and delicate in death as the living flower. There is nothing permanent about the flower's drooping head, but the young man's life is gone forever. The flower also points to female defloration and subsequent childbearing, resulting in a contrast between the beginning of life and the young man's death. Apollonius applies a similar image to the earthborn men who have been slain before they finish rising out of the ground (1397-98). Their drooping heads recall Gorgythion's simile, and add to the allusion the irony that the men themselves grow from the ground like the flower. Their lives, actually born from the earth's fertility, are literally cut short by Jason's sword before they can even begin. The final simile comparing them to vines destroyed by a storm sent by Zeus (1399-1403) emphasizes

their helpless plight. Called up from the ground to be destroyed, they had no control over their fate, but were killed by the gods as callously as a storm beats down plants.

However, the use of exclusively plant-oriented imagery undermines the melancholy of the images Apollonius mimics. Those images depend on the contrast between the men and the object with which they are compared. But the earthborn share with the plants the very characteristics that make the contrast so effective. They too are plants, grown from seeds sown in the ground and harvested (1391) by the ploughman. Thus where Homer emphasizes a man's humanity by contrasting him with a flower, Apollonius reinforces the plantlike aspect of the men with similes that remind the reader that they are not quite human.

The dehumanization of Jason's opponents is bolstered by their lack of individual identities. Hardly out of the ground, they have no history the poet might recall to illicit pity at their death. Their only family is their mother earth (1347), although even this does not prevent them from warring against one another in a manner unnatural to men (1373-75). During Jason's indiscriminate slaughter (1380-85), none of them receives an individual account of his death (Knight 106). Rather, all the imagery and action seems to focus upon Jason's performance. In the simile accompanying Jason's attack, the emphasis is firmly placed on him as a human reaper (1386-87), while the men remain a crop even when the narrative resumes: ὠμὸν ἐπισπεύδων κείρεν στάχυν... / ὣς ὅγε γηγενέων κεῖρεν στάχυν, ("[the reaper] hurriedly cuts the crop before it is fully ripe... just so did Jason cut the crop of the earth-born," 1389, 1391). Jason's hurling of the stone consciously imitates similar scenes in Homer (e.g. *Il.* V.302, VII.264-65; Hunter 1989, 250), but where in Homer the heroes hoist boulders two contemporary men could not budge, Jason lifts a rock four men could not move (1367). The stone Jason hoists is

said to be the shotput of Ares (1366), and his godlike feat causes the Kolchians to cry out and stuns Aietes into silence (1370-73). In Homer, the hero throws the boulder at a particular enemy; but here Jason attacks indirectly, tossing the boulder into an indiscriminate and inhuman group that will turn upon itself.

However, Apollonius still offers moments that remind the audience of the human side of the earthborn men (Knight 112-13). Many allusions carry part of the significance they held in their original context to their new place in Apollonius' poem. The blood that runs in the furrows like water recalls the Homeric battlefields covered with the blood of fallen men (Knight 107). The despair of the king looking upon his ruined vines suggests that their loss elicits genuine sorrow (1401-1403). Likewise, the imitation of the simile describing Gorgythion's death depends upon the reader's familiarity with the earlier poem for its ironic effect. Also noteworthy is Apollonius' brief summary of the foundmg of Thebes (1176-1187), where some of the earthborn men sown by Kadmos become the first citizens of a new city: καί ῥ' ο μὲν Ἀονίοισιν ἐνισπείρας πεδίοισιν / Κάδμος Ἀγηνορίδης γαιηγενῆ εἵατο λαόν ("Kadmos son of Agenor sowed his teeth in the plains of Aonia and settled there a race born from the earth," 1185-86).[77] Immediately before the men become mere objects of Jason's conquest, the poet reminds the reader that in different circumstances they might well have been as human as any hero.

Jason's overwhelming victory on the battlefield is buttressed by a correspondmg dominance the imagery grants him. His attack takes the men's lives, but the similes rob them of their manhood. Apollonius offers two different layers of images simultaneously.

[77] In another parallel to the story of the Argonauts, Kadmos too must overcome a dragon, the source of the teeth he plants (III.1177-79).

