

THE GEOGRAPHY OF KINGSHIP IN APOLLONIUS OF RHODES

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Classical Studies)
in The University of Michigan
2009

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And little he knew of the things that ink may do, how it can mark a dead man's thoughts for the wonder of later years, and tell of happenings that are gone clean away, and be a voice for us out of the dark of time, and save many a fragile thing from the pounding of heavy ages; or carry to us, over the rolling centuries, even a song from lips long dead on forgotten hills.

—Lord Dunsany

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for my maman

Acknowledgements

Much like Jason, I could not have attempted this quest alone.

Affectionate thanks go first to my dissertation advisor, Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, for the consistent guidance, help, understanding, and support he offered me during the writing of this dissertation—and, too, for the direction and care he has offered me since the beginning of my tenure at Michigan. But for his timely intervention three years ago, I would have ended up a Roman historian. Many thanks are also owed and gladly rendered to my excellent committee—Ruth Scodel, David Potter, and Ian Moyer—whose many suggestions have not only improved this dissertation but have given me much to consider for future incarnations of it.

As lucky as I have been in my advisors, I have also been greatly fortunate in my friends. Much affection and many thanks go to my office mates, past and present, of 2139 Angell Hall, whose companionship has made my years here both productive and enjoyable. I am particularly grateful to our League of Extraordinary Dissertators for their many excellent comments on two chapters of this dissertation, and to Jonathan Bright, carrel partner extraordinaire, for reminding me to write *about* Hellenistic poets, not *like* them.

Last but not certainly least, many thanks and all my love to my parents, Earlene and John, and to my sibs, Jeff and Natalie, for more reasons than tongue can tell. If there really were a golden fleece, my hearts, I would bring it back for you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The rise of Alexander and his successors exerted a profound influence on Greek discourse on kingship. While poets and prose writers from Pindar to Isocrates certainly engaged with the concept of kingship in their work, their discourse on the topic was primarily an intellectual exercise: dominated as Greece was by independent poleis, it had little use for the political reality of monarchy.¹ There were the kings of the heroic past, of course, familiar from Homer and the tragedians, and there were the tyrants of more recent history; by the early fourth century, there also were or had been tyrants in Syracuse, Thessaly, and Caria, and Macedon had ever been ruled by hereditary kings. Yet despite the kingdoms crowding in along the edges of the Greek world, contemporary kingship was to the classical mind essentially a foreign institution, one by which barbarians, particularly Asiatic barbarians, were ruled. This point of view did not survive the rise of Macedon. With the advent of Philip and Alexander, kingship was no longer simply a foreign phenomenon that the polis explored on stage; by the time the Hellenistic kings rose to power, it was no longer even a theoretical problem that the Sophists engaged with in their work, or a form of rule philosophers and orators sought to define and justify in theirs. Kingship was instead the political reality of the Greek world, and the literary discourse on it adjusted accordingly. In the aftermath of Alexander, scholars

¹ G. Shipley 2002: 59; P. Bilde and O. Murray 1996: 9–10

were forced to come to grips with what kind of kingship he had created and, as his generals rose to power, what kind of kingships were being born.²

What emerged from that struggle was a discourse on kingship that was rooted in but simultaneously distinct from that of archaic and classical Greece. Although the qualities of a successful Hellenistic king were legion—adherence to justice, and the possession wealth and formidable resources, among others³—the prose writers focused on only two: world conquest and benefaction. Both of these qualities stemmed in part from earlier views of kingship—among the Homeric kings, military prowess was obviously paramount, and Pindar, Plato, and Isocrates all wrote of the necessity of kings being generous to their people—but the manner of their expression was dependent on the career of Alexander. Conquest no longer spoke only of a king's ability at arms. The defeat and subjugation of one's enemies played a vital role, of course, but equally important was the negotiating of treaties and the founding of cities. Likewise, the geographic sphere involved in the conquest of kingdoms was now considerable. It was no longer enough for a king like Agamemnon to lead a host against one city, or for king like Darius to rise to power only among his own people; successful rulers, like Hecataeus's Sesosösis or even the Amazons of Dionysus of Scytobrachion, had to be able to extend their reach far past their own original borders. Of equal importance was their ability and willingness to do services for their people. Benefaction was no longer merely the hallmark of a good king, but one of the most essential props of his power. For at its heart was the expectation of active reciprocity: a king who treated his subjects well could expect to be treated well by them in return. The promise of such quid-pro-quo was of

² S. Stephens 2002: 31–2

³ G. Shipley 2002: 60–3

particular importance to kings in the early Hellenistic kingdoms, for without legitimacy of birth to shore up their position, those kings could hope to accomplish little without the active cooperation of their subjects—especially their soldiers.

As active as the prose writers were, however, this discourse on kingship was not the sole province of historians and philosophers: the Alexandrian poets contributed to the discussion with a will, with works that were both more wide-ranging in their treatment of kingship and considerably more biased. Though world conquest and benefaction were important to the poetic perception of kings, the poets did not consider them the only or even the main qualities necessary for a king's success; they engaged as well with the many other characteristics exhibited by successful Hellenistic monarchs. In the *Hymn to Delos* and *Hymn to Zeus*, Callimachus's praise of two sons of Ptolemy Soter has long been noted,⁴ and his court poetry as a whole has been evaluated as a narrative space in which the parameters of ideas concerning Ptolemaic kingship could be tested and explored.⁵ Theocritus's *Heracliscus* echoes aspects of Ptolemy II's ascension and shares a number of interpretative elements with Callimachus's two Ptolemaic hymns; his *Idylls* 18, 24, 24, and 26 likewise have been read as alluding to the ideology of the Ptolemaic court.⁶ More importantly still, in her *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics at Alexandria*, Susan Stephens contextualizes the poetic commentary on Hellenistic kingship in terms not only of Greek cultural expectations but Egyptian as well, and in doing so elucidates the poets' treatment of another aspect of Hellenistic kingship: the blending of disparate cultures in one regime.⁷

⁴A. Cameron 1996: 9–10; 408–9

⁵D. Selden 1998: 299–412.

⁶F. Griffiths 1979 but see E. R. Schwinge 1984.

⁷S. Stephens 2003: 74–237

Yet despite the attention directed at the ways in which the Alexandrians folded commentary on Hellenistic kingship into their poems, little of that attention has found focus on Apollonius. When any work has been done on qualities of leadership, the analysis has instead centered solely on the Greek leaders of the poem: Jason and Heracles, neither of whom, despite a position of leadership, is a king.⁸ The exclusivity is curious, since there are six men, both Greek and foreign, who hold the title *basileus* in the poem. A certain amount of attention has been paid to three of them in isolation,⁹ but an examination of the kings as a cohesive whole has so far been neglected, and with it an understanding of the connotations *basileus* carries in the *Argonautica*. Without that understanding, it is impossible to situate Apollonius within the discourse on kingship; too, it is impossible to discern one of the major narrative structures of the poem. This dissertation seeks to redress that lack. In doing so, it will characterize the *Argonautica* not merely as a lengthy experiment in Hellenistic aesthetics but as a markedly political poem, one that can be read as a national epic for Alexandria.

The idea of the *Argonautica* as a national epic is not new: Susan Stephens has made an excellent argument for it as a foundation legend for Alexandria. She argues that the defining characteristic of Jason's tale—the fusion of disparate cultures into a single unit—is perhaps what spurred Apollonius to choose the Argo's voyage as the subject of

⁸ The bibliography on Jason's qualities as the leader of the Argo's expedition is exhaustive, to the point that in 2001 R. Gleis called for a moratorium on discussion of the topic. Seminal contributions include J. Carspecken 1952: 33-143; H. Frankel 1957: 1-19 and 1960: 1-20; G. Lawall 1966: 119-169; C. Beye 1969: 31-55; G. Galinsky 1972; D. Pike 1980: 37-44; E. Schwinge 1986: 88-152; R. Hunter 1988: 436-53; S. Jackson 1992: 155-62; S. Natzel 1992; J. Clauss 1993 and 1997: 148-77; and M. DeForest 1994. On Heracles see particularly G. Lawall 1966: 119-169; D. L. Pike 1980: 37-44; R. Hunter 1993a: 25-41; and M. DeForest 1994.

⁹ On Aetes: M. Campbell 1983a and 1993: ad 3. 330ff.; A. Rose 1984: 115-136; R. Hunter 1989a: ad. 3.304f. ; 1989b: 90-92; 1993: 22-3, 147-8; K. Theil 1996; M. F. Williams 1996: 464-479; C. Harrauer 2004: 171-83; A. Bettenworth 2005: 1-17. On Amycus: D. Hagopian 1955; A. Kohnken 1965 and 2004: 73-92; R. Lenk 1984: 22-32; A. Rose 1984: 115-136. On Alcinous: V. Knight 1995; A. Bettenworth 2005: 1-17.

his poem, for it is uniquely suited to a bicultural city like Alexandria. It is, likewise, suited to the particular cultures, Greek and Egyptian, of that new city, for no other story in Greek literature could support the amalgamation of Greek and Egyptian myth she sees embedded in Apollonius's telling of it: the claiming of the fleece as both a Greek katabasis and poetic avatar of the Egyptian night journey of the sun; Medea as both helper-maiden and divine protector of the king; Aeetes's serpent as an analogue to Typhaon and Seth alike. She interprets this parallel structure of complementary and competing mythologies as what makes the *Argonautica* an appropriate epic for Alexandria, for in borrowing symbols and narratives familiar to both halves of the bicultural audience, it defines a place for North Africa within the Greek literary tradition of foundation legends and mythic pasts.¹⁰

Yet Stephens's interpretation of the *Argonautica* as a national epic is limited by her assertion that Apollonius does not breach the temporal boundaries inherited from Homer.

She acknowledges—argues, in fact—that Apollonius fashions an epic past from and relevant to his own present, but she rejects the possibility that he fashioned specific parallels between the two, for such ties would violate an essential aspect of the epic genre: the impermeability of the barrier between the epic past and the poet's present.¹¹ In Homer there is no resonance between past and present; the events of the past, valorized, are entirely independent of and inherently superior to those of the present day. Parallels between Jason's world and the Hellenistic one can therefore not exist, for a link between

¹⁰ S. Stephens 2002: 171–237 and 2007.

¹¹ S. Stephens 2002: 170–3.

the pre-Homeric past and the Hellenistic present would require a temporal flexibility alien to the epic genre as a whole.

Such an argument, while perfectly reasonable, nonetheless ignores the small but significant amount of scholarship that has already established noteworthy parallels between the *Argonautica* and the Hellenistic Mediterranean. The resemblance between the history Apollonius gives for the Mariandynoi and the actual history of the Heraclea Pontica, for example, is noted as far back as Wilamowitz.¹² Vian addresses and briefly expands upon the same parallels in his notes to Book II, and they form a crucial part of Palombi's argument in his evaluation of two scenes from the *Argonautica*.¹³ Too, Frankel and Fusillo both interpret the temple that Lycus vows to dedicate to the Dioskouroi as an allusion to the divine cult of the Ptolemies, who themselves were closely associated with the twin heroes,¹⁴ and in the richness of ethnographic detail along the *Argonautica*'s southern Pontic shore Hunter sees the influence of Ptolemaic geopolitics and kingship.¹⁵ Outside of the Propontis, other parallels have also come to light: the suspicion with which Aeetes views Jason and his men, which could well have been inspired by the intrigues common to Hellenistic courts;¹⁶ the allusions to the Homeric Arete on Drepane, which take on particular significance when read against the public personas of Hellenistic queens;¹⁷ and the prophecy attending the clod of earth Euphemerus receives from Triton, which clearly anticipates the Greek colonization of and rule over northern Africa.¹⁸ What remains lacking for all of them, however, is a

¹² U. Wilamowitz 1924: vol. 2, 237 n2

¹³ F. Vian 1976: 159–61; M. G. Palombi 1993: 154–68

¹⁴ H. Frankel 1968: 516; M. Fusillo 1985: 125–6.

¹⁵ R. Hunter 1995: 13–27.

¹⁶ F. Vian 1974: 23 n3.

¹⁷ R. Hunter 1995: 22–24

¹⁸ R. Hunter 1995: 18–19

comprehensive framework in which they can be evaluated, both on their own terms and against one another. That Apollonius may be equating Aeetes with a Hellenistic king is intriguing—but what is his purpose in doing so? In what way does such an allusion interact with the rest of the poem? More importantly still, in what way should we interpret it? This dissertation seeks to provide some possible answers.

That purpose is not as improbable as it initially may seem. As Stephens herself maintains, ‘meaning’ in Apollonius is rarely a singular noun: one interpretation of a phrase, set of symbols, or pattern of events never precludes others, equally valid. And the blend of Greek and Egyptian myth and history in the *Argonautica* certainly points the way to more than one reading of it in the poem. For while I readily concede that reading the *Argonautica* as a poetic analogue of contemporary environments or events breaches the Homeric boundary between the present and the valorized past, I do not see such a breach as problematic. Apollonius is not Homer, nor, despite the assertions of much of the earlier scholarship on the *Argonautica*,¹⁹ is he trying to be. His treatment of a number of epic elements in the poem, from simile to language to narrative construction, indicates that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were not models to be copied but merely a point from which to begin, a baseline against which to measure variations that are frequently startling in their variety and scope.²⁰ His treatment of the relationship between past and present need be no different. Vergil, after all, certainly did not follow Homer in temporal conventions; he mixes the epic past and the Roman present freely throughout all twelve books of the

¹⁹ This attitude is particularly prevalent in work on the narrative structure of the poem. See J. Carriere 1959: 41–63; E. Phinney 1967: 327–41; P. Thierstein 1971; D. Levin 1971; and J. Preininger 1976.

²⁰ See particularly M. Campbell 1981a; S. Jackson 1993; V. Knight 1995; C. Pietsch 1999; C. Reitz 1996; B. Effe 1996: 290–312; and A. Rengakos 1993, 1994a, and 2001: 193–216.

Aeneid. There is no reason to assume that Apollonius did not do the same; there are, in fact, many reasons to claim that he did.²¹

The most persuasive of those reasons is the fact that the strongest allusions to Egyptian myth are firmly anchored to a single geographic point: Colchis. This link between Africa and the East is what first suggests an alternate reading for the *Argonautica*, for the ties between North Africa and Colchis were already well-attested in Greek literature.²² Nor is Apollonius the only Hellenistic writer to exploit that established link. Callimachus connects Egypt and Colchis in respect to their weaving at the beginning of the *Victoria Berenices*, and Lycophron in his own *Argonautica* identifies Colchis as a Libyan settlement.²³ Moreover, a century and a half before them Herodotus averred not only that Colchians were Egyptian but that their blood relation was both obvious and common knowledge (*Hist.* 2. 104.1). The Egyptian identity inherent in any representation of Colchis would therefore have been familiar to a Hellenistic audience from a variety of sources, which makes the emphasis Apollonius places upon it all the more intriguing: the first allusion to Egypt, is, for him, curiously strong. In a poem where allusions frequently hinge on a variant reading of a single word, or else depend upon the reader recognizing that word in an unusual context,²⁴ the identification of Colchis as Egypt is uncharacteristically forceful: as the Argonauts approach Aetes's kingdom, Apollonius does not so much allude to as entirely co-opt Herodotus's Egyptian framework for the peoples through whose territories the Argonauts pass: as Herodotus does at *Hist.* 2. 35: he writes that they completely invert normal custom in everything

²¹ R. Hunter 1993: 152–189

²² Braund 1994: 9, 17–18

²³ S. Stephens 2002: 175

²⁴ P. Kyriakou 1995

they do. Combined with the trappings and ideology of Egyptian kingship that appear with Aetes, the nod to Herodotus at *Arg.* 2. 1019–20 makes it impossible to read Colchis and its environs as anything other than Egyptian.

This allusion raises the question of intent, for why Apollonius would choose to highlight the Colchian/Egyptian association so strongly is not immediately clear. He is not following Argonautic convention; in no other *Argonautica* that survives is the Egyptian identity of Colchis significant.²⁵ Nor is he merely showing off his knowledge of Herodotus, for patterns of allusion in the *Argonautica* are systematic and precise: Apollonius never includes them for the purposes of showboating alone. Even Stephens's excellent argument of fused cultures is problematic: it offers an interpretation for the entire poem based primarily on a single episode of it. And Apollonius did not write merely Book 3 of the *Argonautica*; he wrote the *Argonautica*. The Colchis/Egypt parallel cannot be effective in isolation; for it to be meaningful, there must be a framework to support it. I argue that such a framework is established from the opening scene of Book 1, and that the overt identification of Colchis as Egypt, already familiar, would have invited any Hellenistic audience, as it certainly invites us, to search for other such geographic parallels tucked inside outwardly familiar shells. If Colchis is Egypt, what might that make Phrygia? Drepane? North Africa itself?

If the familiar shells one chooses to search inside are the Homeric tropes of supplication, hospitality, and the figure of the *basileus*, such a search well repays the inquiry. For Apollonius's variations on them—and those variations are extensive—reveal an almost entirely non-Homeric world. They reveal instead a world where not Greece but the Near East and North Africa are the seats of world power, and where

²⁵ S. Stephens 2002:175.

diplomacy is equally as important as skill at arms. They reveal a world ruled by rival kings, one of whom, in Greece, seeks the death of the rightful heir in order to keep hold of his own power, another of whom, near North Africa, consistently chooses diplomacy before war, and the most formidable of whom—harsh, arrogant and Eastern—trusts no one but his beloved son, a talented war-leader who outshines his own companions as the sun outshines the stars. To any student of Hellenistic history, and, I argue, to any Hellenistic audience, they reveal a world that is a poetic re-imagining of the wars of the diadochoi, and of the early Hellenistic age. And with it, they reveal an extensive commentary on Hellenistic kingship, filtered through a lens of Ptolemaic propaganda.

There are three central aspects to this dissertation: the recognition of Jason's world as a cultural map of the Hellenistic one; the consideration of two kings as poetic avatars of Ptolemy and Antigonos and the remaining four as personifications of different aspects of Hellenistic kingship; and the evaluation of how the manner in which the diadochoi dealt with one another as well as with Hellenistic cities resonates in the poem. Chapter 1 investigates the implications of Apollonian hospitality scenes. Rather curiously, there has not yet been any comprehensive work on Apollonius's variations on Homeric type-scenes in the *Argonautica*. Much attention has been paid to his use of Homeric language, of course; the philological debt he owes Homer was a point of interest for scholars as far back as R. Merkel,²⁶ and the intervening century has seen that interest continued and renewed. In 1953 H. Erbse's article on Apollonius's engagement with the Homeric scholia touched off a profitable debate on Apollonius's interest in contemporary philology;²⁷ this debate culminated in the two monographs of A. Regakos,²⁸ which

²⁶ R. Merkel 1854

²⁷ H. Erbse 1953: 163–96

effectively established the Homeric language of the *Argonautica* as a lens through which to evaluate Apollonius's dual personas of preeminent Homeric critic and inventive epic poet. Too, commentaries and more extensive scholarship have addressed Apollonius's reworking of Homer's narrative technique, spanning everything from authorial voice to narrative unity to the distinctly Hellenistic construction of his otherwise Homeric similes. Yet this careful evaluation of Homeric language and style has not extended to a systematic evaluation of Homeric tropes in Apollonius—particularly that of the guest–host relationship, which constitutes a major aspect of character interaction in all three epics. Individual episodes have been evaluated for their own merits—the reception of Hera and Athena by Aphrodite, for example, or the famously inhospitable hospitality Aeetes offers Jason and his men—but they have not been considered as a whole. Such neglect has left a significant gap in scholarship on Homeric reception in Apollonius, for despite surface similarities the Apollonian scenes stand at a significant distance from their antecedents in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Too, it has left unaddressed a major feature of the *Argonautica*, for in that distance lies one of the major narrative structures of the poem: what it is that determines the social structure of Jason's world. Chapter 1 therefore evaluates each of the Apollonian hospitality scenes in turn. Read against their Homeric models and one another, and considered against the geographic backdrop of the poem, they reveal Jason's world as a geographic mirror of the Hellenistic Mediterranean and Near East.

In evaluating the men who rule that world, Chapter 2 establishes the *Argonautica*'s kings as allegory for different kinds of Hellenistic kingship. Little has yet been done with the six characters called *basileus* in the poem. To date, Aeetes has,

²⁸ A. Regakos 1993 and 1994a

perhaps predictably, garnered the lion's share of scholastic attention, but that attention is incomplete. Vian writes of him in his introduction to Book III,²⁹ and Campbell and Hunter devote significant portions of their commentaries to his character,³⁰ but all three scholars are interested almost exclusively in his behavior during his initial encounter with Jason, when he first challenges Our Hero to three tasks for the golden fleece. Livrea seems to have been of the same opinion: his commentary on Book 4 addresses Aetes not at all, though the king's shadow looms large over the vast majority of that book. Williams offers a broad look at his character in her 'The Character of Aetes in Apollonius's *Argonautica*,' but only in terms of direct characterization;³¹ Bettenworth explores his relationship to Alcinous in the *Odyssey* but not to the Alcinous of the *Argonautica*;³² C. Harrauer investigates the parallel Apollonius draws between Ares and the Colchian king, but does not address the significance of this parallel in respect to Aetes's standing among the other kings of the poem.³³ With the exception of Rose, who discusses three narrative themes that the episode at Colchis shares with the Argonauts' encounter with the Bebrycians,³⁴ nothing has yet been done to relate Aetes to the other kings of the poem: he rules in isolation. The same holds true for Alcinous, who receives even less attention from modern scholarship than he, and for the four other kings, who are rarely, if ever, mentioned at all. Chapter 2 therefore seeks to provide a complete picture of the *Argonautica*'s kings. In doing so, it argues that Apollonius drew more upon contemporary political models than previous poetic ones: though he of course

²⁹ F. Vian 1974: 23–31

³⁰ M. Campbell 1993: ad. 3.305ff.; R. Hunter 1989a: ad. 3. 305ff.

³¹ M. F. Williams 1996: 464–479

³² A. Bettenworth 2005: 1–17

³³ C. Harrauer 2004: 171–83

³⁴ A. Rose 1984: 115–136

relied upon earlier poets' portrayals of Pelias and Cyzicus, Amycus and Lycus, and Aetes and Alcinous in his work, analyses of those portrayals and of the specific *variatio* he works upon them align the *Argonautica's* kings strongly with the diadochoi and their heirs. In previous Argonautic tradition, for example, Apsyrtus is Medea's much younger brother; in Apollonius, he is significantly older than she and an experienced warrior, trusted without question by their father, and sent east at the head of a fleet against his father's rival king. These characteristics have no precedent in argonautic literature, but the similarities with Demetrius Poliorcetes are difficult to ignore. These parallels between the Hellenistic kings and the *Argonautica's* are not mere poetic conceit. They function as embedded praise-poetry for the Ptolemies—of the six kings, only the one associated with Ptolemy survives the poem with his kingdom intact and future prospects secure—but even more importantly, they offer commentary on the potentialities inherent in Hellenistic kingship. There is only one way to rule as a 'good' Hellenistic king, but Apollonius offers five other exciting ways in which Hellenistic kings can go terribly wrong.

Essential to the argument that establishes this reading are two very different and occasionally problematic kinds of evidence: fragments contained within the Apollonian scholia and historical evidence from a period of Greek history that is, at best, unreliable in its documentation. The scholia present their own problems, which are well-documented; when such problems impact this study, which is rarely, they are addressed in the relevant footnotes. In terms of the historical evidence, I have faced the problem any student of early Hellenistic history runs up against in her work: our literary sources are few, late, and therefore not always reliable, and they invariably involve holes we

cannot fill. When writing this dissertation, I elected to acknowledge but not to engage in the problems surrounding the reliability of Diodorus and Plutarch, tempting though the address of such problems certainly may have been. I am aware of the views of scholars such as Hornblower, who frequently accept the judgment passed on the diadochoi at face value, or who assume those judgments to be the faithfully related viewpoint of Hieronymus of Cardia;³⁵ likewise, I am sympathetic to the views of other scholars who believe that the motive of Plutarch's work contaminates the evidence he presents. Nonetheless, I have adopted what I consider the very sensible attitude of Billows in his seminal study on Antigonus Monophthalmus: if we uncritically accept everything Diodorus or Plutarch wrote on the diadochoi, we cannot hope to gain an accurate understanding of the main players in the early Hellenistic wars; likewise, if we continually discount anything Diodorus or Plutarch wrote simply because Diodorus or Plutarch wrote it, we can do nothing with one of the most extraordinary periods of the ancient Mediterranean world.³⁶ Diodorus and Plutarch by default therefore form a large part of my literary evidence on the lives of the *diadochoi*.

I have been careful as well with the distinction between political thought and political theory, as I have embraced only the first for the purposes of this project. Although it deals primarily with kings and the manner of their rule, this dissertation is not an exercise in political theory, nor does it aspire to be. I follow instead the distinction drawn by Barker, who asserts that when applied to the concept of kingship, political thought addresses only two specific aspects of it: the manner in which kings ruled, and

³⁵ J. Hornblower 1981: 211–23

³⁶ R. Billows 1990: 1–12

the popular ideas entertained about them.³⁷ Unlike political theory, political thought does not encompass the nature of monarchy as an abstract idea; as such, it seemed the more suitable basis for this study, as our understanding of early Hellenistic political theory is weak. While we know that most, if not all, of the diadochoi hosted philosophers at their court, and that those philosophers wrote for their patrons treatises on kingship, most of the treatises do not survive. The work on Hellenistic political theory that was done in the first part of the twentieth century—that of Kaerst and Goodenough, in particular—depends instead largely on evidence from the second century A.D.³⁸ While there is of course some value in considering early Hellenistic kingship in light of much later theories on it, the conclusions reached by such an exercise are unreliable: the Mediterranean of the second century was not the Mediterranean of the diadochoi and their heirs. And from the Mediterranean of the diadochoi and their heirs, we have little political theory with which to work.

The evidence for early Hellenistic political thought, on the other hand, is significantly more substantial. We have the poetry of Callimachus and Theocritus, in which matters of kingship are explored; inscriptions dating to the reign of Ptolemy II, which illuminate methods of Ptolemaic self-presentation and the public perception of Ptolemaic rule; a decree from the reign of Antiochus I, which outlines the behaviors for which he and his father Seleucus were praised by their subjects; and the ideology of early Hellenistic coins. When considered together, all of this evidence—the scholia and (late) literary portraits of the diadochoi, and the literary, epigraphic, and numismatic material of kingship—provides if not a complete than at least a satisfactory understanding of early

³⁷ R. Barker

³⁸ J. Kaerst: 1926; E. Goodenough 1928: 55–102

Hellenistic political thought; furthermore, when Apollonius is read against it, this evidence suggests a reading of the *Argonautica*'s kings as allegory for different kinds of kingship. It suggests, too, something more: chapter 2 concludes with the proposition that not only are the *Argonautica*'s kings meant to mirror 'good' and 'bad' modes of Hellenistic kingship, but that in the way those kings interact with Jason and his men, they cast the argonauts as a Hellenistic polis on the move.

To round out this portrait of Hellenistic cities and kings, my dissertation returns in its final chapter to an analysis of Homeric type-scenes in the *Argonautica*. To date, Apollonian supplication scenes have received even less attention than their hospitality counterparts. In their commentaries M. Campbell, R. Hunter, and E. Livrea mention certain scenes individually, but neither analyze them in depth nor contextualize them among the other supplications of the poem; their focus, like that of H. Frankel in *Noten*, is the resonance of Homeric language and structure in such scenes. Only M. Plantinga has offered a systematic analysis of Apollonian supplications, yet even so the problems with her argument are two: like her predecessors, she does not seek to contextualize the Apollonian supplications in relation to one another in the poem, and moreover, she addresses only seven of the nine supplications that occur in the *Argonautica*.³⁹ Chapter 3 therefore seeks to fill the gaps. It not only considers all of the poem's supplication scenes on their own merits (and follows Plantinga's sensible criteria for what constitutes a supplication) but reads them against both their Homeric antecedents and one another. As is true for the hospitality scenes, the distance between Apollonian supplications and their Homeric models is filled by an aspect of the Hellenistic world—in this case, the distrust that dominated the early Hellenistic kingdoms. The specific form that such distrust

³⁹ M. Plantinga 2006: 108–136

takes—suspicion, self-importance, neglect of the will of Zeus, self-interest, and the expectation of active reciprocity, combined in many cases with an odd reliance on blood kin—find echoes in the epigraphic and literary evidence of communications between kings and among cities in the early Hellenistic world. Apollonian supplications therefore complete the picture begun by the hospitality scenes and the treatment of the kings: Jason's world is a mirror of the Hellenistic. That mirror is held at something of a slant, however, for it ever reflects only Ptolemy in the best and brightest light. Considered together with Apollonius's treatment of hospitality scenes and the *basileus*, this final chapter solidifies the *Argonautica* not only as a foundation story for Alexandria, but as a significant contribution to the Alexandrian discourse on kingship and kings.

In closing, a brief word on the more mundane aspects of this study: terminology transliteration, translations, and sources. Like Adcock, I prefer the term kingship to monarchy,⁴⁰ as this study focuses on the how the Hellenistic kings ruled and the public perception of them, rather than on the abstract nature of the institution itself. When speaking of Apollonius's contemporaries, I likewise prefer Alexandrian to Hellenistic, as for the purposes of this dissertation I have limited the poetic comparanda to those poets who lived and worked at Alexandria. Greek appears only in direct quotations; words such as *basileus*, which appear frequently, are transliterated, and those transliterations, like the names of the characters and their Hellenistic models, take the Latinized forms. I fear I am obsessive about consistency of usage; unable to reconcile myself to writing a dissertation about Iason and the kingship of Alexandros III, I elected to use the Latinized forms throughout. All translations are my own.

⁴⁰ F. E. Adcock 1953: 163

Cambridge University Press released Anatole Mori's *The Politics of Apollonius Rhodius* shortly after this dissertation was defended. While Mori's conclusions do not alter my own, I regret being unable to take her many excellent and complementary points into consideration while crafting my arguments. I look forward to doing so in later incarnations of this work.