He alludes to a number of Homeric scenes that bring to mind the melancholy associated with the death of men; but he then ironizes this sympathetic reading. The same images of plants are used as the counterpoint in the similes that describe the planted men, reducing the contrast and thus the distinction between the death of plants and the death of human beings.

The whole of the third book builds towards Jason's fulfillment of the challenge: the petition to Aietes, Medeia's tortured debate, the heroes' discussions and the ritual for Hekate all focus the story on the presentation and solution of Jason's task. However, the yoking of the bulls and the battle with the earthborn are not the climax of Jason's quest. As important as it feels, the contest has little to do with the golden fleece for which he has sailed. Although Aietes claims he will grant it to Jason should he pass the trial (419-20), Jason still must go himself to fetch his prize in a completely separate sequence of events, and in overcoming the dragon requires Medeia's help once again. The emphasis on the challenge is far stronger than that on the actual fulfillment of the Argonauts' quest. In contrast, Achilleus' great *aristeia* in the *Iliad* marks the climax of the epic as well as the immediately preceding sequence of events—even the outcome of the war becomes certain after Hektor's death. Jason's *aristeia* certainly resembles that of Achilleus: he fights alone at the peak of his power, observed by a hostile audience of townspeople and an anxious lung (Knight 101). Yet despite the emphasis on his feat, Jason's greatest triumph does not resolve any vital plot elements of the story.

From the very start of the epic, Jason's journey to Kolchis for the fleece has been denoted as an ἄεθλος (I.15, 32), and Apollonius uses the same term at its end (IV.1776). Jason himself explains to Hypsipyle that he cannot rule Lemnos because he is forced onwards by λυγροὶ... ἄεθλοι ("grievous challenges," 1.841). The frequent use of

ἄεθλος to describe the challenge Aietes makes to Jason grants the feat a particularly significant role in the story. Apollonius tends to avoid the repetition of technical words common in Homeric epic.[78] However, after Aietes first mentions the term at the beginning of the third book (407) it returns regularly throughout.[79] Its usage becomes especially frequent during the *aristeia* and the immediately preceding passages,[80] where the term not only refers to the task at hand (e.g. 1279) but also the difficulties Jason must face (e.g. 1211) and even games for a dead king (e.g. 1273). Apollonius might have used dlfferent words for each of these concepts,[81] but he instead stresses the same one again and again.

The term ἄεθλοι is also associated with Herakles. Homer used the same word to refer to his twelve labors in both the Iliad and the *Odyssey* (*Il.* VIII.363, XIX.133; *Od.* XI.622-24). After the Argonauts abandon Herakles and Polyphemos, the sea-god Glaukos offers them a prophecy concerning these same deeds:

> Τίπτε παρὲκ μεγάλοιο Διὸς μενεαίετε βουλήν
> Αἰήτεω πτολίεθρον ἀγειν θρασὺν Ἡρακλῆα;
> Ἄργεῖ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶν ἀτασθάλῳ Εὐρυσθῆι
> ἐκπῆλσαι μογέοντα δυώδεκα πάντας ἀέθλους
> ναίειν δ' ἀθανάτοισι συνέστιον, εἴ κ' ἔτι παύρους
> ἐξανύσῃ (*Arg.* 1.1315-20)
>
> Why do you seek to take bold Herakles to the city of Aietes against the will of great Zeus? It is his destiny to accomplish at Argos all twelve labours for cruel Eurystheus, at the cost of great suffering, and then to share the feasts of the immortals when once he has achieved the few labours which remain.

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[78] See for instance Hunter (1989 232-33) and Knight (102) on his variations of the typical arming scenes in Homer.

[79] ἄεθλοι of some sort or another are mentioned in lines 427,502,522,561,778,788,906,942,989,1050, 1082,1177,1189,1211,1238,1255,1268,1273,1279 and 1407.

[80] In the buildup to the *aristeia* and during its performance in the last three hundred lines of the book, the same word is used nine times (see note 21 above).

[81] Sometimes he does; for instance, the games Poseidon will witness in the similes describing Aietes are ἀγῶνα (III.1240). Metrical restrictions will necessarily influence this choice as well.

The completion of his assigned tasks will grant Herakles immortality with the gods. Jason renews a rivalry with Herakles[82] by completing his own ἄεθλος and defeating the Kolchian king whom only Herakles could match (1232-34). Medeia tells Jason that with her magic, he will become more than strong enough for any human trial: οὐδέ κε φαίης / ἀνδράσιν ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν ἰσαζέμεν ἀθανάτοισιν (("you will think yourself the equal not of men, but of the immortal gods," 1044-45). The task that Jason performs is thus akin to those godlike feats for which Herakles is famed and for which he gains immortality. Jason will gain a corresponding immortality for his deeds in Apollonius' poem. In the Iliad, Helen weaves a cloak that records events of the war, much as Homer's own poem does,[83] preserving πολέας δ' ἐνέπασσεν ἀέθλους / Τρώων θ' ἱπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων ("[she] was working into it the numerous struggles / of Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armoured Achaians," *Il.* III.126-27). Like these Homeric heroes, Jason accomplishes an ἄεθλος worthy of fame in epic, but without imitating the Homeric hero. So too Apollonius creates a poem worthy of the epic tradition while departing from the style of his influential predecessor Homer.

The *aristeia* also includes many reminders of another meaning of ἄεθλος, a sporting contest. The mention of funeral games that would be held for a deceased king (1273) reminds the reader of those held for Patroklos at the end of the Iliad (XXIII). In this instance, the poet measures the distance the Argonauts travel by the distance in which a chariot race would be run (1271-74). This explicit mention of athletic contests alerts the reader to elements of the *aristeia* that are characteristic of a sporting event

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[82] See chapter 2, p.3-5 for more on the differences between Herakles and Jason as heroes.
[83] See Atchity (86-92) for a discussion of the significance of Helen's handcraft in relation to Homer's art.

(Green 287). The many Kolchians watching the feat use the mountainside as stadium seating to get a better look (1275-76), and like a crowd at an arena, they shout at exciting moments (1370-71, Hunter 1989,251). In particular, they cry out when Jason hurls an enormous rock, δεινὸν Ἐναυλίου oohov Ἄρεος ("a terrible disc of Ares Enyalios," 1366). The hero's most impressive moment is thus reduced to an athletic exercise (cf. IV.859-52). The Argonauts receive Jason and encourage him with words before his battle with the earthborn men (1347-48), much as companions might support a friend before a boxing match (cf. *Il.* XXIII.681-82). Jason himself takes a break from the task as an athlete rests and steels himself to continue a competition, taking a drink of water and stretching his knees before returning to action (1348-50). He even competes in the nude (1282), as a Greek athlete would (Knight 101 n.83).

Jason's challenge is also similar to a sporting event because he has almost no chance of suffering serious injury or death. The dangers he faces are very real and the task he completes is certainly spectacular. Yet the honor due to Jason is compromised by Medeia's intervention: as long as he strives among the monsters, Jason is quite invulnerable to any harm. In the Epic Cycle, Achilleus is for the most part invulnerable; but in the Iliad he is not. Homer's epic relies on a universal mortality that will swallow up even the best of men (Knight 100).[84] A hero who could not be harmed would not be in keeping with the spirit of the epic. Thus although Zeus grants "power to Hektor / to kill men, till he makes his way to the strong-benched vessels" (*Il.* XI.192-93), he does make him impervious to injury, but prevents those who might harm him from succeeding (e.g. Teukros: *Il.* XV.457-465). One reason why Jason's *aristeia* is so conspicuously triumphant is that there are very few limits on the hero's powers. Such a victory may be decisive, but

[84] Achilleus' famous response to Lykaon's petition for mercy (*Il.* XXI.97-113) makes this point well.

it cannot be Homeric. Where Homer commends heroes that find glory in the midst of tragedy, Apollonius has made a hero whose glory is won without danger: a hero in the farmer's field or the sports arena, but not in battle.[85]