Chapter 2: Hospitality

Of the various aspects of cultural anthropology that appear in the *Argonautica*, supplication and hospitality are by far the most prevalent. Familiar from both epic and tragedy, both social institutions appear in a variety of guises throughout the poem: the *Argonautica* is, after all, a journey story, and as such its characters are frequently in need of welcome or aid. Yet the sense of familiarity with which we may initially consider these scenes is misleading. It is true that the principles governing appropriate supplication and hospitality are established as far back as Homer, but even the briefest of surveys reveals that the principles of such customs in the *Argonautica* differ, in some cases substantially, from their Homeric roots. The riddle lies in unraveling the pattern behind the variation: how and particularly why the Homeric characteristics are adapted throughout the poem.

At first glance, that riddle seems no true riddle at all. As G. Hutchinson indicated in his brief treatment of Apollonius,¹ A. Rose in her article on three episodes of Apollonian hospitality,² and R. Hunter in his treatment of Greeks and non-Greeks in the *Argonautica*,³ simple geography seems to be at the heart of many of the variations on familiar custom throughout the poem: the farther Jason travels from Greece, the more bizarre and uncivilized the world becomes. As sensible as this argument initially seems—for with each mile the Argo puts between herself and the Aegean, the world does

¹ G. Hutchinson 1988: 83

² A. Rose 1984: 116

³ R. Hunter in S. Said 1989: 90-92

appear to turn ever more alien— it is nonetheless severely handicapped by two other aspects of the poem: the events of the frequently-neglected Book 4 of the *Argonautica*, and the reader's understanding of precisely what 'Greek custom' entails. Each of these aspects is entwined with the other, and each is equally problematic in terms of casting Jason's travels east simply as a voyage from the familiar to the bizarre.

To argue effectively that the world grows more alien the farther east the Argo sails, it is necessary to argue, too, that the world begins to return to normal, the closer the Argo gets to home. Book 4 makes such an argument impossible, as Book 4 houses some of the oddest episodes of the entire poem. Moreover, the most compelling of these oddities occurs near the book's close, when the Argonauts are back in the familiar Aegean and yet facing an enemy stranger than any of the marvels they encountered in Aetes's kingdom or along the Istros River (*Arg.* 4.1638-1688). Such an argument also neglects the critical fact that Jason's world does not change in all its aspects all at once. Some of those aspects, like language, remain nearly constant from Greece to Phrygia to Colchis to Drépané, changing at only a single point in the journey. Others, like hospitality and supplication, undergo increasingly complex variations from Greece to Colchis but nonetheless share fundamental principles that alter drastically only after the argonauts have begun their long journey home. The interpretative structure Apollonius imposes on the geography of the poem is therefore far more complicated than a civilized/familiar Greek world and an ever-increasingly uncivilized/unfamiliar world to the east. Understanding that structure is essential to understanding the *Argonautica* as an Alexandrian epic as a whole.

Essential too to an appropriately Alexandrian reading of the *Argonautica* is a clear understanding of what qualifies as the norm in Jason's world. It is easy to say that the farther the argonauts journey from their homeland, the less familiar their world becomes; it is more difficult to offer a precise definition of what *familiar* implies for the argonauts. As Apollonius elected to write within the temporal framework of Homeric epic⁴¹—with the appearance of Peleus as a young man (*Arg.* 1. 87), Apollonius places these events a generation before Agamemnon sailed for Troy—our understanding of the *Argonautica*'s social norms default to their Homeric counterparts. The Argonauts' understanding of social norms, however, is not necessarily predicated upon the same. To decipher what is normal for Jason and his crew, we must look at the evidence within the text, and that evidence reveals a truth that governs all aspects of cultural anthropology in the poem: 'normal' is not synonymous with 'Homeric' in the *Argonautica*. What we find instead at the heart of hospitality scenes is a geographic pattern of convention. Between Greece and Colchis, there is, in a variety of guises, a deliberate distancing from the principles of Homeric hospitality. Though that distancing takes on different forms at each household, guests are consistently looked upon as potential enemies rather than as potential friends. This outlook changes at Aeaea, where we find instead a startling return to the Homeric norms, and on Drépané, where we witness an amalgamation of Homeric norms and Apollonian customs that create something new. Through this geography of hospitality, we find the geography of Jason's world: the lands that Alexander conquered and his generals ruled labor under continual and similar conditions of suspicion and warfare; the land that Alexander never reached, on the western side of Italy, remains untouched; and near the coast of North Africa, on an island whose very name signifies a change between

⁴¹S. Stephens 2003: 28.

the old order and the new, something new has taken shape. That this island is associated with Ptolemy Soter, and the other lands with his rivals, is not coincidental.

The customs that govern what, precisely, one should do with unexpected guests on the doorstep are somewhat fluid in Homer. The basic premise is simple: guests are to be welcomed; guests are, in turn, to behave. That premise can, however, be executed in a variety of ways; there are thirty eight possibilities in all, though no one scene in either *Iliad* or *Odyssey* incorporates more than several at a time.⁴² Yet as widely varied as they are—to offer a bath, a meal, and a bed; to offer a bath, clothes, and a meal; to offer a guest gift and a blessing; to offer both; to interpret an omen or offer a prophecy—all those possibilities are governed by specific rules of behavior, of which Homer provides numerous examples. When Telemachus and Pisistratus come to Sparta for news of Odysseus, they behave as proper guests should: they do not stride into Menelaus's home demanding food and drink; they instead wait just outside the inner court of the palace until they are noticed and welcomed (*Odyssey* 4. 20-22). Upon leaving, they offer their thanks and promise to remember the lavish kindness of Menelaus and his wife (*Odyssey* 15. 158-9; 181). Menelaus, likewise, behaves as a proper host:⁴³ though Telemachus and Pisistratus arrive in the middle of a double wedding feast for his children, he nonetheless immediately arranges for his guests' chariot to be unhitched and their horses cared for, sees to it that both young men are given baths and clean clothes, seats them beside him in places of high honor, declares his confidence in the high birth their looks and manners betray, and has his servants set out bread and wine for them, while serving them a king's

⁴² S. Reece 1993: 12.

⁴³ As S. West 1988: 195 ad 4.20ff. notes, Menelaus would have more cause than most to be hesitant about welcoming strangers, considering the consequences of his welcoming Paris fifteen years earlier; that he hesitates not at all argues well for the sanctity of a host's responsibilities.

cut of the meat himself (*Od.* 4. 20-66). He does not ask their names or business before they eat, merely tells them a tale of his own misfortunes to set them at their ease. Having installed them in comfortable quarters in his home, he invites them to stay as his guests for as long as they would care to, but does not hold them when they refuse: it is, as he says, poor form either to usher a man out who wishes to remain or otherwise detain a man who wants to leave (*Od.* 15. 72-4). Finally, upon their departure, he gives them gifts that are the pride of his house (*Od.* 15. 111-129), and Helen favorably interprets an omen for them (*Od.* 15. 170-81). The rules for proper conduct are therefore simple, for both sides: a guest acts with decorum and gratitude; a host willingly offers him the best of his household and gives him all aid and assistance to help him on his way. He makes that offer and gives such assistance and aid either for his own house's honor (*Od.* 3. 346-55), in reparation for hospitality that has been shown to him (*Od.* 4. 33-4), because the gods demand it (*Od.* 14. 56-8), or a combination of the three.

Matters are different in *Argonautica*, for the basic premise of Homeric hospitality no longer holds true. Guests are not always immediately welcomed and provided for; guests do not always intend to behave. Six of the eight hospitality scenes feature variations on or reversals of the Homeric roles of guest and host: Iolchus, where Jason is not welcomed to Pelias's court but sent from it; Lemnos, where the Argonauts must ask to be received; Bebrycia, where the king greets all visitors with his fists; Thynia, where the guests provide the feast and the host the thanks; Acherousia, where the Argonauts are welcomed only because of what they have done; and Colchis, where their welcome becomes constraint. Only in the seventh do Homeric norms come into play, and in the eighth, what appears to be traditional Homeric hospitality is soon subjected to distinctly

non-Homeric circumstances. The pattern of variations is curious, for there does not seem to be a consistent theme that binds the eight scenes together. The basic premise of Homeric hospitality does not apply in Apollonius's world—nor, tellingly, do the Argonauts expect it to—but no discernable replacement has appeared in the gap. Apollonius has not established a new set of universal norms for guest and host; he merely offers example after example in which Homer's no longer function. An analysis of each scene points the way towards why.

Mainland Greece

Calling Jason's arrival at Pelias's court a 'hospitality scene' is somewhat of a misnomer, for he does not arrive seeking simple hospitality; he has come to take part in a religious feast. Nonetheless, two clear Homeric elements demand that it be read as such. The first is the allusion to Telemachus's visit to Nestor at *Od.* 3. 43–4: like Telemachus, Jason has arrived at a king's house in the midst of a feast for Poseidon (*Arg.* 1. 12–14). The second is a constellation of motifs already familiar from the Homeric hospitality type-scene, sharply telescoped though those motifs may be: Jason's journey from his own home in the country to Pelias's city,⁴⁴ his arrival at the feast, his host's notice of him, and his subsequent reception (*Arg.* 1. 5–17). Each of those elements proves a negative example of Homeric convention. For unlike Telemachus, welcomed with immediate warmth even before Nestor knows he is Odysseus's son (*Od.* 3. 34–9), Jason is not invited to the feast; he is instead ordered to sail across the world on a quest intended to be his doom. Also unlike Nestor and his sons, Pelias is far from a model host. Nestor refuses in the name of Zeus to allow Telemachus to sleep anywhere other

⁴⁴ ἴκετο δ' ἐς Πελοπόννησον (*Arg.* 1. 12) strengthens the association with a hospitality scene; S. Reece (1993), 13, notes that a form of ἰκνέομαι is almost always used to signal the arrival of a guest at his host's home.

than in his hall; Pelias gives no thought to the offense maltreating a guest may do to the gods. Nestor and his sons pour libations to Poseidon and all the gods after their sacrifice; Pelias antagonizes Hera by setting a feast to honor Poseidon and all the gods but her (*Arg.* 1. 14). Also unlike Nestor, he does not offer guest-gifts; his desire to hold on to what he considers his is the driving force behind his decision to send Jason away. *Arg.* 3. 333–9 will reveal that he in fact requires a gift from his guest, for he tells Jason that Zeus will soften his anger against their family only if the fleece is fetched back home. Pelias does not, like Polyphemus, threaten to devour Jason for dinner, but by Homeric standards he is nonetheless an exceedingly poor host.

This scene is essential for a variety of reasons, the most relevant of which being the norm it establishes for guest-host interaction in Jason's world. As common as poor hosts are in Homer, their disregard for the laws of hospitality always comes as a shock to their guests. At Polyphemus's cave, for example, Odysseus fully expects the entire measure of customary hospitality to be shown to him; having already plundered the Cyclops's store of food and drink, he waits about in the hopes of a guest gift (*Od.* 9. 228–9) and is genuinely appalled when Polyphemus elects to eat two of his crew members instead of give them shiny gifts (*Od.* 9. 288–99). Despite this unfortunate occurrence, when perhaps three weeks thereafter they land on the island of the Laestrygonians, Odysseus is still not on guard for potential treachery from his hosts: he sends only three men, apparently unarmed, to learn who lives on the island, and loses one to yet another host with a taste for human flesh. Wherever they are, Odysseus and his crew consistently expect a friendly welcome, and herein lies the difference between Homeric and Apollonian hospitality: neither Jason nor the Iolchians expect such a welcome from their

king. His disregard for the customs of Homeric hospitality startles them not at all; rather, they matter-of-factly set about dealing with the consequences. Though Alcimedea bemoans the fell commandment of the king (κακήν βασιλῆος ἐφετμήν: *Arg.* 1. 279) that she suspects will deprive her of her son, she does not berate Pelias for it. Her silence stands in contrast to Menelaus's chastisement of Eteoneus for his treatment of Telemachus (*Od.* 4. 31–2), or Telemachus's of the suitors for their abuse of Odysseus (*Od.* 18. 406–9), or Odysseus's of Polyphemus for making his men into a meal (*Od.* 9. 477–9).⁴⁵ Jason, likewise, later tells Tiphys that he should have simply refused the king's demand flat out even if it meant being torn apart while still living (*Arg.* 2. 624–6), but he does not seem surprised that Pelias issued it, or particularly put out that the king would have killed him for refusing. Pelias may be an immoral and uncivilized host by Homeric standards, but Pelias is hardly abnormal by those of Greece in *Argonautica*.

Jason's reception in Iolchus therefore establishes part of the norm of guest-host relations for Jason's world: it puts the audience on notice that Apollonius has appropriated a conventional Homeric framework for his own nefarious ends. In Homer, the inversion of hospitality rites signals an uncivilized or barbarian land: the Lastrygonians and the Cyclops make a meal of their guests instead of for them; Calypso and Circe both welcome guests gladly but are disinclined to let them go. Yet by the time the audience encounters any of those scenes, they have, too, already encountered Telemachus, Nestor, and Menelaus, all three uniformly excellent hosts whose generosity

⁴⁵ It's worth noting, of course, that the Homeric characters who berate others for poor hospitality have nothing to fear from them: Eteoneus is a wealthy neighbor of Menelaus but still not the king; Telemachus knows that his father has come home and will soon destroy the suitors; Odysseus is on a ship and Polyphemus now blind. As precedent there is nonetheless Telemachus's speech to the suitors at *Od.* 2. 64–79, where he acknowledges that he is powerless to punish them for their breach of guest rights and yells at them for it anyway, and Echenus's admonishment of Alcinous at *Od.* 7.

towards strangers showcase the civilized morality of Greece.⁴⁶ Not so in the *Argonautica*. The inversion of Homeric hospitality norms on the Greek mainland in the first hospitality scene of the poem warns that the *Argonautica* is a different kind of world. Either Homeric norms do not apply, or ‘Greek’ does not mean ‘civilized.’

Lemnos

The second hospitality scene of the poem belongs to Hypsipile, the Lemnian queen, who plays host to the Argonauts when they arrive on her shore and ask her for her aid. In this scene several of the typical Homeric elements are in play: the arrival, the description of the surroundings, and the waiting at the threshold; the supplication, reception, seat, and feast; identification (of a sort); entertainment; detaining of the visitor; guest gifts, and the farewell.⁴⁷ Yet despite the heavy Homeric overtones in this passage, distinctly non-Homeric variations are at work. Again, the conventional framework draws the readers’ attention to the differences from such scenes in Homer, strengthening the suggestion established with Pelias: Jason and his men are moving through a non-Homeric world.

The most striking aspect of this hospitality scene is that it is not immediately recognizable as such. Hospitality scenes in Homer do not come as a surprise; their signposts are uniform and explicit. They begin, always, with the arrival, which the audience sees through the guest’s eyes: we follow him up the wide road to a palace, along steep cliffs to a cave, through the sleeping camp of his enemies, and both audience and guest know where he is bound and why. Only after he is in place at whatever passes for a threshold can the narrative shift to the viewpoint of the host, in time for the guest to be

⁴⁶ For hospitality to strangers as an index of morality, see S. West 1988: 90–3.

⁴⁷ See S. Reece 1993: 12–39 for a full list.

seen, approached, and welcomed.⁴⁸ Yet even before these physical acts of approach and greeting, signposts in the narrative itself not only herald an imminent guest-host interaction but indicate what sort of interaction it will be. Homeric characters do not, as a rule, suddenly stumble across cottages in the woods while hunting and encounter their host unawares in his yard; approaching their host is instead a rather lengthy process, begun when they see smoke rising and make a deliberate choice to go inspect it, intent on discovering what sort of men inhabit a place, or when they set out on a journey with a specific destination in mind. Too, the audience is always aware what sort of hospitality will be extended, for Homer makes a point of introducing relevant qualities of the hosts before the guests ever meet them. Long before we ever meet Polyphemus, for example, we know that Odysseus's encounter with him will not end well; Homer describes the monsters as lawless, ruthless brutes before Odysseus ever reaches his cave. Likewise, Athena tells Odysseus that his swineherd Eumaeus is still loyal to him and a friend to Telemachus and Penelope; neither the audience nor Odysseus is then surprised by the generous welcome Eumaeus extends.

Apollonius breaks with both of these conventions in the scene at Lemnos. The first and most obvious difference is the manner of the Argonauts' initial approach to the island. The Argonauts have not spied smoke and gone to investigate; they have not taken counsel and decided to seek rest; they have not been instructed by a god to ship their oars and drop anchor at Lemnos. The audience is therefore unaware that a hospitality scene is in the offing. Nor does their approach to the island provide any particular clues, as it takes the form of a simple geographic catalog (*Arg.* 1.559-608). While this shares a

⁴⁸ As examples, obviously non-inclusive: Athena and Telemachus at *Od.* 102-22; Odysseus and Eumaeus at *Od.* 14. 1-39.

strong resonance with the ekphrasis not atypical of the Homeric hospitality scene, that resemblance is apparent only in hindsight. The Argonauts have spent the past three days sailing past Pelion and Meliboia, estuaries, Ossa and Athos; they have κλίτεια Παλλήνια, Καναστραίην ὑπὲρ ἄκρην/ ἦνυσαν (*Arg.* 1. 599–600); when Apollonius therefore writes that they rowed to the rocky shore of Sintian Lemnos (εἰρεσίη κραναὴν Σιντηίδα νῆσον ἴκοντο: *Arg.* 1. 607–8), it seems merely the next place of note on their journey. The verb ἴκοντο, familiar both from Homeric hospitality scenes and Jason’s arrival at Iolchus, gives us our first clue that Lemnos may be more than that, but the clue is not absolute. ἴκοντο is not exclusive to hospitality scenes in Homer, and it is not exclusive to hospitality scenes here; it is already familiar from *Arg.* 1.185, where the two sons of Poseidon arrive for the muster call of the Argo. Our only other hint is the time they make landfall: it is either dawn or twilight,⁴⁹ and either is a customary time for a Homeric guest to come calling.

The first hint of its potential comes when Apollonius begins his potted history of Lemnos and its people. Though he delighted in pointing out the landmarks of the Greek mainland as the Argo passed, he did not trouble with accounts of the peoples who lived by and among them; that he does so now suggests that the Lemnian women may soon play an active role in the narrative. Hosts to the men currently rowing in to their shore seems not unlikely. Yet unlike the Homeric description of a potential host, which can be counted upon as an accurate gauge for the type of hospitality he will offer, the description of the Lemian women leaves the audience uncertain of the kind of reception Jason and

⁴⁹ Which is not precisely clear; see H. Frankel 1968: 89. I would tend to read it as twilight: Telemachus and Odysseus both arrive at beaches in the morning, while their visits to palaces are conducted at dusk; considering the other inversions of Homeric norms Apollonius has perpetrated so far within his poem, it seems unlikely he would have chosen to ignore the time of their arrival.

his men are like to receive—or rather, certain of the wrong one. The story Apollonius tells of Lemnos is a bloody one. In anger at the Lemnian women, Aphrodite poisoned their husbands with love for Thracian slaves; in jealousy, the Lemnian women killed their husbands and their husbands' new lovers; in fear of eventual reprisal, the Lemnian women then killed their own sons. The vocabulary Apollonius employs in this description is as ungentle as the tale itself: their husbands were gripped by a τρηχὸν ἔρον (*Arg.* 1. 613); Aphrodite exhibits a χόλος αἰνὸς (*Arg.* 1. 614); the slaughter for which the women fear retribution is a λευγαλέοιο φόνου (*Arg.* 1. 619). Equally ungentle is the description of the Lemnian women as the Argo puts into shore: they immediately arm themselves and rush to the beach like a pack of flesh-eating Maenads (Θυιάσιν ὠμοβόροις ἔκελαι: *Arg.* 1. 636). Any reader familiar with Homer's custom of introducing to the audience relevant qualities of a potential host can be forgiven for assuming Jason is going to lose some of his men if not his own life in asking the women for aid.

Adding to this impression, too, is the Lemnian women's surroundings and activities. Homeric hosts, as a rule, are engaged in peaceful pursuits when their potential guests come calling: Telemachus is brooding over his father's loss, Nestor eating with his captains and sons, Menelaus celebrating his children's wedding, and Alcinous feasting his captains. Even Achilles, who has spent the previous twenty three books alternately sulking in his tent, killing Trojan soldiers, and dragging Hector's corpse through the dust, is at something close to peace; when Priam arrives, he is unarmed inside his tent.⁵⁰ Not so for the Lemnian women. In his description of them Apollonius explicitly states that

⁵⁰ This rule holds true even for hosts who turn out to be less than exemplary in their treatment of guests: Circe is singing and weaving at her great loom when Odysseus's men first call out to her from her threshold and Polyphemus out tending his flocks with what later proves to be thoroughly unexpected gentleness.

they no longer seek out domestic activities, but instead find it easier to engage in a variety of outdoor pursuits; while herding and plowing are peaceful enough, the third calls for the wearing of bronze armor (*Arg.* 1. 627-630). This image of women, armed, pursuing traditional male roles in place of their own unavoidably evokes the Amazons;⁵¹ in doing so, it further heightens the suspicion that instead of taking Jason's hand in welcome they may well try to chop it off. The potential for violence seems confirmed at *Arg.* 1. 630-1, where Apollonius reveals that they forever keep an eye on the sea to watch for the Thracians; it is lessened somewhat when he adds that they do so only in fearful dread (δείματα λευγαλέω: *Arg.* 1. 632); it is heightened again when they arm themselves and charge for the shore; and it is finally defused only at *Arg.* 1. 638-9, where Apollonius reveals that the women are too terrified and confused to be any sort of threat. Such a deliberately misleading characterization has no precedent in Homer, particularly in regard to a host.⁵² In *Argonautica*, however, it serves the same purpose as did Pelias's reception of Jason at Iolchus: it informs the reader that the world has changed. Not only the standard motifs but the very conventions of Homeric narrative can no longer be relied upon, for Jason is moving through a non-Homeric world.

The hospitality scene at Lemnos boasts a number of other variations on Homeric practice as well, all of which begin with the Argonauts' approach of the Lemnian women themselves. Homeric guests—good ones—do their host the courtesy of waiting on the

⁵¹ This association has been noted as far back as Statius, *Thebaid* 5. 144.; see also H. Frankel 1968: 92 ad 630b-9. I. Hulmberg 1998: 140-2, notes that while we do not know what actions οὐνεκά μιν γεράων ἐπὶ δηρὸν ἄτισσαν encompasses, the phrase could easily mean the women had first rejected the men and refused intercourse, thereby angering Aphrodite. Such an interpretation too, puts them in line with the Amazons.

⁵² The potential xenophobia of the Phaeacians is not an adequate parallel. Though vocabulary associates the Phaeacians as a group with the suitors ransacking Odysseus's house, which initially gives the audience pause, Nausicaa is certainly well-versed in the customs that govern hospitality; more, those hints are not entirely inaccurate. Laodamas (*Od.* 8. 145-51) and Euryalus (*Od.* 8. 158-64) both publicly abuse their guest.

threshold to be noticed, but then good Homeric guests always have the opportunity to approach their host's door.⁵³ The Argonauts do not. Hypsipile and her women come down to the shore in a rush at *Arg.* 1. 634–7, they stand helpless and terrified with their queen at *Arg.* 1. 637–9, and the Argonauts dispatch Aithalides to them at *Arg.* 1. 640. He is therefore forced to approach the queen on the threshold of her kingdom rather than the threshold of her house, an oddity matched only by the Argonauts' use of a herald when approaching their potential hosts instead of stepping forward themselves. Initially, their choice to send one man rather than all seems only sensible. They are, after all, facing an armed crowd, unknown and therefore unpredictable; the entire company leaping over the gunwale and tromping across the sands to say hello would probably not end in the welcome they wish for. Nonetheless, it is not Jason, the leader of the expedition, who approaches; the Argonauts decide to outfit Aethalides, the son of Hermes, with the formal accoutrements of a herald and send him forth as their representative instead.

The choice is jarring. J. Nishimura-Jensen glosses over the strangeness of this scene by noting that using heralds as 'a means of establishing contact and requesting safe passage was the norm in the Homeric world,'⁵⁴ but this assertion is problematic.⁵⁵ The Argonauts are not asking for safe passage; they are, as *Arg.* 1. 650 makes clear, only asking the women for permission to stay, presumably briefly, on Lemnos, and possibly to

⁵³ Odysseus and his men in Polyphemus's cave is an obvious exception; the other two

⁵⁴ J. Nishimura-Jensen 1998: 456.

⁵⁵ Not in the least because we never see heralds act as such in either of the Homeric poems. They attend the suitors in Penelope's hall (*Od.* 1. 109) and are later dispatched to bring her gifts (*Od.* 1. 290); they pour out wine for guests to drink (*Od.* 1. 143) and water with which to wash their hands (*Od.* 1. 146); maintain order at assemblies (*Od.* 2. 276); ferry messages across a great hall (*Od.* 7. 476-481), from shores to cities (*Od.* 16. 328), across army camps (*Il.* 4. 192), and across battle fields (*Il.* 3. 116); and they act as escorts for official embassies (*Il.* 9.170; 24. 577). Their role in those embassies, moreover, is a silent one. They accompany Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix to Achilles's tent, but they do not speak. Odysseus is charged with both Agamemnon's message to Achilles and Achilles's reply; they seem to serve as official witnesses whose word may be relied upon. They 'establish contact' only in that they ferry messages from and to men who know one another, and they are never used to request safe passage at all.

acquire supplies while there. What need, then, do they have for a herald? Could Jason not have gone himself? He has, after all, been elected captain of this expedition precisely because of his ability to interact with the people the Argonauts encounter; both his talents at such and his status as the leader of the Argonauts would argue for his being the first person off the boat. Homeric precedent argues for the same. Odysseus is like to send a group of his men out as scouts only when their host and his home is not visible; he is otherwise always the one to speak. Likewise, Athena upbraids Telemachus for being the last to climb out of the ship at Pylos and for hanging back from approaching Nestor. Yet Jason stays with the Argo, and he and the rest of the crew dispatch Aethalides to speak on their behalf.⁵⁶ Their choice significantly lessens the characteristic intimacy of the guest-host relationship, for Aithilades adds a dimension of distance and formality to a ritual that is, for all its codified behaviors and expectations, neither distant nor formal in Homer.

A potential explanation for the puzzle he presents is found in the similar distance Hypsipile maintains between Jason and herself when she welcomes him to her city. Homeric hosts or the children of those hosts greet guests themselves, frequently taking them by the hand to lead them indoors, but Hypsipile does not go down to the shore; she sends her own messenger Iphinoe to invite Jason in her stead.⁵⁷ Too, when Jason later arrives at her palace it is not Hypsipile who greets him. The maidservants throw open the doors, and Iphinoe then leads him—without touching—into the presence of her mistress (who does not rise) and seats him in a chair across from her (*ἀντία δεσποίνης*: *Arg.*

1.785-790). The seating arrangement is critical. Homeric guests are typically seated next

⁵⁶ The possibility that this represents the dealings between cities in the original colonization of the Black Sea, offered by R. Hunter 1995, will be dealt with in the chapter on kings, where I apply the same logic instead to the Hellenistic world.

⁵⁷ Iphinoe is called only *ἄγγελον* (*Arg.* 1. 701), not, like Aethalides, *κήρυκα* (*Arg.* 1. 641). This is potentially important.

to, not across from, their hosts;⁵⁸ when they do face them, either particular intimacy⁵⁹ or some sort of distance or formality is implied.⁶⁰ The more obvious reading in this scene is of course that of potential intimacy: Hypsipile is hoping to convince the Argonauts to stay on Lemnos; Jason's walk up through the city has already marked his first appearance as an erotic rather than epic hero.⁶¹ Yet while there is much validity in that interpretation, rarely in Apollonius does one interpretation preclude all others. Reading ἀντία δεσποίνης as an indication only of potential sexual attraction neglects two other aspects of the scene: the physical distance Hypsipile has so far maintained (and continues to maintain, as she and Jason do not touch until he takes her hands before returning to his men), and the very real martial allusions which resonate no matter how many blushing glances Hypsipile throws Jason's way.

Hosts seated across from guests is an arrangement that appears only twice in the *Iliad*: once at *Il.* 9. 218–9, where Achilles seats himself opposite Odysseus, sent with the embassy by Agamemnon, and again at *Il.* 24. 596–8, where Achilles seats himself opposite Priam, come to beg for Hector's corpse. Like that of the *Argonautica*, both scenes in the *Iliad* involve heralds. Two wait in attendance on the embassy; the one who attends Priam sees his role briefly usurped by Hermes.⁶² More importantly, while both

⁵⁸ *Il.* 24.100; *Od.* 3.37–9; *Od.* 4.51; *Od.* 7.169–71

⁵⁹ M. Plantinga 2007: 547: Odysseus and Penelope at *Od.* 23, 89–90, where the notion of formality also applies, and Paris and Helen at *Il.* 3. 425, though they do not qualify as host and guest. It is worth noting that Helen seems to negate the notion of intimacy by deliberately refusing to look at her husband.

⁶⁰ B. Hainsworth 1993: 92 ad 9. 218–9; N. Richardson 1993:339 ad. 24. 596–8.

⁶¹ The bibliography on Jason in this role begins in antiquity, with the scholiast who noted at *Arg.* 1. 721–2 (Wendel, 60) that Jason's donning of an erotic cloak replaced the tradition donning of armor. See G. Lawall 1966: 158; C. Beye 1969: 31–55; G. Zanker 1979: 53–5; J. Clauss 1993: 130–6.