This *aristeia*'s reliance on a Homeric background exemplifies the sort of self-conscious re-use of literature typical of Alexandrian poetry.[86] However, Apollonius uses Homer in a strange way. Rather than employ Homeric features that will bolster his hero's credibility as a victor, he purposefully juxtaposes Homeric allusions with unHomeric actions. The hero cannot compare, as one might expect; but the effect of allusion is not to discredit Jason but to contrast his success with that of his poetic forebears. Throughout his *aristeia*, Apollonius sets Jason in opposition to the great heroes of Homer: his romantic prowess, agricultural skills, or invulnerability all have no place in a good warrior in the *Iliad*. But the poet proves Jason a triumphant hero while denying him the traits and context that heroism demands in Homer. Jason accomplishes the task before him with an ease that completely confounds and defeats Aietes; there is no hint of the least failure on his part in the triumphant close to the book: ἦμαρ Pbu, καί τῷ τετελεσμένος ἦεν ἄεθλος ("Nightfall came, and Jason's task was at an end," 1407). Jason completes the great ἄεθλος impervious to the dangers of the bulls and the

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[85] The yoking of the bulls and the sowing of the dragon's teeth are a well-established part of the legend of Jason outside of the *Argonautika* (Gantz 358-59), and it could be argued that the unHomeric qualities of this scene are part of the nature of Jason's task. However, Apollonius' treatment of the matter stresses the unheroic manner of the task when judged by Homeric standards. One need only compare Pindar's treatment of the same feat (*Pythian* Odes IV. 220-242) to see that Apollonius might have retained a more heroic tone than he chose to use. Although in Pindar Jason still relies on Medeia's help and does not even battle the earthborn, his immediate response to Aietes' challenge suggests a more collected and confident Jason aside from any drugs he uses. In addition, the tilling of the land is never explicitly compared to the work of war, so that the impression that Jason has traded the plough for the spear is not as pronounced as in Apollonius.

[86] See Hunter 1993, (3-5) and Effe 147-48 for brief discussions of this phenomenon.

earthborn warriors, but likewise to the expectations placed on him by the inclusion of typically Homeric arming scenes, boulder tossing,[87] and Iliadic similes in the narrative.

Similes dominate the narrative in the *aristeia.* Of the twenty-five similes in the third book of the *Argonautika*, seventeen occur during Jason's challenge or the scenes immediately prior.[88] Where Homer may extend a battle scene with accounts of deaths or short biographies of warriors, there are almost no digressions from Jason's actions aside from the many similes that describe them. The rhythm they keep guides the reader through the scene at the pace the poet desires, each half of the task containing eight similes (Carspecken 93). In between the two halves, another simile—appropriately about the time of day when workers wish to unyoke their cattle—marks the midpoint of the *aristeia* (1340-42) and of the day whose dawn (1223-24) and dusk (1407) frames the challenge (Carspecken 93-94; Hunter 1989,247-48). The similes often add multiple layers of meaning to their objects. The comparison of Jason to a craggy rock that withstands the assault of the sea's waves (1293-95) immediately denotes the hero's resistance to the bull's onslaught. However, the simile's origin in the Iliad is also significant. The imitation of the way in which the Greek column was described as it prepared to engage Hektor (*Il.* XV.618-21) links Jason's yoking of the bulls to a battle scene between warriors in the Homeric epic. Moreover, Jason fills the same role in the simile as an entire battle line did in the original model. Thus Apollonius imputes the significance of an army's battle to a distinctly unwarlike task. Thus the imagery of the *aristeia* determines how the audience will receive Jason's actions. The reader will associate

[87] Apollonius might have made the earthborn men attack Jason with boulders, retaining the allusion but establishing the hero as an anti-Homeric figure competing with Homeric models (like Aietes or Herakles). Notably, it is Jason who adopts this strategy, and more vigorously than his Homeric forebear—his boulder requires twice as many normal men to lift it. The suggestion is not merely that Jason is different and better than Homeric heroes in his own way, but that he is better at accomplishing their goals as well.

[88] I have compiled these numbers from Carspecken's list of all the similes in the *Argonautika* (Carspecken 61). He also notes that the third book as a whole has the highest density of similes (62).

a scene that has no war at all with an image soaked in battle; Apollonius gives his unHomeric scene the smell of war, although the meat of battle is largely absent.