⁶² There is a potential allusion to *Il.* 24 in the presentation of Aethalides in *Argonautica*, as well. We know already from *Arg.* 1. 515–16 that he is Hermes's son; the oddly repetitive emphasis of it at *Arg.* 1. 641–4 κήρυκα θεόν, τῶπέρ τε μέλεσθαι/ ἀγγελίας καὶ σκῆπτρον ἐπέτραπον Ἑρμείῳ /σφωιτέροιο τοκῆος may be an attempt to evoke a particular association.

follow the pattern of the standard hospitality type-scene, neither is a simple guest–host interaction. Odysseus is not looking for a place to spend the night; he is carrying a message from Agamemnon, with whom Achilles is not best pleased. Likewise, Priam is not looking for the meal Achilles prepares for him; he wants the body of his son from the man who killed him.⁶³ The simple hospitality theme is therefore compromised in both by the tension of opposing forces: Agamemnon and Achilles are at odds, and though Achilles has already promised to acquiesce to Priam’s plea, he and Priam remain outright enemies still.

ἀντία δεσποίνης therefore provides a double lens through which to view the scene between Jason and Hypsipile at *Arg.* 1. 785–90: it contains the potential for either sex or opposition. On *Argonautica*’s Lemnos, that is a very neat trick indeed, for the combination reconciles the earlier variant traditions of the Lemnian women.⁶⁴ While Apollonius elects to diffuse the potential for violence as soon as the Lemnian women arrive on the shore, a scholiast notes that all authors are not so gentle: the Argonauts fight a fierce battle with the women of Lemnos in Sophocles’s *Lemnian Women*,⁶⁵ and in Aeschylus’s *Hypsipile* the Lemnian women sleep with the Argonauts only after fighting a battle against them first.⁶⁶ This double vision can be applied to Hypsipile as well, for although the audience is well aware of her intentions, an aura of potential hostility clings to her still. She keeps her physical distance by employing an intermediary; too, she does not rise to greet her guest. This recalls Penelope, who sits as she greets Odysseus (*Od.*

⁶³ It is possible to interpret such seating arrangements as being characteristic of the formality inherent to each occasion, but there is little formal in Priam’s visit to Achilles: he is the Trojan king, yes, but he has come to Achilles’s tent alone, at night, and attended only by Hermes and one companion, and Achilles soon serves him dinner with his own hands

⁶⁴ Händel 1954: notes Apollonius’s general fondness for blending variant traditions in his work.

⁶⁵ *Arg.* 1. 769–73 (Wendel, 67–8)

⁶⁶ R. Clare 2002: PAGE

23. 89–90) and Agamemnon, who does not stand to address Achilles as the two reconcile at Troy. (*Il.* 19. 76–7). The allusions ἀντία δεσποίνης evokes are therefore both erotic and polemic; the combination is uniquely suited to the island of Lemnos in Apollonius's poem.

Yet the scene between Jason and Hypsipile is more than a vehicle for Apollonius to resolve variant traditions within his own tale. This is, after all, the first extended hospitality scene of the poem. That the allusions he chooses to evoke are primarily Iliadic is striking, for it indicates that in the *Argonautica* guests and hosts regard one another first as potential enemies rather than as prospective friends. The idea itself is hardly new: even in Homer there is inherent risk in opening one's home to strangers or in approaching a stranger's home.⁶⁷ Yet Apollonius has altered acknowledgement of risk into expectation of danger—or if not outright danger, at least potential opposition. We have seen this expectation twice already, though only from hosts who had a specific reason to be wary of their guests: Pelias, warned of destruction from a man with one sandal, has kept a wary eye out for him ever since; the Lemnian women, fearing retribution from the Thracians, have kept equally wary eyes on the sea. Hypsipile's welcome of Jason, however, suggests that such expectations are not limited only to situations in which the host knows danger is coming: they are endemic to any situation in which strangers are first encountered.

The need for such formality in what appears to be nothing more than a scene of hospitality and welcome seems strange—but again, as was true on the Greek mainland, only to the audience, neither to Hypsipile nor her guest. Hypsipile did not find it odd that

⁶⁷ S. West 1988: 91. Odysseus is an education in the difficulties facing a guest in foreign lands; likewise, despite Menelaus's ready welcome of Telemachus, the Spartan king stands as testament to the dangers of handsome young princes can bring to his host's home.

Aithalides came to speak with her; she allowed him to sweettalk her into a welcome. Nor were Jason and the Argonauts troubled by cooling their heels on the shore all night or surprised that Iphinoe eventually brought them word rather than Hypsipile. Apollonius writes only that her message delighted them all (πάντεσσι δ' ἐναΐσιμος ἦνδανε μῦθος: *Arg.* 1. 717), and they packed Jason off to the city while they ready themselves to follow. The elements that strike the readers as fundamentally non-Homeric pass by the characters themselves without comment; the implication is that those characters are moving through a different kind of world. Jason's world, though it may pre-date Homer's by a scant generation, operates under completely different principles.

Different, too, is the initial reception that follows, for hospitality does not seem a given, on Lemnos. A guest in Homer may stand at a door with a hopeful expression on his face and entertain a reasonable assumption of a ready welcome, but Aithalides must not merely ask but cajole Hypsipile into welcoming him and his fellow crew (ὄς ῥα τόθ' Ὑψιπόλην μελίξατο δέχθαι ἰόντας: *Arg.* 1. 650). Again, the difference from Homer is marked. It is customary enough for a guest to make a request of his host—Telemachus asks Nestor and Menelaus for news of his father; Odysseus asks Aeolus to speed him on his way to Ithaca—but it is highly irregular that a guest must ask for hospitality, usually so freely given, and feel the need to use honeyed words, as well. Too, there is very little that is welcoming about the initial 'welcome' Aithalides coaxes from Hypsipile, as it seems to be little more than permission for the Argonauts to stay precisely where they are. Though Homeric hospitality scenes are occasionally marked by a brief hesitation on the part of the host—Alcinous and Arete sit silently when Odysseus first sinks into the ashes of their hearth, and after spying Telemachus and Pisistratus at the gate in Sparta

Eteoneus goes to ask Menelaus whether he should invite in them—Hypsipile lacks the excuse of shock at seeing a stranger emerge from a mist in her hall or of concern over her household's ability to fete guests in appropriately lavish style.⁶⁸ Night has fallen by the time Aethelides succeeds in speaking to the queen; at dawn, when Hypsipile must call an assembly of her women to decide what they ought to do with these men, the Argonauts are still on the shore. She keeps Jason and the Argonauts waiting for nearly a full day before offering them hospitality—a far cry from Telemachus, who is ashamed that his guest has been waiting so much as a moment at his gates.

Hypsipile's reasons for this delay are likewise non-Homeric. She cannot offer immediate hospitality because first she must assemble a council to discuss what should be done with these sailors from the mainland, and she will not offer immediate hospitality because she fears what it may mean for her life and those of her fellow women. Neither situation has precedent in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. In Homer guest and neighbor may ask what should be done with guests at the gate, as does Eteoneus at *Odyssey* 4, but the host himself most definitely does not. Hospitality is either granted at once or denied at once, but whatever the case the host sees no need to seek counsel of others. Hypsipile is prevented in this course of immediate action, however, by the root cause of her indecision: fear for herself and her people. Homeric hospitality demands that the host offer of food, drink, baths, and beds even at his inconvenience,⁶⁹ but Hypsipile's abject terror that her guests will discover and spread word of the Lemnian women's crime forces her noncompliance. It is only when she realizes that offering Jason hospitality is

⁶⁸ S. West 1988

⁶⁹ Menelaus will interrupt his own children's wedding feast to entertain guests and Achilles will court the wrath of the assembled Achaean army to shelter Priam for a night within his tent.

the best way—indeed, perhaps the only way—to secure her own survival and that of her followers that she sends word for him to attend her in her city.

Once Hypsipile decides to welcome Jason and his crew, the scene seems to change to one much more familiarly Homeric: Jason approaches Hypsipile's house, is met at the threshold, is escorted into the inner rooms, and is seated on the chair directly beside the queen's. The Argonauts are later feted in the city, where the women seek to detain them with promises of lands, wives, and riches (*Arg.* 1. 841-860); when the Argonauts eventually listen to Heracles and elect to abandon the beds of the Lemnian women in order to continue sailing east, the women pack the *Argo* full of gifts of food and wine for the journey (*Arg.* 1.865-887) Finally, Jason and Hypsipile exchange blessings as he bids her farewell (*Arg.* 1.888-909). Such behavior recalls the treatment of both Telemachus and Odysseus by a variety of hosts,⁷⁰ but such behavior nonetheless includes two distinctly non-Homeric elements: Jason's reticence concerning both his name and mission.

Jason's response to Hypsipile's invitation to assume the kingship of the island is without strong Homeric precedent. The exchange of information in Homeric hospitality scenes generally goes two ways: in an effort to set his guest at ease, the host offers a tale of his own misfortune, luck, or combination of the two; once he has already eaten and refreshed himself, the guest is then expected to give his own name and explain his purpose for traveling in return. Yet not so in this scene of the *Argonautica*. Through the courtesy of Iphinoe, Jason knows Hypsipile's name and status on the island before he ever meets her; shortly thereafter, he learns from Hypsipile herself a carefully edited

version of the ill fortune the Lemnian women now face. Yet at the conclusion of her tale Jason does not offer his own name and purpose, as would be customary for a Homeric guest; instead, he only explains that he cannot take her up on her kind offer of a kingship for his crew since there are ineluctable harsh trials (*Arg.* 1. 840-841) that await him. It is telling that Hypsipile does not seem troubled by the evasion. Indeed, 'evasion' is perhaps a misnomer, for Hypsipile never outright asks him his name and business on her island. Menelaus spends the meal he shares with Telemachus watching the boy with interest, wondering if he could be his old friend's son; Alcinous is so eager to learn about Odysseus that he begins to question him before he is finished with his meal; Hypsipile offers her kingdom and herself to a man whose name she does not yet know and makes no attempt to discover it. Her disinterest is odd. A variety of explanations for it present themselves, but perhaps the most relevant is that her disinterest is an echo of her reason for offering the Argonauts hospitality in the first place. Having acquired the men she and her council have decided are necessary for their survival, she does not care what kind of men they may be; her desire for self-preservation, not her obedience to the gods, her sense of honor, or her desire to make reparation for hospitality she herself has been shown directs her behavior as a host. The qualities of circumstance she shares with Nausicaa, another king's daughter who offered hospitality to a stranger on a beach; make her actions all the more startling; the qualities of circumstance she shares with Calypso, also endeavoring to keep a lover on her island, do not entirely explain it.⁷¹

⁷¹ For the Hypsipile/Nausicaa parallel, see J. Clauss in J. Clauss and S. Johnston 1997: 149-177, and H. Frankel 1968: 111-12 notes a parallel of language between the two as well. R. Clare 2002 stresses the Hypsipile/Calypso parallel over that of Hypsipile and Nausicaa. Unlike Calypso, however, Hypsipile is not only acting out of loneliness and lust; she is acting out of political expediency.

In the hospitality scene on Lemnos, then, much like in that on mainland Greece, we find a variety of inversions of the Homeric norm. Of particular interest is the one it shares with the hospitality offered to Jason upon his arrival at Iolchus. Like Pelias, warned to expect a man with one sandal to come walking in from the country, the Lemnian women have been keeping a weather-eye to the sea, ready for unpleasant guests to call. It is a motif each of the subsequent hospitality scenes will share. And while Homer may have intended the rituals of hospitality as a vehicle for the expression of heroic virtue in peacetime,⁷² the repetition of that motif in Apollonius begins to suggest a world at war.

The Bear Mountain peninsula

The third hospitality scene of the poem takes place among the Doliones, whose king will later give the peninsula his name. The traditional Homeric framework is again evoked; here we find, in one form or another, an arrival, description of the surroundings, and the waiting at the threshold; the reception, seat, shared sacrifice and feast; identification; entertainment; and an omen upon farewell. The variations on the Homeric model again serve to draw our attention to the non-Homeric qualities of the encounter.

As was true with the arrival of the Argonauts at Lemnos, their arrival at the island of the Doliones comes up without warning, and their approach takes the form of a geographic description of the route from Lemnos to Cyzicus.⁷³ Too, the threshold at which the Argonauts wait is again that of a kingdom and not a house; they are moored at one of the island's harbors, in the midst of choosing a new anchor stone, when the Doliones and Cyzicus come out to meet them. What was explicit on Lemnos is only

⁷² S. West 1988

⁷³ R. Hunter 1995 makes the point that all of this geographic description is tied to the geopolitical interests of the Ptolemies; that point will be essential in the final discussion of Apollonius's intent.

hinted at here, but again there appears the idea of a host being ever on guard for the arrival of guests, particularly unwelcome ones. Jason and his men are not yet in the harbor below the city; they are at a harbor some distance off from it. Presumably, Cyzicus realized they were there because Cyzicus had someone looking.⁷⁴ Too, Cyzicus has not come by himself to greet them, nor has he sent one or more of his men; the entire male population of the island has turned out en masse on the shore. Their meeting is important for its ambiguity of character:

τοὺς δ' ἄμυδις φιλότητι Δολίονες ἤδ' αὐτὸς
 Κύζικος ἀντήσαντες, ὅτε στόλον ἠδὲ γενέθλην
 ἔκλον οἵτινες εἶεν, εὐξείνωσ ἀρέσαντο·

Arg. 1. 961–3

The Doliones and Cyzicus himself came out in friendship to meet them, heard of their expedition and bloodline and who they were, and welcomed them hospitably.

Of particular interest is φιλότητι. φιλότης has a wide variety of meanings in Homer. It frequently refers to pacts of friendship (φιλότητα καὶ ὄρκια: *Il.* 3. 73), which is the most transparent way to interpret it here: the Doliones and Cyzicus are, in the manner of good hosts, intent on offering their guests all aid and welcome. The context, however, complicates this notion. The Doliones have first of all arrived in a group to greet their guests. The image of hosts-in-a-group unavoidably recalls that of the Lemnian women; the allusion carries with it the potential for violence. Too, there is the seemingly superfluous εὐξείνωσ at *Arg.* 1. 963. If the Doliones have already come to meet the Argonauts in friendship, it seems odd that Apollonius would take the time to note they then greeted them hospitably, as well: the one implies the other. The doubled sentiment

⁷⁴ Compare with *Od.* 10. 141–3, where Odysseus and his men spend two days in the harbor of Circe's island without alerting her of their presence. That Cyzicus does indeed have a lookout becomes apparent when the Argonauts unknowingly return to the island at night, and the king is informed that unknown boats have landed on the island.

could of course be deliberate, an attempt to draw specific notice to the exceedingly hospitable nature of Cyzicus and his men,⁷⁵ but that seems to be contraindicated by *Arg.* 1. 969–71, which indicates that despite his seemingly friendly nature, Cyzicus is likely to entertain thoughts of war:

δῶκεν δ' αὐτὸς ἄναξ λαρὸν μέθυ δευομένοισιν
μηλά θ' ὄμοῦ. δὴ γάρ οἱ ἔην φάτις, εἴτ' ἂν ἴκωνται
ἀνδρῶν ἠρώων θεῖος στόλος, αὐτίκα τοῖσγε
μείλιχον ἀντιάαν μηδὲ πτολέμοιο μέλεσθαι.

From his own stock the lord himself gave sweet wine and sheep to the ones in need. For there was, for him, a prophecy: whenever a god-like band of heroes might come, immediately he should welcome them, and entertain no thoughts of war.

The passage reveals that the Argonauts owe his kind reception of them only to an oracle, not an intrinsically generous nature; the γάρ indicates that the φάτις is responsible for the gifts of sacrificial meat and wine. Such an oracle would suggest that Cyzicus, far from being a customarily cheerful host, is instead in the habit of offering battle to travelers who put in at his shore: the gods are unlikely to warn him against offering battle unless he is already accustomed to do so. This makes it unlikely that he has come to the harbor side with friendly thoughts and kind intentions.

Other uses of φιλότης in Homer may point the way toward a resolution. Despite its prevalence in scenes where warring factions are contemplating or making peace, the word carries other connotations as well: it is what a kind host is remembered for by his guests, what Penelope and Telemachus vow messengers who bring them word of Odysseus would have from them if only their words were true; it is lust; it is love; it is alliance, affectionate loyalty, and simple friendship between men already known to one

⁷⁵ Apollonius will do this at Colchis, where repeated vocabulary of anger draws attention to the depth and wildness of Aetes's rage.

another. The last is particularly relevant. At *Od.* 3.363, Athena tells Nestor why she must return to her ship to speak with the crew instead of sleep in his halls:

οἷος γὰρ μετὰ τοῖσι γεραίτερος εὖχομαι εἶναι·
οἱ δ' ἄλλοι φιλότῃτι νεώτεροι ἄνδρες ἔπονται,
πάντες ὀμηλικὴ μεγαθύμου Τηλεμάχοιο.

For among them, I tell you, I am the only veteran.
The others, young men, of an age with great-hearted
Telemachus, sailed with him out of friendship.

According to Athena, she is needed at the ship because the crew, the same age as Telemachus, is inexperienced. They are not old hands like she is, selected for their skills at sailing or at war; they only sailed with Telemachus for friendship's sake. φιλότῃτι does not refer to the feeling the young men have for their host—they have not come sailing to Pylos for sake of their friendship with Nestor—but to the relationship they share with their captain. A similar sentiment may apply to *Arg.* 1. 961. There is no reason to insist that the φιλότῃτι must needs refer to the potential relationship between the Doliones and the Argonauts rather than the existing affection between Cyzicus and his men. That he is deeply beloved by his people is manifest in their grief at his death; initially too heartbroken even to eat, for a long time thereafter they lack the desire even to cook. In addition to resolving the apparent contradiction in his character, reading φιλότῃτι as applying only to the Doliones and their king neatly bookends Cyzicus's appearance in the poem: the first and last aspects of his character that the reader encounters is his people's affection for him.⁷⁶

If this interpretation is valid, then φιλότῃτι is not an accurate reflection of how the Doliones' view Jason and his men as the *Argo* first lies moored in Fair Harbor. Only

⁷⁶ This proves important in his characterization as a king; of the six, he is the only one in visible command of his people's affection. It is also a trick Apollonius employs for Pelias, whose first appearance is marked by the destruction heralded by Jason's arrival and the last mention of whom is in conjunction with Medea's fate as the instrument of his death.

εὐξείνως applies to the Argonauts, and as such the second part of this passage, ὄτε στόλον ἠδὲ γενέθλην/ ἔκλυον οἴτινες εἶεν, is critical. It reveals that the Doliones are not immediately inclined to usher the Argonauts into the harbor and offer them wine and victims for sacrifice and food for a feast; they do so only once they have heard (from Aethalides, again? from Jason? from questions shouted and answers given across the water?) their purpose, their race, and who they might be. More, that exchange of information does not effect a welcome merely because the Argonauts have satisfied their hosts' curiosity or proven themselves harmless by having been willing to talk; it effects a welcome because it forces the Doliones to recognize their guests as the heroes of the prophecy and act accordingly. It is doubtful they would have welcomed them otherwise; the ὄτε strongly suggests that had the Argonauts *not* been the heroes of the prophecy, they would have been treated to a far less courteous reception. We see this with particular clarity at *Arg.* 1. 1022–4, where the Argonauts are blown back to the shores of the peninsula on a hurricane:

οὐδ' ὑπὸ νυκτὶ Δολίονες ἄν ἀνιόντας
 ἥρωας νημερτῆς ἐπήισαν, ἀλλὰ που ἀνδρῶν
 Μακρῆων εἶσαντο Πελασγικὸν ἄρα κέλσαι.

Nor in the night did the Doliones surely perceive
 that the heroes were returning, but thought that a
 Pelasgian menace of Macrean raiders had made landfall.

Unable to see the new arrivals, the Doliones assume they are enemies from the Greek mainland and proceed to attack. They do not make any attempt to identify them,⁷⁷ which bolsters both a previous impression about the Doliones in particular and the hospitality scenes of the *Argonautica* so far: the Doliones, like Pelias and the Lemnian women, are not automatically hospitable hosts, and strangers in Jason's world are assumed to be

⁷⁷ A. Rose 1984 notes this oddity.

enemies and treated as such. This is a strong shift away from the hospitality scenes of Homer, where guests are meant to be treated as friends unless they prove themselves otherwise, and where men like Menelaus, in the middle of a wedding celebration and entitled to be wary of hosting strange young men, hurries to welcome strangers at his gate.

Adding to this rather bleak portrait is another variation on Homeric hospitality at Bear Mountain peninsula: an omen that speeds the guests on their way, which Mopsus sees and successfully interprets before the Argonauts depart. He recognizes that the bird crying the end of the hurricane that keeps them beached on the isle after Cyzicus's death is diverted to the Argo's prow by the hand of a goddess, and that it calls for sacrifice to Rhea in order to bring an end to the storms (*Arg.* 1. 1092–1102). Unlike such omens of Homer, however, which in general are signs of divine favor rather than a calling for a significant act,⁷⁸ this is not a promise of future success or endurance: it merely points the way towards overcoming one of the obstacles currently preventing that success. The Argonauts are being promised nothing, only provided with part of the means to work out their own salvation.

There are several similarities that bind the first three hosts of the *Argonautica*, the most important being the shift from surprise to wary expectation. Hosts are, in Homer, always taken surprise by the advent of their guests. When strangers arrive at the door, the potential hosts are generally feasting, sometimes weaving, occasionally coming home from a day in the fields; they are never sitting about watching the door, waiting for company to come calling. Yet at Greece, Lemnos, and Bear Mountain peninsula, hosts are indeed keeping an eye on their respective doorways—and not because they are eager

⁷⁸ For example, the bird omen Helen interprets for Telemachus at *Od.* 15.

to offer hospitality. Pelias keeps an eye out for visitors because he knows an enemy is coming. The Lemnian women keep an eye out for visitors because they fear an enemy may be coming. The Doliones keep an eye out for visitors because they know a friend is coming, and do not wish to mistake him for an enemy.

In regards to hospitality, then, Bear Mountain Isle develops some of the themes introduced on Lemnos. There, guests were assumed enemies because of the Lemnian women's fear over their crime being discovered and vengeance taken upon them; here, it seems a matter of course that guests are viewed as potential enemies who must prove themselves friends. In both places, however, once it becomes clear that the guests present no kind of harm to their hosts—indeed, that to refuse them hospitality might well cause harm to their hosts—attitudes revert to typically Homeric ones concerning the hosts' responsibilities to see to the comfort of their guests. The presence of an omen here, and not on Lemnos, suggests that the Argonauts possibly must trust in divine help more the farther they get from home.

Bebrycia

The next port of call for the Argo after Bear Mountain Isle is Bebrycia, ruled by the boxer-king Amycus. Unfortunately for the Argonauts, Amycus is somewhat lacking in the fine arts of hospitality, and so their stay here bears little resemblance to their earlier sojourns on Lemnos and among the Doliones. There are nonetheless Homeric elements at work in this passage, if only in their absence or reversal: again we see the arrival, the description of the surroundings and in this case the activities of the host, waiting at the threshold, reception (or more precisely the lack of it), seat (in that it is not offered), identification (in that Amycus does not care to ask for it), feast and sacrifice (though not

shared with the host), and the stowing of guest-gifts aboard the Argo before departure (which here are less guest-gifts and more plunder).

The first three elements are by now familiar. Their arrival again takes the form of a simple description of their journey, which now appears to be a pattern in Apollonius:⁷⁹ having left Bear Mountain Isle in their wake, the Argonauts continue sailing east. It is significant, however, that though these previous descriptions involved the names of islands, shores, cities, and the histories or nature of the peoples who dwelt in or upon them, there is considerably less of that in this case: from Bear Mountain Isle to their stop at the Mysian coast, such geographic description is given, but from the Mysian coast onward Apollonius tells us only that the Argonauts sailed all through the day and night with a strong wind in their sails, and that when the wind failed they made landfall at a wide foreland that extended from a curve in the coastline (*Arg.* 1. 1358–62). This is the first time that the Argonauts land somewhere unknown, and it is the first time that their journey there is bereft of landmarks on the way. Shortly thereafter we learn that they have made landfall at Bebrycia, where they find the stalls for oxen and pens for cattle that belong to the Bebrycian king (*Arg.* 2. 1–4). As was true on Lemnos and on Bear Mountain Isle, a brief description of the host is given, though here it is merely of Amycus and not Amycus's people as a whole: he is said to be the most arrogant of mortals and accustomed to outrageous violence (*Arg.* 2. 4–10). As was also true on Lemnos and Bear Mountain, Jason and the Argonauts consider the shore, not a doorstep, the appropriate threshold at which to wait.

⁷⁹ As does the time of arrival: Lemnos saw them land at sunset; both Bear Mountain Isle and now Bebrycia welcome them at dawn

This hospitality scene takes a sharp turn from those that preceded it as soon as Amycus arrives. Like Cyzicus and the Doliones, he himself comes to greet his guests, but his manner is hardly the same as theirs: they seemed ready and willing to fight should their guests prove to be a danger to them; Amycus is ready and eager to fight absolutely anyone who arrives on his shore. As Bear Mountain Isle elaborated on Lemnos's theme of preparing for war as an aspect of reception of guests, so too does Bebrycia elaborate on Bear Mountain Isle's: in Lemnos, the hosts were ready to fight on account of what they had previously done; at Bear Mountain Isle, as a matter of course; here at Bebrycia, with savage delight. Amycus is not endeavoring to protect himself from harm, as were the Lemnian women or the Doliones; rather, his demand that no one who lands on his coast may leave before boxing him seems rooted in the arrogance with which Apollonius characterized him at the second line of the book: he is convinced he will be able to best anyone who crosses his path. His reception of Jason and the Argonauts confirms this characteristic. He does not ask for their names or their purpose, but instead labels them with one of his own: pirates (*ἀλιπλάγκτοι*: *Arg.* 2. 11). He does not choose to give them his name at all: either he assumes that they have already heard of his glory and hence know who he is, or else he does not think it worth his time to share his name with men he is doubtlessly about to kill. This kind of arrogance is completely foreign to the previous scenes of Apollonian hospitality, and most of the Homeric ones, as well. The only hint of precedent for such behavior in Homer is the manner in which the suitors treat the disguised Odysseus when he arrives home in Ithaca. As Penelope's home does not belong to the suitors, however, much as they might wish otherwise, the parallel lacks any

particular force: the suitors are behaving poorly in another man's house; Amycus is offering violent death to travelers who turn up on his shore.

Matters do not improve as the scene continues. In lieu of a seat Amycus offers a selection of boxing gloves, and all he offers in terms of provisions or guest gifts is repeated blows to Polydeuces. When he dies, his people do no better: though the terms of the challenge Amycus issued were that the Argonauts' champion would fight hand to hand with him, with the understood conclusion that should that champion win the Argonauts would be free to go, the Bebrycians watch their king die and then nonetheless charge Polydeuces en masse, intent on killing him where he stands. The Argonauts are forced to defend him, and a bloodbath ensues. Despite their inherent blamelessness in this situation—Amycus threatened unspecified retribution if they tried to evade his challenge, and they had no choice but to slay the Bebrycians intent on vengeance for the king—Bebrycia is proof that the war-readiness towards strangers displayed on Lemnos and Bear Mountain peninsula is far from needless: this is the second time in as many stops that the Argonauts have killed their host and a wide cross section of his people.

Bebrycia offers one other quality of hospitality as well, one which is foreign both to much of Homer and to the earlier Apollonian examples of this social custom: the right of guests to take what they feel owed to them, even without the blessings or permission of their host. Though Amycus offers the Argonauts none of the trappings of traditional hospitality—beds, food, a chance to sacrifice, entertainment, guest gifts upon departure—they don't hesitate to claim any and all of those after his death: they bed down on his shore, prepare a large feast for themselves, sacrifice, sing, and then load up on supplies before they leave the next morning. Yet as foreign as this initially seems in the

Argonautica, this sort of behavior is precisely what earlier hosts were on guard against. Pelias feared that Jason would take his throne; the Lemnian women feared that they would be overrun; Cyzicus feared pirates had landed on his shore. In the context of hospitality scenes, this idea of taking what one feels owed as a guest, even if it has not been offered, resonates strongly with Odysseus's actions in the cave of the Cyclops, where after having relieved Polyphemus of cheese and wine Odysseus does him irreparable harm and then makes off with his sheep, to boot. The parallel between these two sons of Poseidon will prove important two stops for the Argo hence, when Jason and his crew meet Aeetes, the arrogant Colchian king, who also masks a one-eyed monster beneath his skin.

Thynia

In respect to hospitality Thynia at first seems a sea-change from Bebrycia, for here it seems we see something of a reversion to the Homeric principles of hospitality. The familiar three-part Apollonian opening is in evidence: the Argonauts' approach to Thynian shore is given in a geographic catalog of their route (*Arg.* 2. 164–177) and a detailed description of the starving Phineus comprises much of Apollonius's description of what they encounter upon their arrival. Of particular interest is the description of the Argonauts at the threshold, for this marks the first time in the poem that they are standing at an actual doorway and not merely on the shore: when Phineus emerges from his house and collapses just on the other side of the door, they crowd around him in amazement (*Arg.* 2. 206–7).

Also evident here are supplication and reception, baths and sacrifice and feast, and the exchange of information—though all in a significantly different guise from the

Homeric norm. And in that distance from the Homeric model, the apparent Homeric quality of Thynia begins to fall apart, for while the norms are not disregarded or violated as they are in Bebrycia, they are nonetheless turned upn their heads. The supplication is not for hospitality but for help, and it is made not by the guests but by the host, for aid in his tribulations (*Arg.* 2. 209–39). Likewise, the first reception of the scene is not by the host as he welcomes his guests, but by the guests themselves, who promise to chase off the Harpies that hound Phineus and have starved him to the brink of death (*Arg.* 2. 244–53).⁸⁰ Soon thereafter, the bathing, sacrificing, and feasting are similarly reversed. Though the Argonauts are the guests who have been traveling, Phineus is the one who is bathed: once the Boreads set off in pursuit of the Harpies, the remaining Argonauts wash the dirt from Phineus’s filthy skin. Soon thereafter, they sacrifice to the gods, but it is their own sheep they slaughter: the flocks they took with them from Bebrycia serve as their offerings here (*Arg.* 2. 301–6).⁸¹ Once the gods have been propitiated, Phineus and the Argonauts sit together to share a meal, but the Argonauts themselves have prepared it and set it out.⁸² The exchange of information at Thynia is likewise reversed from the norm: it is Phineus, the host, who names his guests (much like Amycus, though politely, this time) and who supplies the Argonauts with his own name, at the end of his introduction and plea. Furthermore, after the feast, there is a lovely variation on the standard trope of the guest telling his host from where he has come, and why: in this case, the host tells his guests where they are going, and what they will do when they get there.