Apollonius' self-conscious use of Homer's similes draws attention to the poem's place in the literary tradition in a manner reminiscent of the sort of poetic technique that Homer uses in his description of the Shield of Achilleus. The connection is more than coincidence: the Shield seems to have been constantly in Apollonius' mind during the composition of the *aristeia*.[89] Jason is in competition with bulls that are of Hephaistos' making (228-31), the same deity who created Achdleus' armor. Apollonius describes Idas' crude attack on Jason's spear in terms of the god's craft: ἄλτο δ' ἀκωκή / ῥαιστὴρ ἄκμονος ὥστε παλιμτυπές ("the sword-edge bounced back like a hammer from an anvil," 1253-54). The ῥαιστὴρ is found in Homer only in the hands of Hephaistos as he prepares to beat out the shield (*Il.* XVIII.477, Hunter 1989,237). Another explicit reference is made in the extended simile applied to the bulls that the god forged. Their blasts of flame are compared to the stream of sparks that a furnace emits when the bellows blow (1299-1305, Hunter 1989,242). The bellows and the smelting vats into which they blow are also found in Hephaistos' smithy: φῦσαι δ' ἐν χοάωοισιν... ("and the bellows... [blew] on the crucibles," *Il.* XVIII.470, cp. 1299-1300).[90]

The allusions to the content of the shield seem even more significant, since agricultural work is particularly prominent in both Apollonius' narrative and Homer's ekphrasis. Again Apollonius uses a distinctive farming vocabulary that suggests that he

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[89] I am wary of making too bold a claim on this matter, heeding Dr. Johnson's remarks that "I have always suspected that... the emendation [or in my case, interpretation] wrong that cannot without so much labor appear to be right" (*Preface to* Shakespeare; 333). I do not believe that there is evidence for reading this passage as a sustained and purposeful imitation of the Shield; but I do hold that a) the following allusions and parallels exist and b) they suggest that the similar poetic concerns of the poets at these junctures are more than a happy coincidence.

[90] This is not a unique usage; these same words are also found in the Theogony (863; Hunter 1989,243, Campbell 1981).

modeled himself on the older epic poet (e.g. ἀρηρομένην, "freshly ploughed land," 1336, *Il.* XVIII.548). The reaping that closely follows the sowing in the *aristeia* is reminiscent of the quick change in scene from planting to harvest season on the shield (Knight 104). Homer portrays a watching king who oversees the collection of his crops and silently rejoices in his heart (XVIII.556-57). Aietes' dismay at Jason's successful reaping of the earthborn men seems a deliberate contrast to this model: Aietes is compared to the owner of the vineyards that are destroyed (1402-1403) before grief comes into his breast (1403-1404).

There is also a similar tension in both passages between violence and peaceful agricultural life. Achilleus' σάκος is a weapon covered over with a broad array of images foreign to the Iliad, such as ploughing, herding and peaceful city life. After the long description, it is put to its proper warlike use during the hero's *aristeia.* Jason's shield, on the other hand, is used in that hero's *aristeia* to protect himself against the charge of Aietes' bulls (1293-96). Within a few lines of a specific reference to the hero's σάκος follows the simile of the bellows and furnaces that clearly alludes to the Homeric shield's construction (1299 ff.). The oddity in the *Iliad*'s scene is the presence of the peaceful plough on the warlike shield; in the *Argonautika*'s it is the warlike shield that is out of place on the ploughing land. Both contrasts are tied to the purpose of their respective passages: in Homer's case, the tension on the shield serves to emphasize its universal qualities, while in Apollonius the juxtaposition of a weapon with bulls and crops is typical of the scene's subversion of the traditional warlike *aristeia.*