⁸⁰ See M. Plantinga 1994 for more on the reversed roles of suppliant and benefactor in this scene.

⁸¹ This otherwise completely irrelevant reference to where they have just come from further strengthens the ties between the two places as being different aspects of the same theme.

⁸² Phineus’s profligate use of other people’s resources appears again when he instructs Parabaeus to go fetch two sheep to slaughter for the Argonauts’ second feast.

In all of these instances, the typical Homeric element is present and at work but simply turned around.

The detaining of the heroes and the giving guest-gifts are likewise variants on their normal form. Typically, as in the case of Calypso and Odysseus, or Menelaus and Telemachus, or the Lemnian women and the Argonauts, the host endeavors to delay the guest by offering continued hospitality. On Thynia the Argonauts are not delayed by their hosts but instead by the weather: on the morning they are ready to leave, the Etesian winds begin to blow, and for forty days they are marooned with Phineus, unable to sail. These forty days mark the strange role of guest-gifts in this place, as well: instead of being given them upon departure, they are given a lavish assortment of gifts every day that the winds force them to remain. Nor do those gifts come from their host: the Thynians send them, as a favor to Phineus (*Arg.* 2. 498–550). Though by far friendlier than Bebrycia, in a different guise Thynia is just as strange.

Acherousia

After leaving Phineus free from Harpies and in the care of the Thynians, Jason and his crew closely follow Phineus's directions; after a dangerous and lengthy trip, they put in at the land of the Mariadynoi, ruled by Amycus's enemy Lycus who was plundering Amycus's lands even as the Bebrycian king died. Here, again, is the normal three-part opening to a scene of hospitality, though with minor variations on those past. The Argonauts' arrival to Acherousia is marked by an unusually long description of their route, and that route is peppered with significantly more ethnographic or purely descriptive digressions than their previous arrival scenes. This seems balanced by the dearth of description of their hosts or the land and city thereof: Apollonius shifts

immediately from the Argo making landfall to Lycus and his people, having learned of its arrival, receiving them on the shore, where the Argonauts have again determined the proper threshold of their hosts' home to be (*Arg.* 2. 752–5).

Though that reception here reverts to the Homeric standard —having come to meet the heroes himself, Lycus leads them in to his palace, where he sets out a feast for them and spends the day in conversation with Jason, listening to his long story of where they have come from and why —there is an odd quality to it, nonetheless: the vow of friendship included in their welcome.

Οὐδ' ἄρα δηθὰ Λύκον, κείνης πρόμον ἠπίροιο,
καὶ Μαρνανδονοὺς λάθον ἀνέρας ὀρμισθέντες
αὐθένται Ἀμύκοιο κατὰ κλέος ὃ πρὶν ἄκουον·
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρθμὸν ἔθεντο μετὰ σφίσι τοῖο ἔκητι. (*Arg.* 2. 752-55)

Not for long were Lycos, the chieftain of this country,
and the Mariandynoi ignorant of the arrival of the heroes—
the slayers of Amycus, according to the rumor which they heard before—
but on account of that deed made a pact of friendship with them.

It is apparently their slaughter of the Bebrycians, a long-time enemy of the Mariandynoi, that earns the Argonauts this distinction, but what precisely such distinction means remains unclear. Apollonius does not see fit to explain it. That it is some sort of formal undertaking seems evident: other such vows sworn in the *Argonautica* include Jason's vow to marry Medea. This is, however, the first example of this sort of formality when welcoming a guest. Possibly, it hints at a particularly unsettled atmosphere in this part of the world: it is no longer merely enough to declare oneself a friend; to ensure that neither hosts nor guests will violate their proper modes of behavior, a formal oath is required.

The other odd quality of this scene, one which resonates with the swearing of a formal oath of friendship, is the nature of one of Lycus's guest-gifts to the Argonauts and his explanation for it: his son, Dascylus, whom he vows will secure for the Argonauts a

friendly welcome from any of the peoples they may encounter in the nearby waters (*Arg.* 2. 802–5). This comment would suggest, strongly, that without him such friendly welcomes would not be forthcoming, and moreover, had rumor of the Argonauts' exploits not run before them and named them Amycus's killers, that perhaps even Lycus himself would have been uninterested in hosting them as he did. The manner in which he explains why he is sending his son with them on their voyage supports this idea. He is not necessarily hosting the Argonauts and supplying them with a guide and gifts beyond counting simply because they turned up on his shore and needed provisions, but because he feels that their past actions have merited his service (*Arg.* 2. 802-05). This concept is completely alien to Homer and as yet unseen in Apollonius. It will, however, soon dominate another aspect of Apollonian poetics: the supplications that occur east of Acherousia.

The final unusual aspect of this scene is the other guest-gift he promises, again as recompense for the slaughter of Amycus:

νόσφι δὲ Τυνδαρίδαις, Ἀχερουσίδος ὑπόθεν ἄκρης
εἶσομαι ἱερὸν αἰπύ, τὸ μὲν μάλα τηλόθι πάντες
ναυτίλοι ἄμ πέλαγος θηεύμενοι ἰλάσσονται,
καὶ κέ σφιν μετέπειτα πρὸ ἄστεος, οἷα θεοῖσιν,
πίονας εὐαρότοιο γύας πεδίοιο ταμοίμην.

Arg. 2. 806-810

For the sons of Tyndareus, up on the Acherousian headland
I shall raise a high temple, which all sailors seeing
From far off on the sea shall venerate.
And outside the city I shall consecrate for them, as though for the gods,
Some fertile fields on the well-tilled plain.

The phrase οἷα θεοῖσιν is particularly arresting. Though the Argonauts are all sons or grandsons of immortals, this is the first time in the poem anyone considers honoring them as such; for Polydeuces, it echoes his original reception by the Mariandynoi, who mob him in the streets as he walks up to Lycus's palace ὥστε θεὸν (*Arg.* 2.756). Such

treatment of mortals—even those with divine ancestry—has no precedent in Homer and certainly none so far in the *Argonautica*: even Amycus, half-divine and said to be the most arrogant man alive, is nonetheless referred to as a man and sees himself as nothing more.⁸³

Though the surface form of Lycus's hospitality therefore initially seems quite Homeric—reception, feast, sacrifices, guest gifts—what lies beneath it is not. Homeric principles in Acherousia have not merely been ignored or reversed; they have instead been added to and partially rewritten. This foreshadows the strongest violation of Homeric hospitality that the Argonauts will encounter in the poem: what they endure at Colchis, the home of the Aeetes, child of the sun.

Colchis

The Colchian king Aeetes, much like the Bebrycian king Amycus, proves somewhat remiss in his hospitality towards strangers. Unlike Amycus, his hostility is not immediately apparent: he in fact garners two allusions to the famously hospitable Alcinous before he ever arrives on the scene.⁸⁴ Yet any reader thinking that Jason will receive a welcome like Odysseus's on Scheria is subject to a speedy disenchantment.⁸⁵

⁸³ R. Hunter 1995 connects this scene with the personal cults dedicated to the Ptolemies; though I do not agree with the notion that it must needs represent Ptolemaic practice, the potential allusion to Hellenistic religion is both pertinent and interesting.

⁸⁴ The second allusion, the similarities between Aeetes's palace and that of Alcinous, is well-attested in modern scholarship; see particularly M. F. Williams 1991 and A. Bettenworth 2005 for arguments and bibliography. If the first allusion is attested in modern scholarship, I cannot find it, but the notion at 2. 1140 ff. that Aeetes married Chalcioppe off to the exiled Phrixus gladly, with no bride-price asked in return, seems a clear echo of Alcinous's wish that the wandering Odysseus stay on Phaeacia, marry Nausicaa, and not only pay no bride-price but accept riches and a house as well (*Odyssey* 7. 311-316).

⁸⁵ For more on this theme of Alcinous's palace raising confounded expectations, see M.F. Williams 1991.

As has been well-attested in modern scholarship,⁸⁶ the rites of welcome and hospitality the Argonauts first encounter at Colchis initially seem quite Homeric: in the manner of good guests, Jason and his companions remain in the courtyard until Aeetes comes out to invite them in; in the manner of a good host, Aeetes then orders baths, food, and drink to be prepared for their refreshment (*Arg.* 271-274). Despite this apparent observance of Homeric custom, however, Aeetes already lacks an essential characteristic of the proper Homeric host: the willingness to place himself at the service of his guests. Unlike Menelaus, who serves his guests the food intended for his own plate (*Od.* 4. 65-66), Achilles, who serves the grieving Priam meat with his own hands (*Il.* 24. 626), or even Cyzicus, who offers his own sheep and wine to the Argonauts for sacrifice (*Arg.* 1. 968-9), Aeetes does not address any of his visitors' needs himself – he merely gives the orders that see it done. He is likewise in no great hurry to welcome them personally to his home. Telemachus rises, immediately, when he sees the disguised Athena standing at the door and is ashamed she was not welcomed as soon as she arrived (*Od.* 1. 118-120) and Cyzicus himself comes down to the harbor with his warriors to greet the *Argo* (*Arg.* 1.961-2), but Aeetes is the last of the Colchian court to greet Jason and his men: his two daughters and his wife are with them in the courtyard before he ever arrives. Moreover, even once Aeetes has deigned to leave his tower, he takes no steps to make his guests feel as though they are his equals in his home. Though Alcinous displaces his own son to seat Odysseus beside him (*Od.* 7. 166-170) and Hypsipile sees Jason led to a well-wrought chair immediately beside her own (*Arg.* 1. 788-9), the reader never sees Aeetes even invite the Argonauts into his hall: it is only when Eros must step over the threshold to join them (*Arg.* 3. 275-76) that it becomes clear Jason and his men are no longer in the

⁸⁶A. Rose 1984

courtyard. And while the Phrixides and the Argonauts are only too happy to partake of the feast Aeetes has ordered the servants to prepare and serve for them, Aeetes himself does not honor them by sharing it.⁸⁷ Unlike the Homeric and earlier Apollonian hosts, who delight in collapsing the distance between their guests and themselves, Aeetes is at pains instead to preserve it. He will see his guests bathed and he will see them fed, but he will not pretend that he and his household are at their service—or even that they are the equals of his household and of him.

As the evening continues, matters steadily decline. Aeetes soon proves to be not only an arrogant host but a suspicious and subsequently violent one, who has no regard for the custom forbidding harm to welcomed guests. Although Argus swears to him that Jason has come only in hopes of being given the fleece as a gift (*δωρίνης*; *Arg.* 3. 352), one for which he is entirely ready to make adequate recompense, Aeetes assumes that he has come instead to help Argus and his brothers steal the Colchian throne. Enraged, he replies that had they not already eaten at his table, he would have cut off their tongues and hands and then sent them on their way (*Arg.* 3. 377-380). Despite the violence of his threat, this conditional statement initially suggests that Aeetes is mindful of a guest's right to safe conduct: as much as he might *like* to mutilate and exile these strangers, he is not actually about to do it.⁸⁸ This impression does not, however, survive his next response. Once Jason assures him that Argus is telling the truth—that their intentions are peaceful, that in exchange for the fleece they will not only help him subdue any enemy of

⁸⁷ The Greek makes this point, albeit subtly: the αὐτοί at *Arg.* 2. 300 refers back only to the Argonauts and the Phrixides, not the Argonauts, Phrixides, and Aeetes.

⁸⁸ Like the beginning of Aeetes's speech, this section has given rise to various interpretations: F. Vian 1980 states that A. is trying to balance the laws of hospitality with his desire to kill the Argonauts; A. Rose 1984 follows the lead of P. Handel 1954 in considering his compliance 'specious'; M. Campbell 1994 believes that there is genuinely 'no breach of etiquette on Aeetes's part.'

his choosing but also spread his fame throughout Greece—Aeetes sees two options open to him: he can kill them where they sit, or he can force them to endure a trial of their strength (*Arg.* 3. 396-399). That he elects the second does not, however, indicate that he wishes to respect the laws of hospitality, which generally prohibit the wholesale slaughtering of a man who has already eaten one's bread and salt. By the time Aeetes replies to Jason's conciliatory explanation of his purpose, he has already decided to destroy him. Had he not, had he genuinely been searching for a way to balance hospitality to strangers with his rage, he would have offered the Argonauts a choice: stay and attempt the trial, or leave empty-handed now. He does not. As Jason rightly ascertains (*Arg.* 3. 427-431), he instead puts his guests in an impossible position. If Jason accepts the ἄεθλον Aeetes offers, he will die: he is neither the son of Helios nor the equal of Ares, and as such he cannot match Aeetes's strength. If, on the other hand, he refuses, he will die all the same: Aeetes swears that should Jason run, hesitate, or fail, he will make an example of him as a warning to others who think to challenge those better than themselves (*Arg.* 3. 435-439). He has ordered his ξείνοσ to perform a task he knows full well will kill the man, or else accept death at his hands as the alternative. The definition of Homeric hospitality is somewhat fluid, but in no way does it stretch that far. Although the allusions to Scheria that open this scene initially invite the reader to think of Aeetes as another Alcinous, his actions throughout prove him instead to be a far from a suitable Homeric host.

Suitable he may not be, but there is, nonetheless, a strong Homeric aura that clings to this Colchian king. For despite the several exemplary hosts who dot the Homeric landscape, hosts of considerably less stellar temperaments dwell there too—

among them the Cyclops Polyphemus, whose reaction to finding Odysseus and his men in his cave is to eat two of them for dinner (twice). As Campbell, Hunter, and Vian all note, an obvious parallel between the Cyclops and Aeetes appears almost as soon as the latter opens his mouth: much as the Cyclops asks Odysseus where he and his men have left their boat (ὄπη ἔσχες ἰὼν εὐεργέα νῆα: *Od.* 9. 279), one of the first questions Aeetes asks is where his guests have disembarked from their ship (ὄπη τε γλαφυρῆς ἐκ νηὸς ἔβητε: *Arg.* 3. 316). Too, there is their shared consideration of their guests as a band of sea-faring raparees: Polyphemus asks Odysseus whether he and his crew are pirates (ληϊστῆρες: *Od.* 9. 253) risking their lives to steal from other men; Aeetes later also broods over the pirates (ληιστῆρας: *Arg.* 3. 589) who have invaded his land and vows that they will not stay unpunished for long.⁸⁹ The other echoes of *Od.* 9 in this episode are more subtle but still telling: Chalciope's scolding welcome of her sons recalls some of Odysseus's words to the Cyclops; Jason reworks much of Odysseus's speech to both the Cyclops and his own men.⁹⁰

All of these Odyssean echoes, however, present the reader with an immediate problem: they do not initially seem to *mean* anything. True, they hint that Aeetes, like the Cyclops, is dangerous and inhospitable and like to make mincemeat of his guests, but this is hardly news: Argus already made that point when he intimated that his grandfather would be more of a problem than the guardian serpent when it came to carrying off the fleece (*Arg.* 2. 1204-1215). As Apollonius is unlikely to make an allusion without at least one shifting perspective (and usually three!) behind it, this is initially somewhat

⁸⁹ R. Hunter 1989 ad 3.587f. It is worth adding here that what Aeetes considers pirates to be, men who βοτῆρων αὔλια δυσκελάδοισιν ἐπιδρομήσι δαΐξαι (*Arg.* 3. 592-93), makes this allusion even more specific, as in evoking Odysseus and his men plundering the Cyclops's cave Apollonius casts Aeetes as sympathetic towards the eventual plight of Polyphemus.

⁹⁰ For the particulars of these allusions see M. Campbell 1994 ad 3.176f.

puzzling – but the other similarities Polyphemus and Aeetes share point the way towards a possible solution. Sons of gods, both the Cyclops and the king take excessive pride in their heritage: Polyphemus tells Odysseus his people fear none of the Olympians, being stronger than they are by far (*Od.* 9. 273-276); Aeetes consistently reminds his grandsons and guests of his status as Helios’s son. Upon meeting their guests, both, too, make a mocking offer of what those guests seek: Odysseus asks his unwilling host for a ξεινήϊον (*Od.* 7. 267); in return, Polyphemus offers to save him for the last of his snacks (Οὐτὶν ἐγὼ πύματον ἔδομαι μετὰ οἴσ’ ἐτάροισι, τοὺς δ’ ἄλλους πρόσθεν· τὸ δέ τοι ξεινήϊον ἔσται: *Od.* 7. 369-70) and then later an earthquake courtesy of his father Poseidon (ἀλλ’ ἄγε δεῦρ’, Ὀδυσσεῦ, ἵνα τοι παρ ξείνια θεῖω, πομπήν τ’ ὀτρύνω δόμεναι κλυτὸν ἐννοσίγαιον: *Od.* 7. 517). Jason, likewise, asks for the fleece; Aeetes tells him and his men to leave before they see a fleece and a Phrixus to their sorrow (πρὶν τινα λευγαλέον τε δέροσ καὶ Φρίξον ιδέσθαι: *Arg.* 3.374). The similarities continue. Both the Cyclops and Aeetes were long ago warned of the cause of their eventual destruction by a prophecy simultaneously specific and vague: Telamon foretold that the Cyclops would lose his eye to a man named Odysseus (*Od.* 9. 507-516), Helios that Aeetes must beware of treachery from within his own house (*Arg.* 3. 597-600). Despite being ever vigilant, Polyphemus and Aeetes interpret those warnings wrongly—and thereby permit them to be fulfilled. And in the end, with their respective worlds crashing down around them, both call upon their neighbors for help with limited success (*Od.* 9. 398-412; *Arg.* 4. 211-230, where though the Colchians respond they will ultimately fail) and throw up their hands to call on their divine fathers for witness as their quarry sails away (*Od.* 9. 526-535; *Arg.* 4. 211-230). The resemblances between them are therefore not merely of vocabulary, but of

characteristic and circumstance as well. Apollonius is not merely alluding to Polyphemus; he is casting Aetes as a second one-eyed monster. Yet this still raises the question of purpose: why write the Colchian king as a savage shepherd?

The answer lies, somewhat ironically, not in their many similarities but instead in their fundamental difference of circumstance, for despite the parallels between them the two are obviously not twins. Polyphemus—shaggy-browed, one-eyed, and inclined to eat sailors raw with wine and cheese—may well be the traditional ‘monster’ of the tale, but Aetes masks a beast far more vicious beneath his skin. The Cyclops is obviously no Alcinous, but neither, according to the customs of the *Odyssey*, are his actions out of bounds. After all, Odysseus and his crew do not approach Polyphemus’s cave and throw themselves upon his mercy, nor do they wait outside his cave and see if he will offer them shelter when he returns. Already, this is problematic: good guests do not saunter into the kitchen and stick their fingers in the hearth pot to see what’s cooking, but rather wait at the door to be noticed and offered help. Odysseus and his band choose not to follow this custom: they instead enter Polyphemus’s house while he is off tending his flocks, eat his food, consider running off with both his cheeses and his lambs, and eventually decide against such theft only because Odysseus wants to wait and see what else they can get (*Od.* 9. 223-230). They act in much the same manner as do the suitors who have been destroying Odysseus’s home for the past dozen years,⁹¹ and their fate is therefore much the same. Polyphemus brutally murders four of Odysseus’s men, but that is hardly worse than what Odysseus does to his own subjects. He, too, returns home to find strangers in his house, eating his food, drinking his wine, and abusing the notion of

hospitality, and he, like Polyphemus, soon after bars the door and slaughters them. As Odysseus is not only excused but actively aided by the gods in this, it would seem a legitimate response to suppliants who encroach upon hearth and home without permission. Athena, after all, only warns of Zeus's retribution when Odysseus prepares to turn his hand against the families of the dead (*Od.* 24. 542–44).

Aeetes, on the other hand, has no such excuse. He does not come down from his tower to find the Argonauts sprawled snacking in his hall; he comes down to find them travel-stained and weary at the gate to his inner court (*Arg.* 3. 235–237), awaiting his arrival precisely as they should be. Nor, for that matter, does he even find the *Argonauts*, as a group: Jason has arrived with only Telamon and Augeias, not his entire complement of warriors. More problematic still, it is Aeetes who offers the hospitality of his house, of his own free will; though his instructions are never made explicit, the servants who slaughter the bull, chop firewood, and heat water for the travelers' baths do so on his orders (ὑποδρήσσω βασιλῆι: *Arg.* 3. 274). When Jason accepts such hospitality, he accepts his role as ξείνος, and as such is thereafter entitled to the resources and protection of his host's house.⁹² He is not an Odysseus, who anticipated his welcome by plundering the cheese and then telling its owner that custom demanded further gifts; he followed the code of behavior prescribed for a well-mannered guest. Unlike the Cyclops, Aeetes has no justified cause to turn against him.

The reader, of course, knows full well that even if Aeetes has no cause to turn on his unexpected visitors *now*, he will, in short order: appearances in Aeetes's hall aside, Jason has already made it clear that he entertains no plans to be a model guest. When Argus first warns him of Aeetes's violent temperament and Colchian allies, he replies

⁹² For this idea of entitlement see J. Gould 1973: 79.

that, should Aetes prove unwilling to hand over the fleece of his own free will, those Colchian allies will be of no great help to the king (*Arg.* 2. 1219-1225)—with the implicit understanding that the formidable might of the Argonauts will overwhelm them if it comes to war. He makes this clear as well in his address to his men before leaving for Aetes's palace: with the shadow of Odysseus at the Cyclops's cave looming large behind,⁹³ he proposes that they try first to persuade Aetes to give up the fleece of his own accord, but should that fail they will of course resort to force or whatever other plan they may dream up in order to win their prize (*Arg.* 3. 171-193). In neither case does he ever so much as hint that they may well have to go home without the fleece: with or without Aetes's consent, when they leave, the fleece comes with them. Particularly when combined with the reworking of Odysseus's tale, a strong parallel with Odysseus's ill-mannered behavior at the Cyclops's cave emerges. Much as is the case with the Cyclops and Aetes, however, the critical aspect of this parallel lies in the difference—because for all his bold words and crafty plans beforehand, Jason acts on none of them in Aetes's hall. Unlike Odysseus, he does not call a well-deserved fate down upon his own head. Though Polyphemus offered violence to suplicants who declared themselves as such only after entering his home unasked and ransacking his larder, Aetes promises violence to guests whom he welcomed into his home of his own free will. The similarities Aetes shares with the Cyclops are therefore not meant to portray him simply as kin to a creature with a taste for human flesh, but instead to draw attention once again to the non-Homeric qualities of Jason's world: even the rules that governed the interactions of poor hosts and poor guests no longer apply.

Aeaea

⁹³ M. Campbell 1994

After the number of distinctly non-Homeric hospitality scenes Jason and his crew engage in, their arrival at Aeaea comes as somewhat of a surprise. For here, at last, is familiar Homeric hospitality. Circe, disturbed at the very domestic activity of washing her hair and clothes (*Arg.* 4. 662–4), does not chase her guests from her door; she is, in fact, explicitly not dangerous to her guests, for Apollonius notes that she is not currently contemplating the use of the drugs she normally employs to snare unwary travelers (*Arg.* 4. 667). She invites them in; she offers them seats; she accepts them as her suppliants (*Arg.* 4. 685–692). And in this very Homeric scene at last appears the key to the other hospitality scenes of the *Argonautica*, for in this hospitality scene we see the division of Jason's world.

That key takes the form of two oddities on Circe's island: the language Medea and Circe speak as the younger woman is answering the questions her aunt puts to her, and the fate of the earthborn monsters who attend Circe. Language in epic is always something of a strange business. The problem with the language in which characters speak in Homer, of course, is that, the wide world over, it seems the same. This homogeneity of language across the Homeric landscape has been explained, intelligently, as a necessary characteristic of the stories Homer is trying to tell: if the main characters cannot understand one another, then there is no story to be told. At first glance, this principle seems to hold true throughout both poems: in the *Iliad*, the Trojans and the Achaeans both speak Greek; the leaders of the two armies can, and do, talk to one another. Likewise, though Odysseus sails off the map of the known world in the *Odyssey*, his many troubles do not include being unable to speak to the friends and foes he encounters on his way: peoples as far flung as the Cyclopes, Circe, and the Phaeacians

all speak the same tongue as the Ithacan king. Nor does it ever occur to Odysseus that they would not: when washed up on the shores of an unrecognizable land and contemplating how best to ask a strange young woman for help, he is worried about propriety and how that limits the ways in which he can approach her, but he is not worried that she will not understand him (*Od.* 6. 141-49).

Yet at least in the *Iliad*, there is a clear indication that this common language is not shared by all the world. Our first hint of this is at *Il.* 2. 786-818, where Iris, disguised as the Trojan prince Polites, tells Hector to get his father's army on the move:

πολλοὶ γὰρ κατὰ ἄστῳ μέγα Πριάμου ἐπικούροι,
ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα πολυσπερέων ἀνθρώπων·
τοῖσιν ἕκαστος ἀνὴρ σημαίνεται οἷσιν περ ἄρχει,
τῶν δ' ἐξηγεῖσθω κοσμησάμενος πολιίτας. (*Il.* 2. 803-806)

There are many allies throughout the great city of Priam,
and tongue differs from tongue among far-flung men.
Let each man then give word to those he commands,
And let him lead them forth once he has marshaled the men of his own city.

Sandwiched as it is between the catalog of ships and the shorter catalog of Trojan heroes, this passage seems to have garnered little scholastic attention,⁹⁴ but it is nonetheless one of the most interesting of the book: for in it we learn that though Hector can talk to his enemy Achilles, he cannot talk to all of his father's men. He cannot talk to even most of his father's men. Priam's allies hail from as far south as Lycia to as far northwest as the midpoint along the southern coast of the Black Sea (*Il.* 2. 819-877); there, Greek is presumably not the lingua franca it is in the Aegean, since it is not the Trojan (and apparently monoglot) Hector who gives the men their commands, but rather the separate chieftains who lead them. This effectively destroys the impression that a single language dominates the Homeric landscape. Though Greek is the acknowledged tongue of both

⁹⁴ If it has garnered any scholastic attention at all, I cannot find it.

the Achaeans and Trojans, there is nonetheless an entire other world of languages crowding about at the edges of the poem.

This is not so in Apollonius. Though in the course of their travels the Argonauts encounter women who want to bed them, men who try to kill them, a king who wants to burn them and a giant glad to drown them, they never once encounter a people who cannot understand them. This does not seem particularly odd, for the first stop of their voyage. That the Lemnians would speak anything but Greek is ridiculous; Lemnos is in the middle of the Aegean Sea. Yet this homogeneity of language begins to strike a somewhat odd note with the second people they encounter, the Doliones and their leader Cyzicus, for the Doliones rule land that is on the north coast of Phrygia, a location whose people in Homer speak one of the 'tongues of far-flung men.' By the time of the Argonauts first encounter with the Colchians at the Isle of Ares, this homogeneity of language has progressed past odd and embraced strange: Jason and his men are now on the opposite side of the Black Sea, well east of the river which marked the territory of the easternmost allies of Priam (the Parthenius: *Il.* 2. 854), and within a day's sail of their home Argus and his brothers, in desperate straits, fall to their knees and beg for help in Greek. That Argus and his brothers are in fact half-Greek is not enough for this to make sense; Argus and his brothers have no reason to expect that Jason and his men are from the other side of the world and hence not fluent in their language. Colchis itself is equally bizarre in this regard: long considered a land of strange marvels in Greek literature and synonymous with the edge of the known world, it nonetheless is ruled by a king who speaks the same language as the Argonauts.

The easiest explanation for this universality of language is that Apollonius, unlike Homer, is simply embracing the idea of a single-language world, in which the heroes speak the same tongue so as to be able to speak to one another. The very beginning of the Argo's voyage seems to offer support for this conclusion: the Argonauts elect Jason as a leader not for his prowess as a warrior, but instead based on his perceived ability to settle quarrels and make agreements in foreign lands. Jason not showing any previous signs of being polyglot, their election of him argues that they do not expect to encounter any other language besides Greek between their homeland and Aetes's kingdom.

Complicating this happy resolution, however, is Medea's conversation with Circe, at *Arg.* 4.731, in which we learn both she and her aunt are bilingual:

ἡ δ' ἄρα τῇ τὰ ἕκαστα διειρομένη κατέλεξεν,
Κολχίδα γῆρυν ἰεῖσα, βαρύφρονος Αἰήταο
κούρη μελιχίως (*Arg.* 4. 730–2)

And so she answered at length each question Circe put to her,
speaking winningly in the Colchian tongue, the daughter
of hard-hearted Aetes . . .

With this revelation we find that Apollonius's world is in fact not dominated by a single language. There is indeed a language specifically unique to Colchis; it is, however, curiously not spoken in the Colchian court. Despite its displacement, Colchian is, as the rest of the poem will prove, the only foreign language of which Apollonius makes mention: Alcinous and Arete, as they do in the *Odyssey*, speak Greek, as do the Hesperides and autochthonous desert goddesses whom the Argonauts encounter on the northern Libyan shore. Why on Circe's island alone we should find another language is puzzling. The reason given in the text, that Medea is trying to please her aunt, is insufficient: had speaking Colchian been an effective way to influence Circe on their

behalf, it seems likely Medea would have spoken rather than stood dumb upon their arrival on the island.

The second oddity on Circe's island, the fate of the earthborn monsters who attend her, point the way toward an explanation, for the fate of the Aeaeon earthborn gives us our first real clue as to why the norms on Aeaea are unlike those in the rest of Jason's world. The earthborn have not, as a group, fared well so far in the *Argonautica*. Heracles slays them on Cyzicus's peninsula (*Arg.* 1. 989–1011); Polydeuces kills Amycus, likened to a son of Gaia, in Phrygia (*Arg.* 2. 67–97); Jason engineers the death of the earthborn on Colchis (*Arg.* 3. 1340–1407). As Hunter notes, it is not entirely ridiculous to read the fate of the *Argonautica*'s earthborn as analogous to Alexander's subjugation of native peoples on his march east.⁹⁵ What Hunter does not note, however, and what is potentially critical, is that the earthborn on Aeaea are never touched. Also critical is the geography of this last encounter: Aeaea is on the western side of Italy, where Alexander never marched. This cannot be coincidence—particularly considering the geographic boundaries of language Apollonius imposes on the poem. In the world after Alexander, Greek was spoken from Macedon to India. Not only were the majority of the rulers themselves Macedonian, but also many of the soldiers who served under them or else veterans who had settled in the new cities Alexander or his generals had founded.⁹⁶ Much as does the survival of the earthborn, the Colchian spoken on Aeaea marks it as a place Alexander's influence did not reach. The Homeric characteristics of Circe's reception of Jason and Medea are therefore explained: on the western side of Italy, the Argonauts *are* moving in a Homeric world, for the cultural changes that shook

⁹⁵ R Hunter 1995

⁹⁶ A. Bosworth 2002

the Mediterranean after Alexander's march and subsequent death do not extend to the lands he did not rule.

The hospitality scene on Aeaea, then, is critical to the poem as a whole, for it establishes the appropriate boundaries for interpreting Jason's world. Equally critical, however, is the hospitality scene on Drépané, where Alcinous welcomes the Argonauts to his shore. In its blend of familiar Homeric and Argonautic elements, it reveals Drépané to be an amalgamation of old customs and new.

Drépané

The Argonauts' arrival on Drépané follows the pattern familiar from There is the arrival, marked first by a geographic description of the Argonauts' journey to the island and then by a brief description of the island itself and its history (*Arg.* 4. 982–9); there is the welcome, a glad one, during which Alcinous and his people offer sacrifice; there is the walk up to the host's home. Much as Polydeuces was among the Mariandynoi, the Argonauts here are thronged by the subjects of their host, though here they are not welcomed as if they were gods but rather greeted almost as if they were sons (*Arg.* 4. 996). This welcome is unique in the *Argonautica*, for it marks the first time that the Argonauts have been welcomed with open arms by a host without specific cause; as such, it leads us to believe that perhaps on Drépané, much like on Aeaea, Homeric norms will prevail.

Yet the subsequent elements of a Homeric hospitality scene—a bath perhaps, and new clothes, certainly a meal, and conversation with the host in which stories are given or exchanged—take on an unexpected form, for almost as soon as the Argonauts land they are forced to take up arms when the Colchian fleet puts in to shore behind them. Though

Alcinous knows of the Argonauts' plight before Medea supplicates Arete—at *Arg.* 4. 1010–14 Apollonius notes that he longs to allay the lawless strife between the Colchians and the Argonauts—the formal expression of their story nonetheless comes through supplication, when Medea tells Arete the reasons for her flight. Though Arete sympathizes with her, she does not make such sympathy public; that Medea must supplicate her several times rather than once suggests that she did not immediately agree to speak to Alcinous on the younger woman's behalf. Rather than trying to set her at her ease with a tale either of her own hardship, as Menelaus does with Telemachus, or of the hardships of heroes, she saves such stories for her husband; rather than welcoming the Argonauts in to his city and offering them beds in his own hall, Alcinous permits them only space on the shore with their ship.⁹⁷

Despite these differences from the Homeric norm, Alcinous, like Circe, is bound by his regard for the gods: he believes it his mandate to carry out the straight justice of Zeus (*Arg.* 4. 1100). He is unwilling to risk Aetes's wrath by needlessly provoking him, but he is, too, unwilling to abandon Medea to her father without just cause, for to treat a guest in such a manner would offend the sensibilities of Zeus. The combination of elements in this hospitality scene is therefore odd: the familiar Argonautic approach is present, wherein neither the reader nor the hero necessarily knows that a hospitality scene is forthcoming; the familiar Homeric trope of welcome appears with the generous reception Alcinous and his people offer; the non-Homeric and, until this point, non-Argonautic quality of a host keeping his or her own counsel emerges with Arete's reaction to Medea's supplication; and the Homeric characteristic of a host wishing to

⁹⁷ *Arg.* 4. 1068–9 reads that the Alcinous and Arete were in the palace in the city, which contrasts to the unspecified location of Medea and the Argonauts in the scene before; it seems likely that they are with the Argo.

please, or at the least not anger, Zeus by his treatment of his guests is part of the driving force behind Alcinous's decision to not turn Medea immediately over to her father. Added to this blend of Homeric and non-Homeric elements, which is after all not particularly different from the ways in which the two have been merged in the earlier hospitality scenes of the poem, is the second part of the driving force behind Alcinous's decision: his desire for justice. Alcinous is not merely interested in pleasing Zeus by acting as an appropriately welcoming host; he is interested in arriving at what he believes is the right decision, one that will be accepted as just by all men. And it is in this desire that we find the true break with the hospitality scenes of both Homer and Apollonius: Alcinous is unique in his resolution to see justice done.

Geography is again a critical point in understanding this hospitality scene. Drepane is, according to the geography of the *Argonautica*, an island in the Aegean sea, not far off the western coast of Greece. It therefore bears a strong association with the Ptolemaic kingdom, into whose sphere of influence the Aegean islands fell. Just as the lands between Iolchus and Colchis represent the lands which Alexander conquered and his generals later came to rule, and just as Aea represented the part of the Mediterranean left untouched by the Macedonian campaigns and wars among the successors, so, too, can Drepane be read as a pre-figuring of the Ptolemaic kingdom. And in the blend of Homeric and Argonautic elements in its hospitality scene, coupled with the desire of a host to negotiate in good faith in order to accomplish what he believes is right not only for those he has taken under his protection but for his own kingdom, as well, we find a shadow of Ptolemy Soter. That shadow points us in the direction of the next focus of this study: the *Argonautica*'s kings.

Chapter 3: Apollonian Kings

For the writers of early Hellenistic prose and Alexandrian poetry, kingship was a topic of intense scrutiny and discourse. It had long been of interest to Greek philosophers and poets, of course; anathema as the idea of kingship was to the independent classical polis,⁹⁸ the polis nonetheless routinely explored its ramifications on stage, in philosophy, and in poetry, where it watched as Creon, for example, struggled with the supremacy of natural law, made note of the advice Plato gave to a living king, and was familiar with the judgment-giving, scepter-bearing Homeric kings.⁹⁹ Predictably, the rise of Alexander sparked a surge in the literary dialogue on kingship, as scholars struggled to come to grips with what kind of kingship he had created and then, after his death, what kind of kingships were being born. Such dialogue is best attested, as are so many Hellenistic things, in Egypt.

While treatises on kingship offered philosophers the opportunity to explore a blend of Egyptian and Greek models for the ideal qualities for kings,¹⁰⁰ the poetry at Alexandria offered room for even more experiment and exploration than did its prose. It invited its poets to blur previously rigid boundaries of genre, of language, of culture and of myth to create something simultaneously entirely new and rooted in the past. Poets

⁹⁸ G. Shipley 2000: 59

⁹⁹ P. Bilde 1996: 9–10.

¹⁰⁰ Most of these treatises are lost, though at any given time it is likely that each of the diadochoi was housing a philosopher writing on the subject. O. Murray 1996: 11; S. Stephens 2003: 34.

accepted such an invitation with a will. Callimachus, in his *Aetia*, *Hymn to Zeus*, and *Hymn to Delos*, realigned Greek cosmogonies with Egyptian to accommodate the dual nature of Ptolemaic kings,¹⁰¹ and in doing so indulged his two particular interests in this new form of kingship: the tensions and potentialities inherent in the beginning of a new king's reign, and the strong debt owed to the mythic past.¹⁰² Theocritus, on the other hand, took a different tack. In Idylls 17 and 24, he chose to explore Egyptian monarchy in a traditional Greek context to examine the behavior of Greek and Egyptian royals.¹⁰³ Through that examination, he tendered the proposition that the figures from Callimachus's mythic past were in fact unsuitable models for Hellenistic rulers, and he established a place for poets as critics of kings.¹⁰⁴ Yet while the interest both poets took in the discourse on kingship is well-attested, little has yet been done to determine Apollonius's place within it, for at first glance the *Argonautica* seems to offer little in the way of commentary on the Hellenistic kings. The poem may well be an epic for the Ptolemies, but it does not appear to be an epic about the Ptolemies; as S. Stephens rightly notes, Jason is no parallel for Ptolemy or even Alexander.¹⁰⁵ Jason is, for that matter, no

¹⁰¹ S. Stephens 2003: 74ff, 2007; Livrea 2006.

¹⁰² S. Stephens 2003: 74ff, 2007; Livrea 2006. Despite the strength of Stephens's argument, it is worth keeping in mind Callimachus's assertion at the beginning of *Aetia* that he is disinterested in long poems on kings and heroes (frag. 2–4) when constructing his poetic views on kingship. Cameron 1995: 267 offers a convincing argument for the fragment not referring to living kings and that it is the length, not necessarily only the subject matter, with which Callimachus is taking umbrage.

¹⁰³ S. Stephens 2003: 123ff. In a similar vein, F. Griffiths 1979: 52 has long noted that the myths the Ptolemies employed in their self-portrayal constitute the thematic backbone of Idylls 18, 22, 24, and 26, though this assertion is not uncontested: see E. Schwinge 1986: 65–68 for a differing view.

¹⁰⁴ This is perhaps a criminally abbreviated summary of the excellent chapter S. Stephens 2003: 122–70, offers on Theocritus at court.

¹⁰⁵ S. Stephens 2003: 212.

appropriate parallel for any Greek ruler; defined by passivity and helplessness,¹⁰⁶ he is the antithesis of the Classical or early Hellenistic kings.

True though that certainly is, the impression that Apollonius has nothing to offer on the subject of kings is erroneous. Despite the un-kingly characteristics of his hero, Apollonius engages with the problems of Hellenistic kingship in almost every major episode of the poem—not in the person of Jason, nor yet in Heracles, whom Theocritus takes as his possible model, but rather in the six men who hold the title *basileus*: Pelias, who rules in Thessaly; Cyzicus, whose people inhabit the peninsula around Bear Mountain; Amycus, the boxer-king of the Bebrycians; Lycus, his enemy to the east; Aetes, whose vast kingdom has its capital at the city of Colchis; and Alcinous, who rules the Phaeacians at Drépané. That these six men are the only characters in the poem to be called ‘king’ is hardly accidental: their grouping instead reveals one of the major narrative structures of the poem.

That structure takes shape around the victories and failures each king’s qualities of character and circumstance effect. Over the course of the poem, only Alcinous proves a successful king: by the end of the Argo’s voyage, he alone remains in power with the future of his kingdom secure. Pelias is marked for death, and his kingdom is therefore in jeopardy. Cyzicus and Amycus have both challenged the Argonauts and died for it, and their kingdoms will pass into other hands. By his own admission Lycus is too weak to hold his own lands safe, and the fate of his kingdom, too, is therefore uncertain. And Aetes, once by far the most powerful of the five, has seen his power broken with the loss

¹⁰⁶ S. Stephens makes a cogent argument for Jason representing Egyptian kingship rather than Greek 2003: 212-37; the problem such an argument raises will be addressed below. The bibliography on Jason’s heroic, non-heroic, and anti-heroic qualities is exhaustive: see n 8 above.

of his son and fleet. Surrounded as he is by tribes who are either allies only by virtue of his strength or else enemies with designs upon his lands, those losses threaten destruction to his realm. In different ways and for a variety of reasons, each of these five kings fails to hold his own against an enemy, and each pays the price for that failure in property, blood, or both. In contrast, an entirely different fate waits upon the last of the *Argonautica*'s kings. As a result of his interactions with the Argonauts Alcinous loses neither his life nor his kingdom; rather, he finds himself in a significantly stronger position than he commanded before the Pelasgian sailors arrived on Drepane. The difference is curious.

Although Alcinous's success and the other kings' failures initially appear unrelated, they are nonetheless closely bound with one another. In both action and circumstance, all six men reflect the political reality Apollonius has uprooted from the world of the *diadochoi* and embedded in his poem: the eight qualities of character and circumstance that determined the success or failure of the early Hellenistic kings. Cyzicus and Lycus, who exhibit some but not all, fail to ensure a stable future for their kingdoms, and so fail in their roles as kings. Pelias, Amycus, and Aetes, who not only lack a number of these qualities but also exhibit a decidedly unfavorable one to boot, fail in this respect as well—with particularly spectacular style. Only Alcinous exhibits all eight, and only Alcinous therefore prospers. By the end of the poem, he has usurped Aetes's position as the most powerful king in the Argonautic world and has considerably strengthened his kingdom for his descendants.

It is of course tempting to read in this pattern wholesale allusion to Alexander's successors. There are, after all, six Apollonian kings. Conveniently, there are also six

diadochoi crowned *basileus*,¹⁰⁷ and between those Hellenistic kings and their potential avatars runs more than one convincing parallel. Some of the ties that bind Alcinous to Ptolemy Soter have already been well-attested,¹⁰⁸ but two other Apollonian kings find their roots among the diadochoi as well. Having wrested power from the rightful king in Greece,¹⁰⁹ Pelias is hell-bent on ensuring that the king's heir dies so that he can keep the throne. Any reader versed in Macedonian history will not find it difficult to see looming behind him the shadow of Cassander, who, denied the regency of Macedon by his father, nonetheless took it over the corpse of his father's heir and then assassinated Alexander IV before the boy grew old enough to demand his rights as king. The similarities between Aetes and Antigonus Monophthalmus are equally difficult to ignore, particularly since Aetes is routinely compared to a monster with but a single eye. Yet such similarities do not mean we should wholeheartedly embrace the Apollonian kings as shadows of the Hellenistic monarchs. There is first of all not a Hellenistic parallel for each of them, a lack which leaves us either endeavoring to bludgeon Cyzicus, Amycus, and Lycus into roles they do not fit or else at a loss as to what to do with them. Even more importantly, such an interpretation limits our understanding of the kings' function within the poem. They are not simple historical allusion; in his attention to the qualities of kingship they share and those in which they differ, Apollonius casts them instead as allegory that functions on geographic, temporal, and thematic levels at once. In doing so, he adds an intensely political element to his poem, for on each of those levels his commentary on

¹⁰⁷ Among the immediate successors of Alexander. Agathocles of Sicily, the seventh, comes too late for the purposes of this study.

¹⁰⁸ R. Hunter 1995; Stephens 2003: 236, addresses this briefly as well, though not in the sense of a one-to-one parallel between the two.

¹⁰⁹ Pelias's status at the beginning of the poem is unclear, but Argos's explanation to Aetes at *Arg.* 3.336-9 puts the poem firmly in line with the Pindaric version. See also the evidence in the introduction to Green 1997.

kingship, structured as it is around a tripartite breaking of the world, meshes seamlessly with the propaganda of the Ptolemaic court.

Diving straight in to that commentary and propaganda entices, for there is real delight in watching Apollonius map his re-imagined world of the diadochoi so elegantly onto a what was already a centuries-old tale. Yet a clear understanding of the Apollonian kings—particularly of Aetes and Alcinous, who form the crux of Apollonius's commentary on Hellenistic kingship—first requires a clear understanding of their poetic roots. Apollonius did not conjure his characters from the air; he inherited them from an Argonautic tradition that stretches back beyond Homer. The most well-attested of those kings is Aetes, upon whom the allegory of the kings as a whole will hinge.

Aetes

Tracking the development of Aetes's character through pre-Apollonian literature can seem something of a fool's errand. References to Colchis's king haunt poetry and its attendant scholia from Homer to Euripides, but we get only glimpses of the man in each: a passing remark in the *Odyssey*, a mention of his city in Mimnermus, the flaming breath of his bulls in a fragment of Pherecydes. Not until Pindar does he play an active role in a narrative, and even there it is maddeningly brief. For anyone seeking to understand different presentations of Aetes's character over time, such a fragmented portrayal initially promises little. It is, after all, impossible to compare Pherecydes's Aetes with Eumelus's, when all we know of the one is that his bulls breathed fire and of the other that he originally hailed from Corinth.

Yet while such fragmentary evidence hinders a precise understanding of the early authors' depictions of Aetes, it adds much to our understanding of his character in the

Argonautica. M. Williams errs when asserting that the pre-Apollonian fragments, testimonia, and poems can tell us nothing of Aeetes's earlier incarnations:¹¹⁰ despite their unpromising appearance, a study of them yields a surprisingly full character sketch of the king Apollonius inherited as Jason's adversary. By the time Aeetes appears in Pindar's praise poetry, he has already emerged as a tricky, quasi-foreign king, both dangerous and doomed, who despite gifts of great martial and magical power seems concerned for the stability of his throne. It is not as simple a portrait as his roots in a stock character of folktale would suggest.¹¹¹ More importantly, it is not the sole portrait Apollonius chooses to rely upon in his poem. Though at first glance the *Argonautica*'s Aeetes seems a clear heir of this literary tradition, he nonetheless proves a more complicated kind of king. Rooted though Aeetes is in the Argonautic tradition, he finds his true model in late fourth century Syria, where strong similarities of character and circumstance align him with Antigonus Monophthalmus, the diadochos who first claimed the title *basileus* in the east.

Pre-Apollonian Aeetes

We have no record of the first story in which the Argonauts encounter Aeetes. Evidence suggests that it originated in the tenth or ninth century and likely derived from a universal folk tale,¹¹² but our earliest attestation of Aeetes occurs (as do so many things) in Homer, where in *Odyssey* 10 and 12 four essential facts about the king emerge.¹¹³ The

¹¹⁰ M. Williams 1996: 465.

¹¹¹ For parallels to his character in other ancient folktales, see M. Grant 1967: 11, 63.

¹¹² C. Beye 1982: 42, argues its folktale derivation on the basis of the common motifs it exhibits: a king who sets a foreigner a seemingly impossible task, a king's daughter who helps the foreigner accomplish it, a foreigner who then absconds with both the treasure and the girl, and the distracting of the king as the new lovers make good their escape.

¹¹³ That these characteristics of Aeetes were inherited wholesale from an earlier Argonautic tradition seems likely; as Aeetes is not even a minor character in Odysseus's story, it would have been

first is his parentage: at *Od.* 10.137–9, Homer describes Aeetes and his sister as the children of Perse and the sun (ἄμφω δ' ἐκγεγάτην φαεσιμβρότου Ἥελίοιο/μητρός τ' ἐκ Πέρσης, τὴν Ὠκεανὸς τέκε παῖδα). The remark appears in a description of Circe, not her brother, and is made only in passing, for Aeetes plays no role in either the *Odyssey* or *Iliad*. Nonetheless, the information it gives us is intriguing, for Aeetes's status as a son of Helios is unique in both Homeric poems. Helios has other daughters besides Circe in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—his cattle are kept by Phaethousa and Lampetie, who are his children by Neaera (*Od.* 12. 127)—but he has no other sons. It is tempting to read this absence of other male offspring as an indication that Aeetes is somehow exceptional: considering the number of demi-gods who fight on the plain of Troy and the few whom Odysseus encounters throughout his travels, surely there must be some reason why only one of them belongs to Helios. Despite the appealing puzzle such reckoning offers, however, Aeetes's status is not necessarily significant in either of the poems. In the *Iliad*, there is no reason for any soldier to claim Helios as his kin. Helios is a minor character, called upon twice by Agamemnon as a witness for his oaths (3.277; 19.259)¹¹⁴ and otherwise appearing only in his guise as charioteer of the sun. He does not take part in the interplay among the gods on Olympus or on the battlefield, for unlike so many of his fellow Olympians he does not throw his support behind either the Trojans or the Greeks. It would therefore make little sense to credit him as the ancestor of a warrior at Troy, for such a description would contribute nothing to the narrative of the poem. In such cases

peculiar for Homer to offer needless innovations on the older tale. For further discussion of a pre-Homeric *Argonautica* and its potential effect on the Homeric poems, see particularly the entirety of K. Meuli 1921 and R. Merkelbach 1969: 203ff.

¹¹⁴ M. Edwards 1991: 265. Helios is a logical choice for a witness because he 'sees and heard everything.' It is, however, tangentially interesting to note that in *Odyssey* he obviously cannot see everything at the same time; he does not know of the slaughter of his cattle until his daughter comes to tell him (*Od.* 374–5)

as Aphrodite and Zeus, of course, it contributes much. Although Aphrodite is already invested in the outcome of the war on account of Paris's favorable judgment, danger to her child Aeneas is what compels her to take part in the actual battle (*Il.* 5. 311ff).¹¹⁵ Moreover, when she, wounded, runs back to Olympus, the cosseting of her father and mockery of Athena provide not only a moment of humor but also a look at the tenor of the relationships that the gods share.¹¹⁶ Likewise, the identification of the doomed Sarpedon as Zeus's child reveals that Zeus cannot—or, at least, will not—stand against the unified will of the other Olympians or the demands of fate. This revelation not only qualifies his trumpeted position as the most powerful being among the gods, but serves as one of many in a long line of allusions to Hector's rapidly approaching death. Zeus cannot save Sarpedon, whom he loves; he will not save Hector, whom he favors.¹¹⁷ Helios-as-father would be able to offer no such narrative richness to the poem. Distanced as he is from the alliances among the other gods and so from the action of the poem itself, the identification of one of the heroes as his child could not lead to any significant development of plot, character, or allusion.

The *Odyssey*, too, lacks a compelling reason for Homer portray Helios as a father, for again he is so minor a character that the status of being his son would mean little. As a *herdsman*, of course, Helios fills a significant thematic role within the poem. His demand at *Od.* 12. 376–83 that Odysseus's crew pay just punishment for the slaughter of his cattle permits Zeus to destroy Eurylochus and his companions; although already fated

¹¹⁵ She intervenes in the duel of Menelaus and Paris as well, but it is not as striking a scene: she is not winging through a crowded battlefield to get to Paris's side and employs a more standard method of rescue. In addition, as G. Kirk 1990: 93 ad 313 notes, 5. 313 is designed to emphasize her role as a mother, as the language of the episode with Paris at 3.380ff. is not.

¹¹⁶ G. Kirk 1990: 98–100

¹¹⁷ R. Janko 1991 addresses the many allusions leading up to Hector's death and provides useful bibliography.

to die, they could not justly be punished for Odysseus's transgression against Polyphemus and Poseidon.¹¹⁸ As a father, on the other hand, he serves little purpose in the poem, merely gives a possible reason as to why Aetes and his sister are able to live beyond the boundary of the sunrise and within shouting distance of the eastern edge of the world. As is true in the *Iliad*, there are again contrasts, in this case most particularly in Alcinous and Poseidon. Alcinous's role as a father, for example, is critical to his actions in the poem. Only as a father does he have good reason to want Odysseus to linger on Phaeacia, for he wants a husband for his daughter and a worthy son-in-law for himself (*Od.* 7.311–15). That Alcinous is speaking in the sole capacity of a man who wants the best for a beloved child is clear; the offer would otherwise be deeply peculiar coming from a king whose race discourages foreign guests from partaking even of the slightest hospitality (*Od.* 7. 32–3), never mind marrying their white-armed daughters. Odysseus's refusal of that offer is what assures him a true *nostos*, for in refusing Nausicaa he acquires Alcinous's promise for transportation home. Poseidon as a father likewise establishes one of the central plot points of the poem: if Polyphemus had not been his child, he would have had no cause to torment Odysseus on his seas, which in turn provides a way for the Fates to work out Odysseus's appointed will.¹¹⁹ It therefore seems unlikely that Homer is making any significant point in referring only to Aetes as Helios's son. Driver of a shining chariot though he may be, Helios is not an important enough character to merit much mention; while being his son makes Aetes a descendant

¹¹⁸ A. Heubeck 1989: 140 ad 385–8. It may also be worth nothing that though Helios threatens to go shine in Hades if Zeus does not avenge the slaughter of his cattle and so sets in motion the events that deprive Odysseus of his ships and his men, he himself is not the agent of that vengeance. Zeus, not Helios, punishes Odysseus's crew for their actions, which strengthens the Heubeck's assertion that it is 'justified and part of Zeus's plan.'

¹¹⁹ A. Hoekstra 1989: 41 ad 550–5.

of the immortals, it does not confer any unique position of glory or power in Homer's world. For anyone looking for pieces of the pre-Apollonian Aetes, the only truly essential aspect of Aetes's Homeric status is that Apollonius will borrow but a part of it: in the *Argonautica* Aetes is still a son of Helios, but he is no longer the only one. Apollonius deliberately turns two others loose in his poem.

The second piece of information on Aetes that the *Odyssey* offers is the location of his kingdom. From Circe's directions to Odysseus in Book 12, we can infer that her brother's realm is near her own island, itself a day's sail from the eastern shore of Ocean. To return to Greece, she tells Odysseus, he may either try to win passage through the channel guarded by Scylla or else attempt the same route Jason sailed on the Argo's return home (*Od.* 12. 55–110). As the narrative intent behind Odysseus's sojourn at Circe's island is to show him following in Jason's wake,¹²⁰ Circe's directions suggest that Aetes's city is near her own νῆσόν τ' Αἰαίην (*Od.* 12. 3):¹²¹ for Odysseus to follow the same path Jason took back to the west, he must already be in the same waters Jason sailed. Again, in this piece of information we are tempted to find something of real interest, as with it Aetes is once again distinguished from the other characters of the poem. Unlike Alcinous or Polyphemus, Aetes is not a king or monster whose island Odysseus visits or whose realm he sees; he seems instead only a name in the dark somewhere along the eastern edge of the world. Such a difference is not meant to lend an aura of mystery or danger to his character or to attempt to conflate him with his father Helios, but is instead readily explained by Aetes's absence from the poem. His name

¹²⁰ A. Heubeck 1989: 52 ad 135–9

¹²¹ There is, too, the matter of the name of her island itself. Glossed by U. Wilamowitz 1884: 165 as 'belonging to Aea', the term heightens the impression of Aea itself being in the near vicinity.

appears with Circe's only to heighten her promise of danger¹²²—as the sister of a man who is murder-minded, she herself is unlikely to be kind to children and puppies—and the adventure he shared with Jason appears only as a foil for Odysseus's own trip past the sunrise.¹²³ As Aeetes plays no role in the events of the *Odyssey*, there is no reason for Homer to give anything other than a nebulous position for his kingdom. For the purposes of Odysseus's tale, it is enough to know that Aeetes is somewhere in the far east, well beyond the borders of the known—or indeed even the human—world. The importance of this information, like that concerning Aeetes as Helios's son, lies in what Apollonius will do with it. So nebulous a location will not suit in the *Argonautica*; again, Apollonius will opt to borrow only a part of a quality of the Homeric Aeetes when creating his own. In the *Argonautica* Aeetes's realm is still significantly to the east of Greece, but its location is both clearly marked and, more importantly, known by men: his city is situated at the Phasis river, his realm extends beyond that, and he does not occupy a position at the eastern edge of the world. The Sauromatians, with whom he is at war, dwell to the northeast of his realm, suggesting that the inhabited world stretches east beyond his borders.

The third piece of information Homer offers concerns the potential extent of Aeetes's power. As Circe gives Odysseus his choice of routes home, she remarks that the Argonauts survived their passage through the Clashing Rocks while they were sailing from Aeetes (παρ' Αιήταιο πλέουσα: *Od.* 12.70). When writing of the Argonauts and Phrixides, Apollonius will employ similar phrasing at *Arg.* 1. 337, 2. 775, 2. 1093–4, and

¹²² A similar principle may in play with Calypso and Atlas at *Od.* 1. 62, to emphasize the danger that Odysseus is in; while Calypso and Circe may share similar narrative functions in the poem, however, the danger with Circe is considerably greater.

¹²³ R. Janko 1989: 52 ad 135–9.

2. 1143. In regards to the *Argonautica*, M. Williams ascribes the practice to the esteem in which Aeetes is held: she believes that the practice of referring to Aeetes's kingdom by Aeetes's name rather than by its own marks him as its one essential aspect.¹²⁴ The conclusion is worth considering in regards to Aeetes's status in the Homeric world as well, though without further attestation it is difficult to draw a firm conclusion. It is, however, worth noting that only Aeetes merits such a practice in the poem: Odysseus does not sail 'from Calypso' or 'to Alcinous' or even 'to Penelope'. Even when sailing to the home of Circe, Aeetes's sister, Odysseus and his men are bound for the island, not the woman. When they arrive at *Od.* 10.135, they arrive at the Aeaeon island (Αἰαίην δ' ἐς νῆσον ἀφικόμεθ'); when they set sail from Persephone's grove they likewise sail not for Circe but again the νῆσόν τ' Αἰαίην (*Od.* 12.3). This practice suggests that while Aeetes may not necessarily derive any special status from being Helios's son, he nonetheless wields considerable power of his own. This quality, unlike the first two, Apollonius will not halve; he imports it whole into the *Argonautica*.

While being the son of Helios, powerful, and in the east are essential aspects of the Homeric Aeetes, the final piece of information the poet offers is the most important: Aeetes as a man with the epithet ὀλοόφρων. It is the adjective ascribed to him the first time his name appears; at *Od.* 10.137, Circe is identified as the full sister of 'murder-minded' Aeetes (Κίρκη. . . αὐτοκασιγνήτη ὀλοόφρονος Αἰήταιο). Glossed in the Homeric scholia as 'contemplating destruction and cunning, terrible things',¹²⁵ it indicates that its subject is not only dangerous but deliberately so: something that is ὀλοόφρων does not inflict mindless devastation—as would a sea storm, for example, or a wildfire, or

¹²⁴ M. Williams 1996: 465.