Stylistically, the use of mundane detail in the account of Thetis' visit to Hephaistos and her petition for her son's arms is quite similar to the small realistic events Apollonius sprinkles into his poem. At moments such as Jason's leaning of his

helmet against his spear—to prevent spilling the teeth inside—the poet grounds the epic's more grandiose elements in the commonplace matters usually ignored in epic (1287, Green 287). So too when Achilleus' mother enters the home of Hephaistos, the language is remarkably realistic. Charis calls her husband out with an unadorned and familiar address (392, Willcock 268, Feeney 1993 78). Hephaistos answers with a fairly typical digression (393-409), but he does not immediately go meet his guest, gloriously and pleasantly arrayed. Rather, he must first remove his bellows from the fire and place all his tools in his silver toolbox (410-13). That finished, he cleans himself and puts on fresh clothing (414-417). This scene serves as one of the primary models for the visit of Hera and Athene to Aphrodite's home at the beginning of this book (36 ff., Hunter 1989, 101). Here too the gods are reduced to activities common to humans, such as braiding one's hair (43-47), or even having to make do with a ribbon in order to entertain guests who have arrived unexpectedly (47-50). The goddesses tease one another in a manner that likewise seems too trivial for Homer's goddesses (Green 254). The following passage concerning Eros and Ganymede (117 ff.) continues in the same vein, portraying divine figures cheating at games and crying as little boys would. In this case Apollonius is much less distant from Homer than usual: the homey atmosphere in which Thetis and Hephaistos dwell has a much more similar feel to its Apollonian counterpart than is usually the case.

The unusually strong affinity between Hephaistos' crafting of the shield and the book focused on Jason's ἄεθλος centers upon the attention each passage gives to the poet. Homer's shield represents the height of his emphasis on the poem as a work of art—and so too, the poet as its artisan. Apollonius' poem continually demands such an awareness of the poem's craft from his readers. To understand the full significance of

the catalogue of heroes or Thetis' visit to Peleus, the reader must recall the corresponding scenes in the Homeric tradition, and in particular the Iliad and the *Odyssey*. But Apollonius draws more from Homer than his allusions. To make a successful epic poem, he must be a successful epic poet. For this reason, Apollonius emulates the poetic self-awareness found in the Shield of Achilleus throughout the *Argonautika*. Apollonius encourages throughout his poem the same kind of awareness of the poet's craft found in the Shield of Achilleus. There is no element that distinguishes Apollonius from Homer as readily as this insistence that the reader read with knowledge of past poems. This knowledge allows Apollonius another layer to his work. Aside from the usual epic plot elements, digressions, and imagery, he also highlights the poem's dependence on previous models and uses this dependence to reinforce its effect. Any emulation of Homer can only match him through a purposefully artificial imitation of distinctive elements. Such blind imitation diverts much of a poem's energy from composition to allusion."[91] But in the *Argonautika*, Apollonius moves beyond simple emulation by purposefully integrating this very artificiality into the epic's story. Jason surpasses the Homeric hero by lifting a rock twice as big as those the greatest Homeric heroes can carry (1366-67)[92]—even though his feat relies on Medeia's magic. This action serves as metaphor for Apollonius' own triumph over the Homeric model: despite the restrictions of the tradition, he wrote a poem that was recognizably epic. He remained within the tracktion, but expanded rather than contracted its boundaries.

Thus the attention lavished on Jason's otherwise anticlimactic ἄεθλος derives from the parallel triumph of Apollonius' unorthodox *aristeia*. Jason consistently succeeds

[91] The most commonly cited instances of works where detailed attention to form overwhelms the poem's effect are the Hesiodic Shield *of Herakles* and parts of the Epic Cycle.
[92] See discussion above on p. 83-84.

despite his deviation from the Homeric norm. Aietes, who combines many aspects of Homeric heroes, villains, and gods, imposes on Jason the strictures of necessity typical of Homer. Jason must prove his ability to succeed when challenged with a task that requires uncommon characteristics.Jason's victory is aclveved through magic; but this unHomeric means is made heroic by Apollonius' allusions. The very use of similes and their especially Homeric character rubs off on Jason, giving his success an unexpectedly appropriate epic sheen. He completes the task emphatically, the like of which no Homeric hero could accomplish; furthermore, he is supported by imagery and allusion in a manner no Homeric hero could expect. Ultimately, Jason plays the part of a hero convincingly. The reader cannot smirk at Jason's improbable accomplishment, but must smile at Apollonius' successful reinvention of the *aristeia.*