¹²⁵ *Scholia in Iliadem* ad 15. 630: ὀλοόφρων: ὀλέθρια καὶ δεινὰ φρονῶ.

winter—but rather has an active interest in causing harm. The adjective intrigues. For despite the appealing simplicity of its definition, its use in the poems argues for a more expansive connotation. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are, after all, peopled by any number of characters prepared to visit harm upon their adversaries, but only three men, human or somewhat otherwise, garner the description *ὀλοόφρων*: Aetes, the Titan Atlas (*Od.* 1.52), and Minos, the Cretan king (*Od.* 11.322).¹²⁶ An analysis of these instances suggests that, when describing men, *ὀλοόφρων* implies more than the deliberate intent to harm. It invokes two additional narrative expectations: someone ‘murder-minded’ is both associated with clever women and also marked for defeat.

The first of these expectations, that someone who is *ὀλοόφρων* is associated with clever women, is the more obvious of the two. Atlas appears as *ὀλοόφρων* in the *Odyssey* when Calypso is first introduced: at *Od.* 1. 52, Athena identifies the goddess holding Odysseus captive as the daughter of the murder-minded Titan who knows the depths of the sea and whose shoulders hold the earth and sky apart. Calypso’s cleverness is highlighted immediately afterward, as Athena speaks of the soft, seductive words with which Calypso is trying to enchant Odysseus’s heart (*Od.* 1. 55–7). Aetes, likewise, appears as *ὀλοόφρων* in conjunction with a clever woman: Circe, his full sister, whose cunning will require the intervention of the gods for Odysseus to escape (*Od.* 10. 273–302). Minos follows the same pattern. Though his name appears twice in the *Odyssey*, he is *ὀλοόφρων* only when mentioned in conjunction with his daughter Ariadne and her flight with Theseus from Crete. When Odysseus later sees Minos himself in the underworld, the king is not described as murder-minded but instead as a shining son of

¹²⁶ In the *Iliad* the adjective is limited to wild animals: the snake whose bite crippled Philoctetes (*Il.* 2.723), the spirit of a wild boar (*Il.* 17.23), and a marauding lion (*Il.* 15.630).

Zeus (Διὸς ἀγλαὸν υἷόν: *Od.* 11. 568) who is meting out judgments to the dead. Though all three men themselves are crafty, their cunning is familial rather than unique: the women in their family have a share in it as well.

The second expectation ὀλοόφρων raises, that the one described as such is destined for defeat, is perhaps the more important of the two, for it will eventually speak directly to the characteristics not only of Aeetes but of Jason in the *Argonautica*. Though reading ὀλοόφρων as ‘marked for defeat’ initially seems ridiculous—if anything, the ferocity inherent in the word suggests the opposite—defeat is nonetheless an integral part of its definition when describing men. In the *Odyssey* Homer employs it to describe what has been seen as the rather incongruous set of Minos, Aeetes, and Atlas. The adjective easily describes the attitudes of Minos and Aeetes in their encounters with Theseus and Jason, respectively,¹²⁷ but Atlas is an unlikely member of the trio: as West notes, tongue firmly in cheek, ‘it is not clear why Atlas is so described: the probability that the duties imposed on him would have soured his disposition is insufficient explanation.’¹²⁸ A more sufficient explanation emerges if we consider Minos’s and Aeetes’s encounters with their nemeses in their entirety. Having imposed a seemingly impossible task upon a wandering Greek hero, Minos and Aeetes are each defeated when that hero unexpectedly outwits the king and completes the task. It is tempting, so very tempting, to borrow here from later tradition and extend the parallel to Atlas, for in later tradition another wandering Greek hero, likewise struggling with seemingly impossible tasks, outwits the Titan. Having successfully shifted the burden of the cosmos onto Heracles’s shoulders

¹²⁷ From the later incarnations of both tales, and from the universal folk tale both seem to have derived from, this seems a logical conclusion, though I think it responsible to note that Homer describes neither king as being at odds with his nemesis in the poem.

¹²⁸ S. West 1988: 81–2, ad 52–4.

and entertaining no plans of taking it back, Atlas is tricked into assuming it again when Heracles asks for a moment to adjust his cloak—and then absconds with the golden apples Atlas fetched for him from the Hesperides' garden, leaving the Titan to again bear the burden of the sky. As Atlas, Heracles, and the Hesperidae do not begin appearing together even in art until the sixth century, however, it seems irresponsible to assume that this labor of Heracles was known—or had even yet been devised—when the Homeric poems were composed. Adding weight to such hesitation is the fact that the exploits of Heracles mentioned in Homer do not constitute part of the canonical twelve labors known in later myth.

Fortunately, however, this situation does not leave us at an impasse, for the argument of ὀλοόφρων carrying the connotation of 'marked for defeat' is not dependent on the specific trope of king-fooled-by-hero. Rather, it is dependent on the larger (and older) trope of hero imposing order over the forces that threaten his understanding of the world.¹²⁹ Both Theseus challenging Minos and Jason challenging Aeetes follow this pattern; ascribing the epithet ὀλοόφρων to Atlas fits this pattern as well, for Zeus and the Olympians defeating the Titans is the Greek prototype for such hero stories as those of the defeat of the Minotaur and the capture of the Golden Fleece.¹³⁰ Linked by this connotation, the three characters make sense as a cohesive set, for their circumstances suggest that in Homer the adjective ὀλοόφρων conveys more than a sense of intentional malice. It also raises the expectation that the man described as such, himself clever, will be associated with clever women and also marked for eventual defeat. As such, ὀλοόφρων constitutes a large part of our earliest attestation of Aeetes and his character.

¹²⁹ See A. Rose 1984 for a discussion of that trope and the older but still relevant bibliography.

That Apollonius will elect to employ this word only in describing Scylla will prove important.

Mimnermus to Herodorus

From Homer, then, we acquire the information that in addition to being intentionally dangerous, associated with clever women, and in some sense doomed, Aeetes is a son of Helios who keeps a kingdom at the eastern edge of the world and potentially enjoys considerable power. The fragments of works between Homer and Pindar are not so generous with us; still, they have essential nuggets of character and circumstance to offer. Mimnermus offers one: Aeetes as a keeper of marvels.

Αἰήταο πόλιν, τόθι τ' ὠκέος Ἡελίοιο
ἀκτῖνες χρυσέωι κείαται ἐν θαλάμωι
Ἵκεανοῦ παρὰ χεῖλος, ἵν' ὤιχeto θεῖος Ἴήσων

Fragment 11a

the city of Aeetes, where the rays of swift Helios
lie in a golden room
at the edge of Ocean, where godlike Jason went.

With such little context, the use of Αἰήταο πόλιν rather than the proper name of the city could be due to half a dozen different reasons—metrical convenience not the least of them!—but again the choice perhaps hints at the extent of Aeetes's influence. The name Aeetes derives, after all, from the name Aea;¹³¹ that 'Aea' has been passed over¹³² for 'the city of the man from Aea' says a deal about Aeetes's position in that city, and perhaps something about his reputation outside of it, as well. Of particular interest,

¹³¹ A. Lesky: 1948.

¹³² Elsewhere Mimnermus employs the proper name; frag. 11 states that Jason never would have brought the great fleece back from Aeaon his own (οὐδε κοτ' ἀν μέγα κῶας ἀνήγαγεν αὐτὸς Ἴήσων/ἐξ Αἴης). This could have well been but a few lines before frag. 11a, and so explain why Mimnermus elected to give an alternate name for the city at Αἰήταο πόλιν. Nonetheless, its position is not secure: in relating the contents of these fragments, Strabo gives the first (11) and then notes that the second (11a) is 'further on' (καὶ ὑποβας: 1.2.40) in Mimnermus's poem. The ambiguity of the phrase, and the consequent ambiguity of the placement for each fragment, allows an interpretation of Αἰήταο πόλιν as something other than a poet's wish not to repeat himself.

however, is that at least in this fragment, his reputation seems to stem from the marvels in his possession. Again, the lack of real context makes analysis chancy—the previous lines could, after all, have seen seventeen adjectives devoted to the shining glory of Aeetes—but it is worth noting that *Jason* is the man Mimnermus chooses to describe as godlike. The only description Aeetes merits is in terms of the glories of his city, which suggests that he is a trusted caretaker of divine marvels rather than a divine marvel himself.

Hesiod¹³³ offers a marginally more concrete characterization of Aeetes in the *Aegimius*, though again the fragmentary state of the source renders that characterization ambiguous. At *Arg.* 3.587–88a, a scholiast notes that in opposition to the *Argonautica*, where Aeetes gives Phrixus his daughter only at Zeus’s command, the *Aegimius* has Aeetes welcome Phrixus in return for the golden fleece:

ἄγγελόν

φησιν Ἑρμῆν ὑπὸ Διὸς πεμφθῆναι κελεύοντα δέξασθαι τὸν Φρίξον,
 ἵνα τὴν Αἰήτου θυγατέρα γάμη. ὁ δὲ τὸν Αἰγίμιον ποιήσας
 διὰ <τὸ> δέρας αὐτὸν ἀθαιρέτως φησὶ προσδεχθῆναι.
 λέγει δέ, ὅτι μετὰ τὴν θυσίαν ἀγνίσας τὸ δέρας οὕτως ἔστειχεν εἰς
 τοὺς Αἰήτου δόμους, τὸ κῶας ἔχων.

As a messenger,

they say, Hermes was sent by Zeus to command [Aeetes] to welcome Phrixus, so that he might marry Aeetes’s daughter. But the one who wrote the *Aegimius* says that [Aeetes] welcomed him of his own accord on account of the ram. He relates that after sacrificing the ram, [Phrixus], carrying the fleece, approached the house of Aeetes.

Σ ad 3. 587–88a (Wendel, 235–6)

There are two possible interpretations of this tale from Hesiod. One is simply that Aeetes, as he will be in Apollonius, is disinclined to accept strangers at his gate: he does not welcome Phrixus for Phrixus’s own sake, but rather for the extraordinary gift he

¹³³ Or possibly Cecrops of Miletus; the authorship of *Aegimius* is uncertain.

brings with him. Such a welcome can be read in three ways. The first and most obvious reading is that of Aeetes as an exceedingly poor host, the 'eastern barbarian' in whose court all appropriate customs are reversed: with hospitality neither certain nor free, the guest must offer a gift instead of receiving one.¹³⁴ There is nothing particularly wrong with this reading, save that it is, frankly, boring. The second reading, which proves to be both less condemnatory and more interesting, is that of Aeetes simply as Other.

Reluctance to show hospitality does not, after all, necessarily mark a man as an 'evildoer' or even a deficient host, only confirms him in his status as a non-Greek: in the *Odyssey*, for example, Athena warns Odysseus that the Phaeacians do not gladly entertain strangers (*Od.* 7. 32–4), and the Phaeacians certainly do not prove themselves poor hosts. Lending significant weight to this second reading is that Phrixus by all accounts lives a long and pleasant life in Aea, much like the life Alcinous offers to Odysseus on Scheria. The third reading the scholion offers, however, is perhaps the most noteworthy of the lot. When evaluating Aeetes's reaction to the young man who arrives unexpectedly at his gates, it is essential to remember that Aeetes is not in the position of the customary Greek host. Phrixus is not a traveler like Odysseus, seeking temporary lodging as he makes his way home; he is an exile seeking a new land to call his own. As such he will be dependent on his host not for an evening or a week but for the rest of his life. This presents the necessity for a somewhat unusual adaptation of the quid-pro-quo nature of Homeric hospitality. While the host is expected to feast his guest to the best of his ability and offer him a gift from among the best he has, there is, too, the clear expectation that the host himself will be treated in a similar fashion should he one day find himself at his

¹³⁴ G. Hutchinson 1988: 107 dismisses him as an 'Oriental tyrant,' though his rationale for doing so is Aeetes's treatment of Jason and the Argonauts, not Phrixus before them.

guest's door.¹³⁵ In accepting Phrixus into his household, Aetes forfeits the possibility of his generosity someday being returned. It therefore does not seem particularly improper that he would accept a gift in return for the permanent hospitality he offers; Phrixus will, after all, never be in a position to return the favor of the hospitality he receives.

In addition to these three readings of Aetes as a host, the welcome of Phrixus διὰ <τὸ> δέρας allows—or, at the least, tempts—another interpretation as well: Aetes as a father negotiating his daughter's bride-price. Hesiod's version of Phrixus's arrival comes on the heels of the comment that, in Apollonius, Zeus commands Aetes to welcome the refugee so that Phrixus might marry Chalciope. In his note on Hesiod the scholiast does not negate the outcome of that welcome, merely offers a different initial reason for it. It is therefore somewhat tempting to read Phrixus's surrender of the fleece not as the cost of Aetes's hospitality but rather as the price for Aetes's child. Such a reading would therefore render διὰ <τὸ> δέρας αὐτὸν ἀθαιρέτως . . . προσδεχθῆναι not merely as 'welcomed willingly on account of the fleece' but rather 'welcomed willingly to the family on account of the fleece'—with the fleece playing the part of the bride-price.¹³⁶ With such scant context, it is impossible to determine whether this reading is viable, but whether Aetes accepted the fleece in exchange for either his hospitality or his daughter, in the *Aegimius* he is its rightful owner by the time Jason arrives to ferry it home.

Aetes also merits a brief appearance in Hesiod's *Theogony*, though that appearance falls in a section of doubtful authenticity.

¹³⁵ The bibliography on Homeric hospitality is a weighty one; see in particular S. Reece 1993 for a careful analysis of several hospitality scenes; P. Gainsford 2003 has useful bibliography for similar work done since.

¹³⁶ There do not appear to be parallels for προσδεχθῆναι being used in relation to marriage, though Thucydides (*Hist.* 3.15.1; 6.20.5) and Plato (*Rep.* 485 c 3; 535 e 3) both use it to describe a person being admitted to citizenship, which seems a useful parallel. Thucydides also uses it in the sense of exchanging one thing for another: *Hist.* 8.5.1.

κούρην δ' Αἰήταο διοτρεφέος basileus
Αἰσονίδης βουλήσι θεῶν αἰτιγενετῶν
ἦγε παρ' Αἰήτεω, τελέσας στονόεντας ἀέθλους,
τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπέτελλε μέγας βασιλεὺς ὑπερήνωρ,
ὕβριστῆς Πελῆης . . .

Theogony, 992–6

The daughter of Aetes, the Zeus-nurtured king,
Jason led away from Aetes by the will of the gods,
once he had finished those many grievous labors
the great king Pelias, violent and overbearing, had set for him.

Though ‘Zeus-nurtured’ is a common enough epithet, its context here renders it a striking description of Aetes. First of all, though Aetes and Circe have already been listed as children of Helios (*Th.* 957–8), this association with Zeus introduces the idea of divine favor. More intriguing still is the description of Pelias, which follows shortly on the tail of Aetes’s. This is now the third time we have had a reference, albeit on the slant, to Jason and Aetes; it is also the third time such a reference has been lacking in open antagonism between the two. At *Od.* 12.70, Jason is merely sailing (πλεύουσα) away from Aetes, not fleeing in a panic. One could, of course, argue easily that the very fact Jason chooses to chance the Clashing Rocks rather than the marginally more friendly Scylla and Charybdis is evidence of a mad dash in whatever direction he could find, or else evidence of a plan that he, trusting in Hera’s favor, has devised in order to write an end to his pursuers. That argument would hardly be wrongheaded. Likewise, though there is no mention of Jason and Aetes at odds in *Mimnermus*, it would be unwise to postulate much about the early Argonautic tradition from fragments that are, together, six lines long. Nonetheless, it would also be unwise to ignore the fact that in the *Theogony*, Pelias, not Aetes, is the outrageous, wicked king (βασιλεὺς ὑπερήνωρ, ὕβριστῆς: *Th.* 995–6) of the tale. While in later tradition Pelias will always be the first cause of Jason’s troubles,

Theogony is nonetheless the only place where he is seen in a negative light while Aetes is simultaneously presented in a positive one. The contrast does not suggest that, much like the medieval troubadours, later poets needed a wicked figure and co-opted a previously innocent Aetes for their use; it suggests only the possibility, even the likelihood, that there were originally more traditions than one about this son of Helios from which to choose.

In the *Aegimus* and *Theogony*, then, Hesiod presents us with an Aetes who is simultaneously similar to and somewhat different from his earlier Homeric incarnation. Like the *Odyssey*'s Aetes he is the brother of Circe and the only son of Helios and Perse;¹³⁷ unlike the *Odyssey*'s Aetes, he lacks the element of danger and the other characteristics 'murder-minded' implies, acquiring the epithet διοτρεφές rather than ὀλοόφρων. Too, from Hesiod we learn that by the time Jason arrives at Colchis, Aetes has accepted the fleece either as payment for Phrixus's board or else a bride-price for his daughter, and so it is his rightful property. Neither his characteristic of 'Zeus-nurtured' nor his status as the fleece's rightful owner will survive in the *Argonautica*.

By the time Aetes appears in the fragments of Eumelus and Pherecydes, he has therefore been established as dangerous, clever man associated with clever women and marked for eventual defeat. He is also a potentially powerful keeper of marvels, a host disinclined immediately to welcome guests, and the rightful owner of the golden fleece. The fragment of Eumelus from the scholia of Pindar's *Olympian* 13 adds a somewhat odd entry to this list, for in Eumelus's *Corinthiaca* Aetes is revealed as only a quasi-foreign king. He dwells on the far side of the earth, but he originally hailed, somewhat

¹³⁷ R. Janko 1992: 52 ad 10. 135–9: the spelling Περσηλις is different from *Odyssey*'s Πέρσης; this is nonetheless the same nymph.

surprisingly, from Corinth, and only after giving Corinth over to a son of Hermes did he resettle in Colchis.¹³⁸ Although this Greek pedigree does not initially seem to offer much to an understanding of the pre-Apollonian Aeetes—Eumelus likely drafted Aeetes as an early Corinthian king in order to provide literary precedent for Greek settlement of the eastern coast of the Black Sea¹³⁹—Aeetes as a Greek king in the east will prove relevant for the study of Aeetes in Apollonius.

Like Eumelus, Pherecydes offers something new, for in Pherecydes comes the first glimpse of Aeetes as more than human. Though Aeetes's heritage as the son of Helios is established as far back as Homer, Pherecydes's fragments are the earliest attestation of the abilities that such a bloodline may entail: an Apollonian scholiast notes that Pherecydes gives Aeetes bronze-hoofed bulls whose breath is flame.¹⁴⁰ Again, from such scant context there is little to be established other than that Aeetes is the owner of these marvelous bulls, but it is not unreasonable to assume that if Aeetes owns them he can also control them. This presumed capacity introduces the new quality of the king. The *city* of Aeetes is what is extraordinary in Mimnermus, both for its position at the eastern edge of the world and the shining treasure locked within in it (a treasure which is not, it should be noted, the fleece). This shift to Aeetes and his own possessions as the real marvels marks the appearance of a new characteristic of the king's that will persist through Apollonius. He is no longer merely the keeper of wonders; he himself is one. At the same time, this fragment speaks to Aeetes's power, a quality tentatively introduced in Homer and affirmed here. In being able to control bulls who breathe fire, he has extra-

¹³⁸ Volume-Jacoby # F 3b,451, F frag. 2c, l. 3

¹³⁹ R. Hunter 1995

¹⁴⁰ ὅτι χαλκόποδες οἱ ταῦροι καὶ πῦρ πνέοντες: 3 F 112 J=Σ ad 3.230 (Wendel, 225)

human capabilities; combined with his position as Colchis's ruler, those capabilities presumably make him an extremely powerful king.

The final relevant fragment of Pherecydes has one more element to offer, for it is our first direct attestation of Aeetes pursuing Jason when the hero escapes with Medea.¹⁴¹ As the focus of this fragment is the varying traditions concerning Medea's brother Apsyrtus, not the chase itself, Aeetes's exact motivation is unclear. We cannot tell whether he has set sail to avenge his losses on Jason, to reclaim and punish his daughter, to rescue his son, or a combination of the four. We therefore cannot determine whether Pherecydes's Aeetes is merely vengeful or else determined to hold on to what it is his. Nonetheless, the chase adds a key element to the portrait of the pre-Apollonian Aeetes: not only does it affirm the Homeric idea that he can be an intentional danger to others, but it will prove essential to understanding Apollonius's intent behind his portrayal of Aeetes in the *Argonautica*, where Aeetes is motivated solely by vengeance against his child, not a desire to reclaim what his personal property.

Herodorus is the next to add to the tradition, albeit briefly, as the Apollonian scholia explains. The situation here gives pause. Aeetes has, by the time of Herodorus, acquired a number of formidable characteristics and epithets. In addition to associating him with clever women, Homer has described him as powerful, intentionally dangerous, and marked for defeat; Hesiod has added the description 'nurtured by Zeus' and given him rightful ownership of the golden fleece. Mimnermus has made him a keeper of marvels; Eumelus has made him a Greek ruler in a foreign land; Pherecydes has made him and his possessions more marvelous than his city and strengthened the hint Homer

¹⁴¹ 3 F 32 J= Σ ad 4. 223–30a (Wendel, 271)

gave of his power. Too, Pherecydes has introduced Aeetes's pursuit of Jason out of Colchis, and in doing so echoed the Homeric idea of Aeetes as an intentional danger to others. Yet despite these characteristics, all of which argue that Aeetes is not a man to be either easily cowed or overcome, there remains the promise of eventual defeat at the hands of a Greek hero that the *δλοόφρων* in Homer suggests. With Herodorus we find our first echo of that sentiment in the later tradition, for Herodorus's Aeetes is concerned about the stability of his own power.

After offering a summary of the prophecy Aeetes received from his father (that he should be wary of treachery from within his own house) an Apollonian scholiast adds that Herodorus has this to say about the prophecy: '[Herodorus] says that on account of this [the fear generated by the prophecy] he [Aeetes] elected to yoke the bulls.'¹⁴² The *τούτου ἔνεκα*, 'on account of this,' is key, for it intimates that the reason Aeetes chose to set this task for Jason was not only—or even—to safeguard the fleece, but rather to safeguard his kingdom. He is not simply worried that Jason will return the fleece to Pelias; he is worried that he himself will lose his position in Colchis if Jason succeeds in his quest. It is a critical distinction, and one which will surface again in a more prominent guise in Pindar's *Pythian* 4.

By the time Aeetes appears in Pindar, he has emerged as a dangerous, crafty, quasi-foreign king in the east who is in possession of great marvels and is himself capable of marvelous deeds. Despite his abilities, however, he is nonetheless concerned for the stability of his throne, a quality which echoes Homer's suggestion that he is marked for defeat. He will retain all but one of these characteristics in *Pythian* 4.

¹⁴² *τούτου ἔνεκα καὶ τὴν ζεύξιν τῶν ταύρων λέγει αὐτὸν ἐπινοῆσαι*: 31 F 9 J= Σ ad 3. 594–98a (Wendel, 236)

Pindar

As old as the story of Jason and Aetes is, it is not until Pindar that we find a continuous narration of the tale: *Pythian* 4 gives an abbreviated version of Jason's quest, embedded in a poem meant to simultaneously celebrate the chariot victory of the Cyrene king Arcesilas at the Pythian Games and call for the return of the king's relative Damophilos from exile.¹⁴³ As the poem is therefore much more political than the previous tales of Aetes—in addition to flattery of a king and the plea for an exile's recall, Pindar uses Jason's quest to serve as a foundation myth for Cyrene—¹⁴⁴ the poet's purpose in writing is fundamentally different from those of his predecessors. That difference anticipates that he will re-imagine, perhaps radically, some of the main players of the tale, so that they tell not merely their story but the one Pindar wishes to convey as well. Rather surprisingly, Aetes loses only one familiar characteristic as a result: in neither his actions nor his epithets does the Pindaric Aetes display intentional danger to others as a defining quality. He offers Jason a challenge he believes the younger man may die trying to fulfill, if he even tries to fulfill it at all (*Pyth.* 4. 398–411), yet he does not stipulate, as he will in Apollonius, that Jason may die anyway if he refuses the attempt. Likewise, though he is later perfectly content to point Jason towards what he trusts will be the younger man's death, he seems in no hurry to hasten that death along. Aetes directs him, without warning, to the grove inhabited by a great speckle-backed serpent in the hopes that he will fail to retrieve the fleece (*Pyth.* 4.241–6); he does not then send twenty Colchians after him to make certain Jason does not somehow survive

¹⁴³ G. Kirkwood 1982: 161.

¹⁴⁴ There are a variety of sources who discuss this, but all of them state it is common knowledge and therefore I am uncertain which to cite as the original source. I will pin it on G. Kirkwood 1982: 161, as his commentary predates the other material I am looking at.

the encounter. Nor does Pindar make any mention of Aeetes pursuing Jason and Medea once they sail from Colchis, and as they the Argonauts begin their voyage home they are unconcerned that they may be being pursued across the deep.¹⁴⁵ As he is in Herodorus, Aeetes here is inclined to stack the odds in his own favor, but he is not, in Pindar, an unusually or overtly dangerous man.

The language of the poem supports this interpretation, for the only adjectives Aeetes lays claim to in *Pythian 4* are 'wondrous' and 'shining' (Ἀελίου θαυμαστός υἱὸς δέρμα λαμπρόν ἔννεπεν: 241–2). That θαυμαστός also describes Pelias's dream at *Pyth. 4* 162 should not be ignored; as the demands of the 'wondrous' dream prove potentially fatal to both Jason and his men, the repetition of the adjective at *Pyth. 4* 241 could well be a marker that Aeetes, too, spells possible destruction for the Argonauts. If so, it is still far more subtle than the Homeric ὀλοόφρων, and when combined with Aeetes's actions suggests that danger is not a defining characteristic of this incarnation of the Colchian king. As Pelias, too, is remarkably mild-mannered in his encounter with Jason instead of reverting to the wicked, arrogant king of the *Theogony* 995–6, it is possible that the conciliatory nature of the poem demanded the softening of both kings.

Much as was true was the Aeetes of Herodorus, at the heart of Aeetes's character in Pindar is his concern for the stability of his power. His reaction to Jason completing his appointed task makes this all too clear: Aeetes does not become enraged as he sees Jason finish plowing the field, but rather wails in silence (ἔυξεν δ' ἀφωνήτω: *Pythian 4*.

¹⁴⁵ It would be unwise to make too much of this lack. In a similar vein, it would be very wise to remember that Pindar 'composes at a maximum of compression' as F. Nisetich 1980: 25, puts it, and that this could well be merely an example of that practice. Pindar himself speaks of 'taking a shortcut' as he abbreviates Jason's slaying of the dragon and the Argonauts' voyage to Lemnos. All that considered, however, it is nonetheless important to note that it is the violence of kings being compressed from this poem: Pindar devotes a lengthy amount of time to the gentle, reasoned discussion between Jason and Pelias at its beginning.

237). The verb choice is critical, as we find it also in Homer and the tragedians, who employ the same verb in very different ways. Though the idea of mourning is inherently bound up in its definition, ἰύζω is not, in Homer, associated primarily with grief. Dogs and shepherds are ἰύζοντες as they see a lion ravaging their flocks and devouring the best of their heifers (*Il.* 17.66); the men and women of Nestor's palace are ἰύζοντες as they chase an eagle who has made off with one of their geese (*Od.* 15.162). In both scenes the concept of wailing for a loss, though present, is tempered by the desire to make a good deal of racket in an effort to chase an animal off: the dogs and shepherds are too frightened to engage the lion directly; the people are presumably hoping the eagle is going to drop the goose. It is the noise, not the gravity of loss, that seems the main focus of the verb.

The meaning shifts in tragedy. ἰύζω appears in the plays of both Aeschylus and Sophocles; here, it carries the connotation of not mourning merely for a loss, but for a loss that heralds the end of the mourner's life or world. In Aeschylus's *Suppliant Women*, for example, the messenger advises the women to wail and shout and call upon the gods, for they will not escape the Egyptian ship that is coming for them (ἰύζε καὶ λάκαζε καὶ κάλει θεούς· Αἰγυπτίαν γὰρ βᾶριν οὐχ ὑπερθορήϊ); in the *Persians*, the chorus moans that they must keen for the Persian army, destroyed to a man (ἰύζ' ἄποτμον δαίους /ὠς πάντα Πέρσαις παγκάκως/θεοὶ_ἔθεσαν, αἰαῖ, στρατοῦ φθαρέντος: *Il.* 280–83), and Xerxes later tells them to cry out and harmonize their song of sorrow with his own (ἰύζε μέλος ὁμοῦ τιθείς: *l.* 1042). Heracles, in Sophocles's *Women of Trachis*, is screaming and wailing (βοῶν, ἰύζων: *l.* 787) as he staggers about in Deineira's cursed cloak; at the beginning of *Philoctetes*, Odysseus remarks that Philoctetes is also screaming and

wailing (βοῶν, ἰύζων: l. 11) over the condition of his foot. The Homeric sense of raising a clamor for clamor's sake has vanished from the verb; it implies only the vocal expression of particularly great grief.¹⁴⁶

That the ἰύξεν at *Pythian* 4. 237 is aligned with the tragic rather than Homeric definition is made clear by ἀφωνήτω: the emphasis cannot be on the noise Aetes is making, for he is explicitly making none.¹⁴⁷ Rather, the force of the verb describes the enormity of his loss. The description is curious. Aetes cannot, yet, be mourning the loss of the fleece; at l. 243 he is clear in his expectation that Jason is not going to survive the task of claiming it (ἔλπετο δ' οὐκέτι οἱ κείνόν γε πράξασθαι πόνον). Nor can he be mourning the treachery of his daughter, for he is unaware that Medea helped Jason with the task: as he watches Jason finish plowing the field, he is grieved only at the man's power (ἄχει δύνασιν: ll. 237–8), which suggests that he entertains no suspicions concerning from where that power has come. ἰύξεν therefore raises the question: for what world-changing loss does Aetes mourn?

Pyth. 4 237–8, in conjunction with 221–2, points us toward a possible answer:

ἰύξεν δ' ἀφωνήτω περ ἔμπας ἄχει
δύνασιν Αἰήτας ἀγασθεῖς.