Conclusion

I started this project with the observation that the Argonauts fall short of the Homeric heroes. This effect is deliberate: Apollonius juxtaposes this failure with the hero's success in his tasks. In outlining how he achieves this, I have tried to relate Apollonius' adaptation of heroism to the poetic project of the *Argonautika*. I hope in the process to have shed a little more light on the place of the heroes in the poem. As noted in the introduction, there is a danger that in studying the heroes of this epic one translates the centrality of an Odysseus or Aeneas to Jason's role. Apollonius' poem demands a careful eye for Homeric allusions, and so there is a temptation to read his whole project as subordinate to Homer's. But one must read the poem for its own merits. Although Apollonius falls between Homer and Virgil on the literary timeline, the exact relation between these epics has not been well defined. It is difficult to set a Jason in the context of more familiar epic heroes without forcing him to fit either previously or subsequently established categories. But for precisely that reason, it remains worthwhile to examine what distinguishes him from the heroes of other poems. Centuries of scholarship have allowed a familiarity with Homer and Virgil to be envied. In order to gain the same rapport with Apollonius, one must first engage in comparisons with what is known about these more famous poets.

There are many directions in which I would have liked to push this study, most of which have been thwarted by the impositions of limited time and energy. The concept of the romantic hero demands a more careful examination. The central role Eros plays in bringing Medeia to Jason's aid and the narrator's continued attention to love in the third and fourth books promises further development of this theme through the second half of the epic. Some earlier moments deserve some attention at as well: the loss of Herakles

(1.1153-1362) is another occasion where love comes to the fore. Hylas disappears from the poem, done in by the love of a nymph I.1228-39), while Herakles is lost because of the raging desperation the loss of his *erastes* brings. But although love remains an important aspect of the epic, any comprehensive study of this aspect of Jason's character must also examine moments where he succeeds in spite of breaking the Homeric model, but not on account of his romantic appeal. For instance, when he tests the crew's determination (II.622-47), Jason emulates Agamemnon's greatest failure (*Il.* II.109-154). Yet Jason's trial of the men is successful, and does not seem related to the victories his romantic charm brings him.

My greater knowledge of the Iliad has led me to privilege that poem over the *Odyssey* in drawing comparisons between the *Argonautika* and the Homeric epics. Ideally, this would not be so. Odysseus provides the most immediate model for Jason as a traveler upon the sea, and his trickery seems more akin to Jason's largely non-violent successes. Jason's fantastic journey also shares geographical and thematic similarities with Odysseus'. Apollonius seems to encourage comparison between one voyage and the other (e.g. III.320-66), although the Homeric hero's account has a confidence characteristic of a survivor's tale and which Apollonius' narration lacks (Hunter 1989, 32). Odysseus is subject to the same ἀμηχανίη ("helplessness," Od. IX.295) so typical of Jason, yet is also frequently described as πολυμήχανος ("versatile, of many devices," (e.g. *Od.* V.203). Likewise, his trials are described by the now especially familiar term ἀέθλος (*Od.* 1.18). Lastly, he is a hero who depends upon the advice of Athene, the same ὑποθημοσύνη (e.g. *Arg.* 1.19, Od. XVI.233) on which Jason frequently relies.[93]

[93] This theme returns in numerous guises throughout the *Argonautika*, but to my knowledge very little has been written upon it.

Herakles' role in the poem following his abandonment deserves more scrutiny as well. Even after his abandonment Herakles haunts the Argonauts' quest. On several occasions, he is remembered as the ideal man for a task now facing his former companions (II.145-50, III.1242-44) or else inadvertently saves the crew (11.1050 ff., IV.1458 ff.).[94] His absence is constantly felt, always in contrast to the weakness of the other heroes. His transformation from hero to god on account of his labors (ἀέθλους, 1.1315-25) implies a different treatment for a different kind of hero, in contrast to the kind of immortality the narrator wishes for the other Argonauts (IV.1773 ff.).

Comparisons to the *Aeneid* also remain fertile ground for further inquiry. Virgil's invocation of Erato (VII.37 ff.) alludes to the invocation of the third book of the *Argonautika* (111.1 ff.), but where Apollonius deals with the effect of love on Medeia in some depth, the potential romance between Lavinia and her two suitors is conspicuously absent—especially in light of Aeneas' detailed affair with Dido[95]. The invocation to Erato, however, may be an announcement of an Apollonian treatment of the hero. Jason can no longer shrink from a great feat when the *aristeia* is laid before him—he must succeed physically as a Homeric hero would. So too in the second half of the *Aeneid* Aeneas must enter a war that will test his Homeric prowess rather than his Roman heroism."

Turnus likewise owes some aspects of his character to Jason. He is something of an Argonaut in reverse: where Jason would consistently fail to meet the Homeric

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94 See p.54 ff. for a more thorough discussion.

95 This may in part be intended to suggest the parallel roles of Dido and Turnus as foils to Aeneas.

96 Another element with something of an Apollonian flavor to it is the deliberate hiding of Lavinia after announcing a love theme. This at times happens with great subtlety. For example, the allusion to Achilleus' pursuit of Wektor in the *Iliad* (XXII.158-66) during Aeneas' final chase of Turnus (XII.764-65) purposefully leaves out the woman for which athletes will sometimes compete (XXII.164). Since Aeneas and Turnus are in one sense fighting for the hand of Lavinia in marriage, the omission may suggest a purposeful repression of romantic tension where it would be most expected.

standard and succeed regardless, Turnus tends to fulfill expectations for a Homeric hero only to fail. Although he plays the role of the villain, he attempts to emulate Achilleus (IX.740-42) and to ally himself with Diomedes (VIII.9-17). In the end he becomes another Hektor, pursued by Aeneas and a flurry of allusions to the Trojan hero's death—but not without more ambiguous moments where he seems to match no one more closely than Aeneas. For instance, Turnus fails to kill himself on three attempts while trapped upon the boat to which Juno led him (X.653-88), emulating Aeneas' thrice-failed embrace of the ghosts of his past family (II.792-94, VI.700-702). Virgil's complicated portrait of a hero who does not quite fit the standards set for him is reminiscent of Apollonius' definition of Jason against his Homeric counterparts. A comparison of the techniques used to render each hero unsuitable for the rule by which he is judged may well be instructive.

The narrative style of the *Argonautika* differentiates the poem from Virgil's smoother and more cohesive poem. The result was somewhat less Homeric and thus less conducive to being traced in an epic tradition. Hunter writes:

> Such an uneven [narrative] texture was, however, fundamental to Apollonius' conception of how epic should be written in the shadow of Homer; it is after all the extraordinary continuity of voice and atmosphere which is perhaps the most astonishing thing about the Homeric poems. Apollonius has shattered this continuity, but refuses (unlike Virgil) to put a new one in its place. (Hunter 1993, 109)

In Homer's epics, the success of the heroes is intimately connected with the song's success as a poem. Odysseus and Achilleus must be convincing heroes in order to earn their respective victories; otherwise the poem becomes ineffective as a work of art. Aeneas exchanges his unconvincing Trojan heroism for a greater Roman one, becoming in the process part of an end greater than himself. His victory is destined, and so as invulnerable to failure as Jason is to the flames of Aietes' bulls. But Jason neither

measures up to l s own story nor shares in any grand teleological schemes; he wanders through the plot to wherever Apollonius' poetic fancy may lead him. Jason is not bound to a heroic death, nor to the foundation of an empire. The poem is driven by its poetic soplstication rather than its story.

The epic tradition of Western Europe built on the Aeneid rather than the *Argonautika*, and the epic without an overarching purpose for hero and poem alike remains somewhat foreign to post-Virgilian sensibilities. Yet studies such as that of Nelis (2001) demonstrate the tremendous influence Apollonius had upon Virgil himself. Given the example the Roman poet set for Western literature, it may well be worthwhile to investigate how much of the conscious emulation through allusions in later epic poems originate in Apollonius' deliberate and conscious adaptation of the epic tradition.

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