Aetes wailed, though his cry was silent,
Amazed at his [Jason's] strength.

Pythian 4 237–8

¹⁴⁶ That both Heracles and Philoctetes are not only ἰύζων but βοῶν seems to support this idea; unless Soph. is aiming for hyperbole or poetic redundancy, there is no need to double up on the verbs unless they each convey a different message.

¹⁴⁷ A scholion helpfully emphasizes the aspect of silence: at 422a we find ἰύξε δ' ἀφωνήτω glossed as 'Aetes, marveling at the strength of Jason, groaned furtively in his soul' (ἀνεστέναξεν. ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἐστέναξε δὲ λαθραίως κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁ Αἰήτης τὴν τοῦ Ἰάσονος δύναμιν θαυμάσας). G. Kirkwood 1982: 194 ad 237 notes further that ἰύξεν is related to the ἰύγξ, with which Jason bewitches Medea through Aphrodite's instruction. He does not press the point, and it seems a reach to conclude that the relationship is significant.

σὺν δ' ἐλαίῳ φαρμακώσαισ ἀντίτομα στερεᾶν ὀδυνᾶν
δῶκε χρίεσθαι.

She mixed drugs together with oil as remedy against pain,
And gave it to him to anoint himself.

Pythian 4 221–2

Δύνασιν is the word to note in *Pyth.* 4 237–8, for its context at *Pyth.* 4 221 makes it doubtful that the word refers to Jason's physical strength.¹⁴⁸ Though in Apollonius Jason will require both protection from the flames of the bulls' breath and superhuman strength to yoke and drive them, the drug Medea offers him in Pindar is only a protection against harsh pain (ἀντίτομα στερεᾶν ὀδυνᾶν: *Pyth.* 4 221). Her choice suggests that Jason is fully capable of yoking and driving the bulls on his own, and that it is therefore his ability to do so unburned which stuns Aeetes into silent grieving. The unusual force of Aeetes's grief, coupled of course with the nature of the challenge, suggests that this ability was, prior to Jason's arrival, his alone. This conclusion still leaves us with the question of why the loss of that unique status—Aeetes has, after all, presumably not lost the ability itself—would lead him to believe his life had irrevocably changed for the worse.

Williams's reading of *Arg.* 3. 372–81, where the Apollonian Aeetes accuses his grandsons and the Argonauts of conspiring to steal his kingdom, may offer us a clue. After Argus explains Jason's purpose in Colchis and puts forward an offer to aid Aeetes in his wars against the Sauromatians (*Arg.* 3.320–66), Aeetes replies that both his grandsons and the Argonauts had best clear out of his city, for he knows well that they are conspiring to steal his throne. Levin asserts that Aeetes has simply misunderstood

¹⁴⁸ In addition, Pindar does not, as a general rule, employ either δύνασις or δύναμις only in that sense. Both seem to refer instead to ability; when that ability is physical, both words carry the additional sense of unexpected or unusual. See *Pythian* 2. 20; 5.13; 5. 117; 9. 330; *Olympia* 9. 82; 13. 83; *Nemea* 1.57; 6.3.

their intentions;¹⁴⁹ Williams, on the other hand, notes that he very likely has not.¹⁵⁰ She pushes too far in intimating that Jason's intent in seeking the fleece must involve his own wish for the destruction of Aetes's power, but her underlying point is a good one: in surrendering the golden fleece, Aetes forces the possibility of losing status among, and possibly his kingdom to, his subjects. The same principle may be at work in Pindar, for in *Pythian 4* Aetes rules a nation of warriors. That the Colchians are both formidable and violent is evident as soon as the Argo puts in at the mouth of the Phasis, for her crew must cross swords with the dark-skinned inhabitants of Aetes's city (κελαινώπεσσι Κόλχοισιν βίαν/μεῖξαν Αἰήτα παρ' αὐτῶ: *Pyth 4* 211–12). The cause, instigator, and outcome of the battle are all (maddeningly!) unclear, but it seems likely that the two sides are an equal match: had the Colchians overpowered the Argonauts, Jason never would have been in a position to make his bid for the fleece; likewise, had the Argonauts sacked the city, Aphrodite would have had no need to teach Jason witchcraft in order for him to win Medea's aid. This stalemate suggests that Aetes's subjects are the equals of the congeries of god-born heroes Jason has brought with him to Colchis. Among such a war-like people, Aetes is unlikely to be in a favorable position should the Argonauts succeed in their quest. Not only will his unusual abilities have been proven other than unique, he will have been publicly humiliated. Jason's success paves the way for other challenges to Aetes's power. It is for the security of his position, not the fleece or his daughter, that Aetes mourns.

¹⁴⁹ D. Levin 1971: 21.

¹⁵⁰ M. Williams 1996: 472: 'How can Aetes retain his power and the respect of his people if he meekly surrenders the fleece or if he is beaten in the contest?'

Apollonian Aeetes

The next time we see Aeetes in extant Greek literature is in Apollonius's *Argonautica*.¹⁵¹ From the Argonautic tradition of Homer through Pindar, Apollonius inherited Aeetes as a tricky, quasi-foreign king, both dangerous and doomed, who despite gifts of great martial and magical power seemed concerned for the stability of his throne. He was, too, the rightful owner of the fleece. At first glance, the Aeetes of the *Argonautica* seems a clear heir to that tradition. He is tricky: without visible effort, he ensnares Jason in a challenge the younger man cannot escape (*Arg.* 3.401–21). He is quasi-foreign: though located on the far side of the world, Aeetes is manifestly Greek. He speaks the Greek language; he honors the will of the Greek gods (*Arg.* 3. 576); he is meticulous in his observance of the forms if not the spirit of Greek custom (*Arg.* 3. 299–315). He is certainly dangerous, for he commands the respect and fear of his own grandsons (*Arg.* 2. 1202–5) and of a king halfway across the world (*Arg.* 4. 1100–04); by the end of the poem, he is also doomed: he has lost his son (*Arg.* 4. 465–7), along with his warriors and his fleet (*Arg.* 4. 1206–1210), and the enemies on his northeast border, never subjugated to his rule, will likely greet this news with joy. The basis of his martial power—a fleet of ships—is unrivalled among the other kings of *Argonautica* (*Arg.* 4. 1102–4), as is his ability to slaughter, unaided, a field of warriors sprung from the earth; his ability to withstand the breath of his fire-breathing, bronze-hooved bulls as he yokes and drives them is matched only by his daughter's magic, which allows Jason to do the same. Too, Aeetes is concerned for the stability of his throne: warned by his father

¹⁵¹ Fragments of Euripides and Sophocles indicate that the quest for the fleece was popular among the classical dramatists, too, and Aeetes obviously would have figured large in their stories. The fragments that survive, however, deal primarily with Medea; Aeetes's name does not appear again until Apollonius.

Helios to expect treachery from his own kin (*Arg.* 3. 594–600), he was all too happy to send his grandsons to Greece and is immediately suspicious of their purpose when they return home too soon (*Arg.* 3. 369–70).

Yet the Aeetes of the *Argonautica* is not merely the next similar incarnation in a long line of Colchian kings: despite the immediate similarities, there are pivotal differences between the earlier incarnation of Aeetes and the Apollonian one. In the *Argonautica* Aeetes is not ὀλοόφρων, as he was in Homer. Considering how dependent Apollonius is upon Homeric language, his use of ὀλοόφρων in the *Argonautica* initially seems somewhat odd. That Aeetes is intentionally dangerous, associated with crafty women, and marked for defeat is one of the few pieces of information Homer offers about the Colchian king; as such, it would be reasonable to assume that Apollonius might employ in a description of the king as well. In the *Argonautica* he is certainly dangerous, he shares his craftiness not only with his sister Circe but with both his daughters as well, and he will indeed be defeated in the trial that he sets for Jason. Yet Apollonius employs the adjective only once, and in reference to Scylla, not Aeetes. Apollonian Scylla of course fits the Homeric definition of the term well enough. Hera does not seem to think that she will *accidentally* devour the best of Jason's men (*Arg.* 4.830–2); her attacks on sailors are intentional. She herself is a crafty female, and moreover, the reader is aware that Odysseus, encountering her a generation after Jason, will evade her not only on his first pass (*Od.* 12. 245–7) but his unscheduled second, as well (*Od.* 12.442–46). As ὀλοόφρων appears to carry the same connotation in the *Argonautica* as it does in the *Odyssey*, Apollonius's avoidance of the term in reference to Aeetes is doubly puzzling.

A consideration of what precisely befalls Aeetes as a consequence of Jason's trial, however, points the way toward an answer. In the *Argonautica* he is challenged by a Greek hero, but he is not defeated by one: he is defeated by his daughter. Herein lies the reason for omission. Pelias and Cyzicus are warned to expect trouble from a stranger (one-sandaled and god-born, respectively) but Aeetes is told by Helios to watch for destruction from within his own house (*Arg.* 3. 599–600). His anger at *Arg.* 4.9–10, where he is well aware that both his daughters must have had a hand in Jason's victory, mirrors the idea of Medea's responsibility; this idea again in the orders he gives to the Colchians at *Arg.* 4. 230–4. Jason has made off with the golden fleece and with his daughter, but Aeetes is uninterested in either Jason or the fleece. He tells the Colchians

εἰ μὴ οἱ κούρην αὐτάγρετον ἢ ἀνὰ γαῖαν
 ἢ πλωτῆς εὐρόντες ἔτ' εἰν ἄλλος οἴδαμι νῆα
 ἄξουσιν καὶ θυμὸν ἐνπλήσει μενεαίνων
 τεῖσασθαι τάδε πάντα, δαήσονται κεφαλῆσιν
 πάντα χόλον καὶ πᾶσαν ἐὴν ὑποδέμενοι ἄτην.

If they did not seize the girl with their own hands, whether on land
 or finding the ship still on the billow of the open sea,
 and bring her back so that he could slake his soul,
 eager for vengeance for all these wrongs, on their own heads
 they would bear all his wrath, paying for all his ruin.

His intent in the pursuit is not to reclaim the fleece or punish Jason; it is to reclaim and punish Medea. He cannot be ὀλοόφρων, for the agent of his defeat is not Greek.

ὀλοόφρων in the *Argonautica* therefore has little to do with the character of Aeetes; it instead points to another aspect of the poem: Jason's status as an erotic rather than epic hero, and Medea's as a helper-maiden-turned-hero.¹⁵²

¹⁵² And a well-attested and contested aspect it is. For bibliography on Jason's qualities of a hero see n8 above; for Medea's status as a helper-maiden-turned-hero, see particularly J. Clauss in J. Clauss and S. Johnston 1997: 149–77 and its attendant bibliography.

In addition to not being the ‘murder-minded’ Aeetes of Homer, the Apollonian Aeetes is likewise not unique in his status as the son of Helios, as he was in Hesiod; likewise, he is neither διοτρεφές nor necessarily the rightful owner of the fleece. Among the Argonauts Aeetes has a half-brother Augeias (*Arg.* 1. 172–5), and at the borders of his realm the body of another such brother lies in a smoking ruin: Phaethon, who fell so recently from the heavens that his body is still burning (*Arg.* 4. 596–8). He has likewise lost the divine favor evidenced by his epithet of διοτρεφές in the *Theogony*: it is Phrixus, not Aeetes, who is specifically cared for by Zeus in the *Argonautica* (*Arg.* 4. 584–88). And too, the question of to whom the golden fleece belongs is deeply ambiguous. In the *Aegimius* Hesiod cast Aeetes as its rightful owner. Whether he accepted it as payment for the hospitality he extended to Phrixus or else as the bride-price for his daughter, the fleece was his personal property. His right of ownership is not so clear in the *Argonautica*. He did not accept the fleece from Phrixus as payment for his hospitality, for he welcomed Phrixus into his household only at Zeus’s command (*Arg.* 4. 584–88). Nor did he accept the fleece from Phrixus as a bride price for Chalcioppe: Argus tells Jason that his grandfather gave Chalcioppe to Phrixus with no bride-price asked (κούρην τέ οἱ ἐγγυάλιξεν/ Χαλκιόπην ἀνάεδνον εὐφροσύνησι νόοιο: *Arg.* 2. 1148–9). His right to the fleece is therefore somewhat suspect. It belongs to him in the sense that he has physical possession of it, and has set so terrible a guard on it that he is unlikely to be challenged for it, but nothing in the poem specifies that he has a right to call it his, or to keep it.

Perhaps more important even than the familiar qualities that Aeetes lacks, however, are the four Apollonius ascribes to him which do not appear in the earlier Argonautic tradition:¹⁵³ arrogance, severity, an inclination to treat his subjects as his enemies, and his trust in his son. Arrogance and severity are somewhat non-specific; as far back as the classical Greek philosophers, they were considered the hallmarks of a tyrannical king.¹⁵⁴ The last two, on the other hand, find strong echoes in a very specific ruler, this time of the waking world: Antigonus Monophthalmus, who first claimed the title *basileus* in the east.

Antigonus and Aeetes

Perhaps the easiest method of tackling the comparison between Antigonus and Aeetes is to examine first the oddly recurrent association of Aeetes with the Cyclops. As Campbell, Hunter, and Vian all note,¹⁵⁵ there is an immediate and obvious parallel between the Cyclops and Aeetes, almost as soon as the latter opens his mouth: much as the Cyclops asks Odysseus where he and his men have left their boat (ὅπη ἔσχεσ ἰὼν εὐεργέα νῆα: *Od.* 9. 279), one of the first questions Aeetes asks is where his guests have disembarked from their ship (ὅπη τε γλαφυρῆς ἐκ νηὸς ἔβητε: *Arg.* 3. 316). Too, there is their shared consideration of their guests as a band of sea-faring rapparees: Polyphemus asks Odysseus whether he and his crew are pirates (ληϊστῆρες: *Od.* 9. 253) risking their lives to steal from other men; Aeetes later also broods over the pirates (ληϊστῆρας: *Arg.* 3. 589) who have invaded his land and vows they will not stay

¹⁵³ At least in what we have of it. It needs to be noted and remembered that our evidence of the older Argonauticas is fragmentary and scant.

¹⁵⁴ As T. Young 1926: 81 remarks, the Greeks 'never tired of telling themselves this.' See particularly R. Drews 1983.

¹⁵⁵ M. Campbell 1994, R. Hunter 1989, and F. Vian 1980.

unpunished for long.¹⁵⁶ The other echoes of *Odyssey* 9 in this episode are more subtle but still telling: Chalcioppe's scolding welcome of her sons recalls some of Odysseus's words to the Cyclops; Jason reworks much of Odysseus's speech to both the Cyclops and his own men.¹⁵⁷

All of these allusions, however, do not immediately seem to *mean* anything, other than that Aetes, too, is dangerous, inhospitable and like to make mincemeat of his guests. This is hardly news; Argos already made that point when he intimated that his grandfather would be more of a problem than the guardian serpent when it came to carrying off the fleece (*Arg.* 2. 1204-1215). The redundancy is initially somewhat puzzling, but the other similarities Polyphemus and Aetes share point the way towards a possible solution. Sons of gods, both take excessive pride in their heritage: the Cyclops tells Odysseus his people fear none of the Olympians, being stronger than they are by far (*Od.* 9. 273-276); Aetes consistently reminds his grandsons and guests of his status as Helios's son. Upon meeting their guests, both, too, make a mocking offer of what those guests seek: to Odysseus, who asked for a guest-gift (ξεινήϊον: *Od.* 7. 267), Polyphemus offers first to save Odysseus for the last of his snacks (Οὐτιν ἐγὼ πύματον ἔδομαι μετὰ οἷσ' ἐτάροισι, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους πρόσθεν· τὸ δέ τοι ξεινήϊον ἔσται: *Od.* 7. 369-70) and then later an earthquake courtesy of his father Poseidon (ἄλλ' ἄγε δεῦρ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, ἵνα τοι παρ ξείνια θεῖω, πομπήν τ' ὀτρύνω δόμεναι κλυτὸν ἐννοσίγαιον: *Od.* 7. 517); as Jason seeks the fleece, Aetes tells him and his men to leave before they see a Phrixus

¹⁵⁶ R. Hunter (1989), ad 3.587f. It is worth adding here that what Aetes considers pirates to be, men who βοτήρων αὔλια δυσκελάδοισιν ἐπιδρομήσι δαΐξαι (*Arg.* 3. 592-93), makes this allusion even more specific, as it evokes Odysseus and his men plundering the Cyclops's cave for cheese and plotting to run off with his lambs while the Cyclops was out tending his flocks; too, it casts Aetes as rather sympathetic towards the eventual plight of Polyphemus.

¹⁵⁷ See, in particular, M. Campbell (1994), ad 3.176f.

and a fleece that will bring them grief (πρίν τινα λευγαλέον τε δέρος καὶ Φρίξον ἰδέσθαι: *Arg.* 3.374). Both, likewise, were long ago warned of the cause of their eventual destruction by a prophecy simultaneously specific and vague: Telamon foretold that the Cyclops would lose his eye to a man named Odysseus (*Od.* 9. 507-516), Helios that Aeetes must beware of treachery from within his own house (*Arg.* 3. 597-600). Despite being ever vigilant, Polyphemus and Aeetes interpret those warnings wrongly—and thereby permit them to be fulfilled. And in the end, with their respective worlds crashing down around them, both call upon their neighbors for help with limited success (*Od.* 9. 398–412; *Arg.* 4. 211-230, where though the Colchians respond they will ultimately fail) and throw up their hands to call on their divine fathers for witness (*Od.* 9. 526-535; *Arg.* 4. 211–230). The resemblances are not merely of vocabulary, but of specific shared characteristics and circumstance as well, and they considerably strengthen the ties already binding the two characters. This raises the question, then, of purpose: why cast the Colchian king so deliberately as a second one-eyed monster?

The answer lies with the *diadochoi*, for establishing a strong link between Aeetes and the Cyclops is an easy way to link Aeetes immediately with Antigonus Monophthalmus. In addition to being hugely tall, with a raucous laugh and a barrel-chested voice,¹⁵⁸ Antigonus, like Polyphemus and as his epithet would suggest, had but one eye. The parallel was a subject about which he was notoriously touchy. Though he himself was fully capable of joking about his scars, he did not take kindly to the jibes of others; pseudo-Plutarch relates that he once executed the sophist Theocritus for calling

¹⁵⁸ The description of Antigonus comes from both Appian and Plutarch (*Dem.* 2.2; 3.2; 19.3; 27.4; *Eum.* 10.4; 15.2). In conjunction with the loss of his eye, Antigonus's sheer size may have played into this association with the Cyclops.

him ‘Cyclops’ behind his back—and more, that the messenger who heard the comment knew the man was going to die as soon as Antigonus learned of it (*De. Puer. Educ.* 14). In consistently comparing the Colchian king to a one-eyed monster, Apollonius brings to mind this one-eyed king—particularly since Aetes, like Antigonus, rules in the east. The simile establishes a parallel which is borne out by shared qualities of character and circumstance.

Two of the most obvious qualities the kings share are their arrogance and their severity. While both such characteristics are generic to tyrannical kings from as far back as the classical philosophers, the similarity of their expression by Antigonus and Aetes deserves comment: in addition to the epithets ascribed to him, each king appears most arrogant in his speech. Diodorus, who draws upon Apollonius’s contemporary Hieronymus of Cardia, describes his manner of speaking as arrogant (ὕπερήφανος) on three separate occasions. At 18.52.4, Arrhidaos believes his envoys to be arrogant; at 18.56.2, Seleucus damns Antigonus for his arrogant dismissal of his envoys; and at 20.106.3, with his envoys having been rebuffed, Cassander writes to Ptolemy and Seleucus about the arrogance of Antigonus’s reply. In Diodorus, ὕπερήφανος gives the impression of Antigonus as a tyrant; as J. Hornblower notes, ὕπερήφανος is a standard part of Diodorus’s vocabulary of tyranny.¹⁵⁹ Yet R. Billows makes a valuable observation about the arrogance of Antigonus the One-Eyed. In each of the three of instances in Diodorus, the ‘arrogance’ in question is a charge being leveled against Antigonus by his enemies, not a judgment that Diodorus (or Hieronymus, before him) is passing. Billows notes that while at times Antigonus may have been arrogant—and that he was is undeniable; Plutarch, too, notes his fondness for blustering speech at *Dem.* 28—only Antigonus’s enemies portrayed his arrogance as his main characteristic, his fatal flaw.¹⁶⁰ This parallels rather well Aetes’s circumstances in the *Argonautica*, where his arrogance is discussed only by those who will prove themselves his active enemies.

¹⁵⁹ J. Hornblower 1981: 213

¹⁶⁰ R. Billows 1996: 4, n9.

Enemies though they may be, those characters are not mistaken in their assessment, for Aetes, too, displays a fine disregard for modesty. Argus notes his grandfather's arrogance when he first warns Jason against crossing him; in addition to other formidable qualities such as territorial wealth and military power, Aetes boasts of his divine lineage (στεῦται δ' Ἡελίου γόνος ἔμμεναι: *Arg.* 2. 1202). The verb is repeated again at *Arg.* 3.579, when Aetes boasts (στεῦτο) to the Colchians that he will burn the Argonauts alive in their ship as soon as Jason has failed. At *Arg.* 4. 212 and *Arg.* 4. 1051 he is Αἰήτη ὑπερήγορι; too, when speaking with her aunt Medea is desperate to escape the high-handed threats of her father (ὑπέρβια δείματα πατρός: *Arg.* 4. 735).¹⁶¹

Apollonius hardly limits himself simply to description when it comes to Aetes's arrogance, which like Antigonus's appears more clearly in his speech than in his actions.¹⁶² Before the Argonauts first encounter him, that arrogance has been mentioned only once, and only in conjunction with his birth; Jason and audience both would be forgiven for assuming it a minor characteristic bound up in his lineage. Yet this impression does not survive the Argonauts' first meeting with him, for he establishes his arrogance as a dominant characteristic from the first time he opens his mouth. He greets his grandsons with these words: παιδὸς ἐμῆς κοῦροι Φρίξιοί τε, τὸν περὶ πάντων/ ξείνων ἡμετέροισιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔτεισα (*Arg.* 3. 304-305). The phrase is problematic. Williams notes that by addressing his grandsons as the children of Phrixus, a man he once

¹⁶¹ This vocabulary of arrogance is not limited to Aetes; Apollonius employs it for the descriptions of Pelias and Amycus, as well, two other kings who will be discussed below.

¹⁶² M. Williams 1996: 472 believes Aetes fonder of making violent threats than carrying out violent action; while we certainly do not see Aetes carry out the more terrible of his threats towards Jason, there is no reason to believe that he would not: if anything, the fear with which the Phrixides and the Colchians view him suggests he is in the habit of following through on his promises. Her argument that in setting Jason the challenge Aetes deliberately avoids single combat also neglects the fact that the challenge has been a pivotal part of the Argonautic legend since its inception.

honored above all other strangers in his house, Aeetes is indicating respect, particularly for Phrixus and also for Phrixus's sons.¹⁶³ Were that indeed the manner in which Aeetes addresses his grandchildren, this would be a valid and excellent point. Yet Aeetes does not immediately greet them as the children of his old ξείνος Phrixus; he greets them first as the children of *his daughter*, and only then does he tack Phrixus's name on to the end. This is striking. For all the begats and begots that Apollonius includes in his work, the mother's name, when given at all, comes only infrequently before the father's; when it does, she is of greater worth.¹⁶⁴ Aeetes is not simply recalling the virtue of his Greek son-in-law here, as Williams states; he is pointing out that his Greek son-in-law was not his daughter's equal – and, more importantly, that his daughter is of great worth only because she is his. He refers to Chalcioppe not by her name, but only as παιδὸς ἐμῆς: hence, whatever status she possesses comes from him alone. It is a lovely bit of subtle self-aggrandizement, and it is immediately echoed in how he speaks of Phrixus. Though Phrixus fled Greece as a child, has just died of extreme old age, and presumably spent the dozens of intervening years in the halls of Aeetes, Phrixus is still a ξείνος—not a son.¹⁶⁵ After at least a generation in his company, Aeetes still considers Phrixus an outsider. Furthermore, while Phrixus might in truth have been a man worthy of being called τὸν περὶ πάντων/ ξείνων ἡμετέροισιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔτεισα, Phrixus himself is not the focus of this phrase. This is the second time in as many lines that Aeetes has used a possessive pronoun—ἐμῆς, in line 304, and ἡμετέροισιν, here in 305—and in tandem with the first

¹⁶³ M. Williams 1996.

¹⁶⁴ Calliope at l. 24. In other cases where the mother's name alone is given, she is always the daughter of a god, while the unnamed father is presumably not.

¹⁶⁵ This is a nice variation on *Odyssey* 7. 313, where Alcinous, acquainted with Odysseus for barely an evening, tells him he wishes he would remain in Scheria as his son-in-law (ἐμὸς γαμβρὸς: *Odyssey* 7. 313)

person verb ἔταισα they serve to highlight the Colchian king, not the man he hosted. It is Aetes's daughter Phrixus married, Aetes's house in which Phrixus lived,¹⁶⁶ Aetes who fixed the value of Phrixus's worth. However great that worth might have been, Phrixus nevertheless played a distinct second fiddle to the king. In his carefully worded welcome of that man's sons home again, Aetes is therefore not reminding them of the father's greatness; he is reminding them of his.¹⁶⁷

This arrogance directs the rest of Aetes's opening speech. After inquiring into their reasons for coming home so soon, Aetes reminds his grandsons that they should have listened to his advice and never tried to make such a lengthy voyage to begin with, the dangerous distance of which he warned them against before they ever left.¹⁶⁸ Yet he does not simply remind them of his advice and move on; he takes further pains to mention that his knowledge of their proposed route was gleaned from the time he and his father Helios escorted his sister Circe to her new home (*Arg.* 3. 307-313). That Aetes is showboating is obvious,¹⁶⁹ but he is not merely showing off his knowledge of geography: the fact that he gives his father's specific name is key. Presumably, Argos and his brothers know who their great-grandfather is; in choosing to remind them Aetes is seizing yet another opportunity to boast of his divine ancestry—an opportunity he is never, as Argos warned Jason at the Phasis, slow to take. Likewise, his remark that he

¹⁶⁶ It is telling that Aetes, unlike Alcinous, appears never to have offered the stranger who married his daughter a house and possessions of his own; Argos makes an oblique mention of this at *Arg.* 2. 1151, where he states that Phrixus, a young man when he arrived in Colchis, has just died of extreme old age in Aetes's halls (ἐν Αἰήτῳ δόμοισιν).

¹⁶⁷ M. Campbell 1994 ad 3.302 notes that Aetes's use of παιδός and κοῦροι denotes his 'senior status,' but leaves it at that. The ἐμῆς seems to me to be particularly important, since Aetes is not emphasizing that he is merely older than his guests but fundamentally better than they are.

¹⁶⁸ It seems appropriate here to note Ursula LeGuin's iron rule for dialogue in fantasy fiction: no one who says *I told you so* has ever been, or will ever be, the hero.

¹⁶⁹ M. Campbell 1993 ad 3. 281

and his sister were whirled along in Helios's chariot on this trip is similarly designed to highlight his unique capabilities.¹⁷⁰ For unlike Phaethon, another of Helios's sons who famously took his father's chariot out for a spin, Aeetes survived not only one trip, but two: presumably, he and his father returned to Colchis in the same manner they left it. For the Argonauts and the Phrixides, the allusion is impossible to miss; Aeetes's half-brother tumbled so recently from the heavens that his broken body is still burning (*Arg.* 4. 596-598). For the reader, the allusion is somewhat more subtle, but still marked: the name Phaethon has been mentioned not fifty lines before (*Arg.* 3. 245), where Apollonius gives it as the nickname for Aeetes's son.¹⁷¹ It is difficult to see that name and not be reminded of the myth; with that in mind, it is likewise difficult to soon after read ἐν ὄρμασιν Ἡελίου (*Arg.* 3. 309) without noting, along with Jason and his crew, that Aeetes did not share Phaethon's fate. Aeetes's message here is clear: you, puny children, could not hope to accomplish this task; I, on the other hand, could do it in a day . . . and you, people I do not yet know, take note of my magnificence. Though his arrogance will never again be as blatant as it is in this first encounter with the Argonauts, the epithets and vocabulary Apollonius employs throughout the rest of the poem keep it at the forefront of his audience's mind.

The second quality Antigonus and Aeetes share is their savagery. This, like arrogance, is a stock characteristic of tyrant or barbarian kings in both poetry and prose, so much so that G. Nagy notes that hubris cannot truly be hubris unless also tainted by

¹⁷⁰ M. Williams 1996 rightly notes this, but does not address the fact that Aeetes himself is the one calling attention to the abilities in question.

¹⁷¹ M. Fusillo 1985 et al. note this as an ill omen for Aspyrtos's eventual fate.

unrestrained violence.¹⁷² Unrestrained violence is something with which both Antigonus and Aetes are intimately familiar—Antigonus is τραχὺς and βαρὺς; Aetes βαρὺς and ἀπηνέος—but again, the meaningful similarity lies in their manner expression. Both men can be savage towards their enemies: in 316, Antigonus dropped his captured enemy Antigones into a pit and burned him alive (Diod. 19.44.1–3); Aetes, in a similar turn as goodwill diplomat, plans to burn the Argonauts in the Argo as soon as Jason fails (*Arg.* 3. 507).¹⁷³ Neither is alone in his respective world in acting so harshly against his enemies: save Seleucus, all of the successors, particularly Lysimachus, were capable of horrific cruelty against their adversaries, and in the *Argonautica*, Amycus has already established himself as a particularly savage king (*Arg.* 2. 1–7). More importantly, however, both Antigonus and Aetes can be equally savage toward their allies. When Antigonus loosed his son Demetrius upon Babylon in an effort to retake it from Seleucus, Demetrius, one assumes with his father’s blessing, pillaged, plundered, and burned the land Antigonus was claiming as his own. It seems appropriate for him to have been merciless towards Seleucus and his troops; it does not seem appropriate for him to have treated Babylonia as enemy territory and ordered his soldiers to loot anything they could carry or drive out of the country (Plut. *Dem.* 7). The Babylonian Chronicle (rev. lines 34–41)¹⁷⁴ notes the widespread devastation wrought on the realm, and in *Dem.* 7. 3 Plutarch notes that Demetrius’s attack actually strengthened Seleucus’s claim to Babylon, for by ravaging the country Demetrius was thought to admit that it no longer belonged to his father. There

¹⁷² G. Nagy 1982: 275. He also notes that Hesiod lists violence as a symptom of hubris at *WD* 143–55.

¹⁷³ It may be relevant to note that Aetes and Antigonus generally resort to savagery when looking to make an example of someone.

¹⁷⁴ Grayson 1975: no. 10, 115–19

was, too, Antigonus's treatment of his men. Diodorus suggests that in the unreasonable demands he made of his soldiers he demonstrated little care for their welfare: in the lightning march across Pisidia, he forced them to an intolerable strain (Diod. 18. 44. 2); in 317 he endeavored to take them across the desert in midwinter (Diod. 19.37); in the winter of 314 he attempted a pass in the Taurus mountains and lost a large number of men to the cold and snow before admitting defeat (Diod. 19. 69. 2). Desertions followed—particularly in 306, when on the banks of the Nile his men endeavored to decamp to Ptolemy, whose forces they were supposed to be fighting. Those who were caught Antigonus ordered publicly tortured in an effort to discourage others from following (Diod. 20. 75.3). Hornblower asserts that such desertions were 'surely a result of . . . tactlessness in his personal dealings'; while 'surely' seems a stretch and 'tactlessness' less likely than 'poor treatment,' the same principle holds true. Antigonus's men were not deserting because they believed Antigonus would lose the coming battle; Antigonus had a force of 88,000 men. Nor could they be deserting solely for the promise of money Ptolemy offered; they were well-paid in Antigonus's army. Dissatisfaction with their commander seems the likely explanation.¹⁷⁵

In this instance, the echo of Antigonus in Aetes is obvious. When gathering the Colchians to chase after the Argo, Aetes does not simply command them to follow the ship or explain to them their task; he calls down terrible curses upon the heads of his

¹⁷⁵ It should of course be noted that the phenomenon of troop desertion during the wars of the diadochoi is hardly limited to Antigonus. Perdikkas's troops also left him for Ptolemy, and for similar reasons; Diodorus notes that they were disheartened by their many failures and tired of their commander's harsh severity. That severity, however, seems to have taken the sole form of punishing free speech, not in demonstrating an active disregard for the lives and physical welfare of his subjects. Likewise, during the war against Eumenes the Silver Shields defected TO Antigonus, not from him (though Antigonus lost soldiers to Eumenes and Peucestes in that situation as well). But Diodorus is clear that the Silver Shields were angered over the loss of their loot, women, and children, not over any ill treatment they had received at the hands of Eumenes or Peucestas.

people (δεινὰ δὲ παντὶ παρασχεδὸν ἤπυε λαῶ: *Arg.* 4. 230) and informs them that unless they track down Medea on either land or sea, and bring her back so that he may satisfy his soul with revenge, they will abide all his rage and vengeance at the cost of their own lives (*Arg.* 4.231–4). The vocabulary may be different from that of *Arg.* 3. 582–3, where Aeetes is contemplating burning the Argonauts for their wretched hubris (ὄφρ' ἀλεγεινήν / ὕβριν ἀποφλύξωσιν ὑπέρβια μηχανώοντες) but the sentiment is not: whether it be friend or foe who crosses him, Aeetes is ready to mete out punishment with a heavy hand. This scene is particularly telling in regard to his relationship to Antigonus, for this scene is unique in the Argonautic tradition. In the fragments of earlier Argonautic tales, Aeetes does not threaten the Colchians who pursue Medea: everyone boards a ship and they set sail after the Argo.¹⁷⁶ The same holds true in later traditions; particularly in Valerius Flaccus; the Colchians are spurred on by Aeetes and Apsyrtus, but their anger matches that of their king and prince (*Argonautica*, 8. 295–7). Yet not so in Apollonius's *Argonautica*. The Colchians are obviously raging over Medea's escape—with Aeetes they come to the shore in arms, shouting (*Arg.* 4. 212–19)—but Aeetes's threats are what truly compel them to sail. Note the lines that immediately follow Apollonius's description of his threats:

Ἵς ἔφατ' Αἰήτης. αὐτῷ δ' ἐνὶ ἡματι Κόλχοι
 νῆας τ' εἰρύσσαντο ἥ καὶ ἄρμενα νηυσὶ βάλοντο,
 αὐτῷ δ' ἡματι πόντον ἀνήιον·
 So spoke Aeetes, and on that very day the Colchians
 Launched their ships and loaded supplies onboard;
 On that very day they put out to sea.

Arg. 4. 235–7

Of interest here is Ἵς ἔφατ' Αἰήτης. Ἵς ἔφατ' . . . is a common enough phrase throughout the poem; it appears at the end of almost every speech act in the *Argonautica*.

Yet *Arg.* 4. 235 does not follow a precise speech act; it follows only Apollonius's summation of Aetes's address to his people. Its inclusion therefore takes on a causal force; it emphasizes the reason for the tension and rush expressed by the doubled ἀὐτῶ . . . ἡματι at *Arg.* 4. 235 and *Arg.* 4. 237. The Colchians assemble a fleet and sail the same day because they know that their king intends to keep his promises to them, as surely as he would have to Jason and his men. The fact that they are his countrymen and subjects, and Jason his enemy, makes no difference.

The result of this treatment is the same for Aetes as it is Antigonus: he loses his troops. For when the Colchians realize there is no way to bring Medea home, they refuse to return to Colchis. The force that sailed with Apsyrtus scatters along the coast of the Black Sea (*Arg.* 4. 507–21), but of particular importance is the force that followed Medea and Jason to Drepane: though they arrived at his shore threatening war and destruction (*Arg.* 4. 1004–7), they in the end beg Alcinous to accept them as allies (δέχθαι μελιξάντο συνήμονας: *Arg.* 4. 1210). There is a strong resonance here with the troops that left Antigonus to go over to Ptolemy. Tired of a general who paid no mind to their welfare, Antigonus's troops were ready to revolt; frightened of a king who valued their lives at nothing, Aetes's men refused to come home. And in both cases, the king's soldiers gave their loyalty instead to the man they were supposed to be fighting.

The final similarity Antigonus and Aetes share, and perhaps the one that binds them most strongly, is the characteristics of, and their own trust in, their sons.

Demetrius and Apsyrtus

One of the most compelling similarities between Antigonus and Aetes takes shape around their sons. Apsyrtus's role in the Argonautic tale before Apollonius was

minor; fragments from Pherecydes and Sophocles speak only of his death and the desecration of his corpse. Those fragments suggest that his function was simple and two-fold: to provide the Argonauts with the time they needed to flee his father, and to highlight the barbarism inherent in Medea. Neither of those functions holds true in the *Argonautica*. The Apollonian Apsyrtus is a grown man, older than Medea, apparently high in their father's trust, and rather than being sacrificed by his sister to delay Aeetes he is the commander of the fleet Aeetes sends to bring her home. It is one of Apollonius's most obvious breaks with the Argonautic tradition; it is also one of the oddest, for there seems to be no point. The not uncommon assertion that the shift to a half-brother is meant to whitewash Medea for a more feminist Hellenistic audience is erroneous on two levels: Apsyrtus was Medea's half-brother as far back as Sophocles, and though Jason, not Medea, kills and partially dismembers him in the *Argonautica*, she is no less responsible for his death.¹⁷⁷ She devised the plan; she tricked the heralds; she sent her brother the purple cloak (*Arg.* 4. 411–20). We must look elsewhere for a source. Again, the Antigonids present themselves as likely models.

The trust between Antigonus and Demetrius is a substantial part of their legend. At *Dem.* 3. 1–4, Plutarch relates that their trust was so great Antigonus permitted Demetrius within weapons range of him while armed; more, the king believed that such trust added to the strength of his kingdom and the stability of his own power. Plutarch adds (rightly) that their relationship was unusual among the families of the diadochoi, who were accustomed to kill sons, mothers, wives, and brothers with depressing regularity. Nor was the affectionate trust between the two limited to Antigonus's

¹⁷⁷ J. Bremmer in J. Clauss and S. Johnston 1997:83–4.

certainty that his son would not kill him in his sleep. Upon arranging for his own coronation after the battle of Salamis, Antigonus conferred upon his son a diadem and the title 'king'; while this was an essential part of his own plan to present himself as the founder of a new, stable dynasty,¹⁷⁸ it nonetheless displayed his genuine trust in his son. Demetrius was not named his heir; he was named his co-ruler, presumably with the same powers and responsibilities such a position entailed. Too, as early as 312 Antigonus entrusted him with military operations essential to the stability of his own kingdom: Demetrius was assigned to hold Syria against Ptolemy, sent to liberate Greece, and was entrusted with campaigns in Cyprus, Egypt, and Rhodes. Perhaps most importantly, in 306 Demetrius won the battle that won his father a crown: when Antigonus sent a fleet of ships east to challenge Ptolemy, he sent them under Demetrius's command.

Though the relationship between Aetes and Apsyrtus does not constitute a significant part of the *Argonautica's* plot and therefore does not receive much mention, there are nonetheless strong similarities to the kind of rapport Antigonus and Demetrius shared. That Aetes trusts his son implicitly is apparent at *Arg.* 3. 596–604, where he considers the prophecy of his father Helios. Though that prophecy warns him to expect treachery from within his own house, Aetes never thinks to expect treachery from any of his children; he suspects it instead from his grandsons through Chalciope. This misdirected suspicion is of particular note when considered against the previous two prophecies of the poem. Pelias, warned to beware of a man with one sandal, recognizes Jason immediately as the source of his promised doom and takes steps to rid himself of the younger man (*Arg.* 1.12–17). Likewise Cyzicus, warned not to offer battle to a band

¹⁷⁸ E. Gruen 1985

of traveling heroes, immediately befriends rather than challenges the Argonauts (*Arg.* 1. 969–71). Though neither king can save himself from his promised doom, both nonetheless correctly identify the man from whom danger is prophesied to come. Aetes alone misapprehends the prophecy entirely. Apollonius does not give a specific explanation why—he says only that Aetes is certain the prophecy will be fulfilled in his grandsons—but there are a limited number of explanations that are reasonable to entertain. After all, the Phrixides cannot yet have given him cause to believe that they are conspiring against him. Though they eventually throw their lot in with Jason and his men, the fear with which Argus views his grandfather (*Arg.* 2. 1202–06) seems proof enough of their previous good behavior: even had they been considering treachery and usurpation, wariness of their grandfather’s temper and power would have forbidden them to act.¹⁷⁹ Nor can Aetes be underestimating the abilities of his children: as *Arg.* 4. 9–10 reveals, he knows full well what Medea is capable of; besides, he thinks highly enough of Apsyrtus that he gives him command of the fleet sailing after his sister. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that he does not interpret his father’s prophecy correctly because he trusts his daughters and his son.

Two similarities of circumstance Demetrius and Apsyrtus share support this idea. Much like Demetrius, Apsyrtus is at his father’s side when his father sets out to do battle (*Arg.* 2. 224–5); it is unlikely he would serve as his father’s charioteer if his father did not trust him. That Apsyrtus appears in this position at this point in the poem is telling, as Aetes has already discovered the treachery that Medea and Chalcioppe planned against

¹⁷⁹ We see such caution again in Argus’s speech to Aetes at *Arg.* 3. 320–66; M. Campbell 1994: 288 ad 318 makes the excellent observation that Argus addresses his grandfather as though ‘the king’s anger has already been vented and needs to be mollified.’

him (*Arg.* 4, 9–10). Aware now that his daughters have betrayed him and already convinced that his grandsons have long been planning to, Aeetes nonetheless does not turn suspicious eyes upon his son. Too, again much like Demetrius, Apsyrtus is given command of a fleet sailing east against his father's enemies (*Arg.* 4. 305–6). The trust such a command implies is obvious, particularly since that command seems to be an Apollonian innovation. In the earlier attestations of Jason and Medea's flight, it is Aeetes, not his son, who leads the pursuit of the Argo. His role is potentially evident as early as Homer, where at *Od.* 12. 70–3 Jason is 'sailing from Aeetes'; $\pi\alpha\rho'$ Αἰήταιο can be read either as 'from the city of Aeetes' or else 'from Aeetes himself.' Too, an Apollonian scholiast offers the following parallels: in Pherecydes, Medea takes her brother from his bed and brings him aboard the Argo, where (presumably to slow her father's pursuit) she scatters his dismembered limbs in the Argo's wake; in Sophocles's *Scythians*, she apparently does the same. Later authors, too, cast Aeetes in the role of pursuer. In Diodorus's summary of Dionysius of Miletus's tale, Aeetes pursues the Argonauts, kills Eurystheus's brother Iphitus in battle, and is soon after killed by the argonaut Meleager (*Diod.* 4. 48.4); this account is in reasonable accord with the fragment of Dionysius in the Apollonian scholia, which reads that Aeetes, having taken command of a ship and assembled the best of his warriors, kills Iphis, the brother of Eurystheus, and many others as well (Σ ad 4. 223–30a (Wendel: 271)). Likewise, Hyginus writes that Aeetes and his son together went after the Argo (*Fabulae* 23). Not so in *Argonautica*. Having called the Colchians to assembly and to arms, Aeetes, raging, informs his people that unless they fetch back his daughter, they will answer to him in her place. The Colchians then immediately put out to sea in pursuit (*Arg.* 4. 236–8), but soon thereafter

it becomes apparent that Aeetes has not gone with them. Apsyrtus, not his father, commands the fleet on the Argo's tail (ἄλλοι δ' αὖ ποταμὸν μετεκίαθον, οἷσιν ἄνασσειν Ἄψυρτος; *Arg.* 4. 305–6). The singularity of this episode within the Argonautic tradition is striking. It was not inherited from earlier authors, and it will not be adopted by most later authors;¹⁸⁰ it therefore raises the question of source material. Demetrius Poliorcetes seems an obvious choice.

There are two further innovations in this scene that strengthen the link between Demetrius and Apsyrtus. The first is the fleet of ships under Apsyrtus's command, which Apollonius describes as looking not like a fleet but a flock of birds, wing upon wing, flying over the deep (*Arg.* 4. 238–40). Such a description has no parallel in earlier or near-contemporary Argonautic tales.¹⁸¹ Dionysius of Miletus gave Aeetes but a single ship (τὴν ναῦν: Wendel, 271), and from the bloody trick Medea employed to aid the Argo's escape we may presume that Pherecydes and Sophocles did the same. Scattering a prince's limbs into the water may well force a single ship to slow, but the trick will be ineffective against an entire fleet; as one ship pauses to search for Apsyrtus's dismembered corpse, the rest will continue their pursuit. The second innovation is Apsyrtus's age. Though he does not appear in Dionysius's version of the tale, he does appear in those of Pherecydes and Sophocles. In both, he is Medea's significantly younger brother. Pherecydes describes him as a little boy still in his bed when his sister comes to fetch him; Sophocles notes that Medea is his older half-sister. In Apollonius,

¹⁸⁰ Only Valerius Flaccus will, like Apollonius, make Apsyrtus the commander of his father's fleet; in his *Argonautica*, however, Apsyrtus's command is the specific result of his father's old age (*Argonautica* 8. 280).

¹⁸¹ S. Jackson 2004: 57–67 addresses the problems inherent in the tale of the 'first ship' including foreign fleets of them.

however, he is old enough to lead a host to war.¹⁸² Both differences from the older Argonautic tale are curious. Both differences, too, point to Demetrius as a possible model: he commanded his father's fleet with brilliant success at Salamis.

The final two similarities of circumstance that bind Demetrius and Apsyrtus, and which in turn strengthen the association between Antigonus and Aeetes, hinge on Apsyrtus's nickname: Phaethon, the shining one. It appears first at *Arg.* 3. 245, where in a description of Aeetes's palace Apollonius specifies which tower belongs to Aeetes's son; the poet then goes on to relate that Apsyrtus acquired the name 'Phaethon' because he stands pre-eminent among his companions (*Arg.* 3. 245–6). His 'shining' is the first and one of the few qualities of his we encounter in the poem; it is, as such, a defining or at least particularly noticeable characteristic.¹⁸³

That shining finds an echo in Demetrius, whose formidable physical beauty is well-attested in literary sources.¹⁸⁴ In *Dem.* 2 Plutarch credits him with, among other things, great height, features of such rare beauty that no sculptor could capture their likeness, and a heroic look and kingly majesty that were difficult to imitate. At first glance, such perfection appears suspect, for it seems little more than an example of the classical and Hellenistic ideal of beauty as an indication of moral rectitude. Moreover,

¹⁸² In Apollonius, in fact, he appears to be older even than Chalciopé; Apollonius relates that he was born of Asterodeia before Aeetes ever married the mother of Chalciopé and Medea. On the other hand, he is young enough to still be unwed and have an apparently wide group of acquaintances of the same age and marital status. The ages of Aeetes's family members are deeply weird.

¹⁸³ Compare with the introductions of the Argonauts in Bk. 1, where their most relevant characteristic is given: Boreas's sons, who will be able to run down the Harpies, are described in respect to the wings that beat at their temples and feet; Tiphys is described in respect to his seamanship.

¹⁸⁴ Coins are not of particular use to us in determining the features of Hellenistic kings. R. Fleischer 1996: 30–31 notes that the royal portraits of the diadochoi and their immediate heirs are unreliable; the similarity of their features is too strong, and the adoption of traits of Alexander too many, to argue for a realistic representation of individual men. Their portraits represented the necessary 'kingly' qualities of strength, military prowess, and appropriate age; it is relevant that beauty is not among those qualities..

Plutarch's intent in chronicling Demetrius's career renders a depiction of that ideal at this point of *Demetrius* fitting: portraying Demetrius as kingly in his youth better highlights his later fall. A look at other descriptions of Demetrius, however, suggests that Plutarch's may not be far off the mark. It matches that of Diodorus Siculus, and both Diodorus's and Plutarch's accounts seem to stem from the same Hellenistic source: Hieronymus of Cardia, now lost. It would of course still be easy to argue that Diodorus and Hieronymus are simply offering examples of the Hellenistic ideal, and that the hymn is combining flattery with the iconography of kings, but the other Hellenistic kings do not always merit the same treatment. While listing Seleucus's many kingly qualities, for example, Appian describes the king as being tall and powerfully built (καὶ τὸ σῶμα ὄντι εὐρώστῳ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ: *Syr.* 57), but he does not mention beauty; in *Idyll* 17, Theocritus refers to the divine ancestry, power, territory, wealth, victories, generosity, and piety of Ptolemy II, but he does not refer to his looks.

That both Demetrius and Apsyrtus are pretty does not, of course, necessarily mean much; half the heroes aboard the *Argo*, too, are beautiful, as were the heroes of the *Iliad*, as were the heroes of the *Odyssey*. Nonetheless, the shared quality of beauty introduces the second and more significant similarity between the two. Fusillo and Newman note that the nickname 'Phaethon' serves as an ill omen for Apsyrtus, and they are of course correct.¹⁸⁵ The omen is particularly powerful in a poem where the broken body of Phaethon himself is still burning (*Arg.* 4. 596–8); that the Argonauts pass his corpse immediately after learning what they must do to expiate Apsyrtus's murder seems to mark that ill omen fulfilled. Yet the focus on the doom the name promises neglects the

¹⁸⁵ M. Fusillo 1986: 42–3; J. Newman 1986: 79.

other connotations the name carries, for disaster is not all 'Phaethon' represents: there is powerful solar imagery associated with it, as well. The most familiar source of that imagery is Helios's son, our earliest attestation of whom is Euripides's *Phaethon*; familiar as that tale is, however, the link between the name and the heavens is not limited to it alone. The Phaethon who appears in Homer is one of the horses of Eos (*Od.* 23. 246); in Hesiod, he is Eos's son by Cephalus; in the astronomical texts of Eudoxus, the star of Zeus (ὁ τοῦ Διὸς ἀστήρ: *Ars Astronomica*: col. 5; l. 14) is known as Phaethon. Too, in literature from the eighth to fifth centuries, the adjective φαέθων describes only Helios, his light, or his kin.¹⁸⁶ Such a nickname is therefore obviously appropriate for Apsyrtus, who in the *Argonautica* is not only the grandchild of Helios but the son of a man continually associated with light.¹⁸⁷ φαέθων therefore does not only suggest that Apsyrtus will come to an ill end, but also gives him a specific share in the celestial imagery of his father. In a more subtle fashion, his mother's name, Ἀστερόδεια (*Arg.* 3. 235–6), does the same, as it has its root in ἀστήρ, 'star'. This would perhaps seem coincidence had Apollonius inherited the name from a definite earlier tradition, but as C. Robert points out its origin is uncertain.¹⁸⁸ In the fragment that remains from Sophocles's *Scythians*, Apsyrtus's mother is merely one of the Naiads (fr. 546: Wendel, 272); a previous scholion at *Arg.* 3. 240 (fr. 344: Wendel, 227) gives her name as Naeara. Campbell makes the sensible suggestion that the name Asterodeia may simply have been the name of Phaethon's mother in earlier tradition and been co-opted by Apollonius to

¹⁸⁶ In Homeric Hymn to Helios it describes his mother, as well. Its usage begins to expand in the fourth, but even then it is limited: we find two attestations of φαέθων in reference to Zeus and one in reference to gold, and the rest still refer to Helios or his son.

¹⁸⁷ See particularly A. Rose 1984 for the celestial imagery of Aetes.

¹⁸⁸ C. Robert 1921: 762.

provide Aectes with an equivalent of Helios's wife,¹⁸⁹ but whatever its origins, the break with the Sophocles's genealogy seems deliberate.

In both solar imagery and vocabulary, these five lines about Apsyrtus's birth reveal a key similarity to Demetrius. In the hymn the Athenians composed in honor of Demetrius's return to the city in 291, they have this to say about him:

σεμνόν τι φαίνεθ', οἱ φίλοι πάντες κύκλω,
ἐν μέσοισι δ' αὐτός,
ὅμοιος ὥσπερ οἱ φίλοι μὲν ἀστέρες,
ἥλιος δ' ἐκεῖνος.

He appears marked, his friends around him in a circle
And he himself in their midst,
As though his friends were the stars
And he the sun.

Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* VI. 253b–f

The similarities with the first description of Apsyrtus at *Arg.* 3. 245–6, wherein we learn that the sons of the Colchians call Apsyrtus the shining one, since he stands pre-eminent among all his bachelor companions (καὶ μιν Κόλχων υἷες ἐπωνομίην Φαέθοντα / ἔκλειον, οὐνεκα πᾶσι μετέπρεπεν ἠιθέοισιν) are too powerful to be ignored. Just as Demetrius outstrips his friends by as much as the sun does the stars, so too does Apsyrtus outshine all of his companions. Asserting that this description of Apsyrtus is meant to deliberately recall the Athenian hymn to Demetrius does not go too far.

In similarities of circumstance, then—their relationships with their fathers, their command of a fleet, their age, and their beauty—and in similarities of language—the celestial imagery that points toward the strong resonances between Demetrius's hymn and Apsyrtus's introduction in *Argonautica*—Demetrius and Apsyrtus seem a fair match. The number of innovations Apollonius perpetrated upon the older Argonautic legend to

¹⁸⁹ M. Campbell 1994: 219 ad 242–3.

effect this parallel suggest that such a match was deliberate. The association between the sons strengthens the already significant association between the fathers. The intent behind this association will be discussed below.

Aeetes and Cambyses

Yet the similarities of character, circumstance, and position that bind Aeetes with Antigonus leave a reader in a somewhat precarious position, for combined with the poetic geography of Colchis they initially seem to bind him with Ptolemy, as well. Colchis may well lie at the mouth of the Phasis river, but it is not associated simply with the eastern side of the Black Sea. It is associated, strongly, with Egypt. At *Arg.* 4.272–9, the unnamed king credited with the foundation and settlement of Colchis is widely accepted to be the Egyptian king Sesosotris;¹⁹⁰ more importantly still, as the Argonauts first approach Colchis at *Arg.* 2. 1009–15, Apollonius borrows Herodotus’s description of how the Egyptians’ methods, customs, and daily activities are a fundamental inversion of those of the Greeks.¹⁹¹ Nor is this association of Colchis with Egypt one of Apollonius’s inventions. The connection between Colchis and Egypt was one well-attested in ancient literature;¹⁹² as such, it would be one with which much of Apollonius’s audience was already familiar before encountering his poem. In the event that his audience was somehow not familiar with this parallel, however, Apollonius makes it explicit by co-opting the Herodotean framework for Egypt as the Argonauts draw closer to Colchis: everything is upside down. In his description of Egyptian custom, Herodotus asserts that Egyptians reverse the common practices of mankind: men stay home while

¹⁹⁰ S. Stephens 2003: 173.

¹⁹¹ S. Stephens 2003: 175.

¹⁹² D. Braund 1994: 17–18.

women go to the marketplace; weavers work the wool down the warp instead of up; everyone eats their meals outside instead of within (*Histories* 2.35). Likewise, as the Argonauts approach Colchis, they experience a similar reversion of customary norms: the men of the Timbarenaoi take to their beds with sympathetic pregnancy while the women prepare them the customary meals and baths that follow delivery (*Arg.* 2. 1010–14); the Mossynoikoi practice out of doors what Greeks practice within (*Arg.* 2. 1015–25); the Colchians themselves inter their dead men in the air, wrapped in untanned skins and hung from trees, and their women in the earth (*Arg.* 3. 200–09).

Much has been made of this allusion, and on its strength Colchis has been established as an Egyptian space within the poem.¹⁹³ The identification, while accurate, is troubling. If Aeetes's character and circumstance ally him with Antigonus, then his position within the allusive geography of the poem would seem to ally him with Ptolemy, who assumed rule of Egypt upon Alexander's death. Writing under the patronage of Ptolemy's son, Apollonius is dependent upon the king for his position in Alexandria; the association of Ptolemy with the most violent and arrogant character of the *Argonautica* is therefore problematic. Too, the nature of the other Hellenistic poetry on kingship that survives, coupled with later evidence in the *Argonautica* itself, makes such an association unlikely. While neither Callimachus nor Theocritus shies away from the difficulties inherent in this new form of kingship in the early Hellenistic world,¹⁹⁴ neither ever

¹⁹³ S. Stephens 2003: 176, offers Aeetes's status as the son of Helios as further evidence of Apollonius particularizing Colchis as Egyptian space; the Ptolemies adopted the pharaonic title 'son of Re' as υἱὸς τοῦ Ἡλίου. This similarity needs to be considered carefully, as it is hardly Apollonian invention: Aeetes has been the son of Helios since Homer.

¹⁹⁴ As Stephens 2003 notes, even in praise poetry Callimachus is frank in his uncertainty about anything after the inception of Ptolemy II's rule, and Theocritus, in offering new models for kingships, establishes himself and all poets as arbiters of royal behavior, which would suggest his belief that kings require careful watching.

engages in a direct attack on their patrons—nor does Apollonius, as his depiction of Alcinous will prove. The allusion to Herodotus at *Arg.* 2. 1009–15 therefore gives rise to a troubling paradox: Colchis must be Egypt; Aetes cannot be Ptolemy.

Its resolution lies not in Apollonius but in Herodotus. Precisely because the allusion at *Arg.* 2. 1009–1015 is so strong, its original context in the *Histories* must be considered more carefully. With his reference to Herodotus, Apollonius does indeed present Colchis as Egyptian. But ‘Egyptian’ is too nebulous a term, for the allusion forces a narrower interpretation. It does not merely evoke Egypt; it evokes, specifically, Egypt of the early fifth century B.C.: Herodotus presents his discussion of the Egyptians’ odd behavior as the result of his own inquiry into and observance of contemporary Egyptian custom. In referencing Herodotus, Apollonius is therefore associating Colchis with a specific point of Egyptian history, Egypt under the Persians. The allusion is not merely a signal of an upcoming geographic allusion, a signpost that Colchis should be read as a distinctly Egyptian space within the poem, but a temporal one as well.

This temporal association is vital for a number of reasons, the most important of which being the distance it establishes between Aetes and the Ptolemies. The allusion to Egypt does not indicate that Aetes should be read as an avatar of a native or Ptolemaic king, but rather of the Persian kings of its past. And Herodotus does not paint a pretty portrait of the Persian kings in Egypt. Cambyses in particular is described as the perpetrator of especially malicious violence.¹⁹⁵ In the aftermath of his invasion, he subjects the defeated pharaoh and his court to deliberate humiliation—they are forced to

¹⁹⁵ There is evidence, of course, that Herodotus’s account is a good deal more lurid than the truth, but even the sympathetic source Udjahorresne does not deny the desecration of holy places and obliteration of Amasis’s cartouches, and speaks twice of the great misfortune Cambyses’s reign brought upon the land. See particularly J. Ray 1988: 255–9.

watch their daughters act as slaves and their sons march to their executions (*Hist.* 3.14)—and soon engages in what Herodotus describes as an assault upon and mockery of everything which ancient law and custom made sacred in Egypt (*Hist.* 3.37). Moreover, his disrespect for Egyptian religious custom is matched by disregard for his own; in burning the body of Amasis, he violates the precepts of both systems of belief. Too, his violence is unpredictable and deadly, and Herodotus makes clear that he is ecumenical in his savagery (*Hist.* 3.37): he kills allies and subjects alike. Nor is his death the end of Egypt's troubles. Once Herodotus abandons his Egyptian narrative to follow Darius's exploits in Asia, the next we hear of Egypt is at the beginning of Book 7. Here Herodotus relates that although a recent rebellion in Egypt stiffened Darius's resolve to go to war against both the Egyptians and the Greeks, the king died before having a chance to exact his vengeance. Yet Darius's early death does the Egyptians no favors. At *Hist.* 7.7, the final mention of Egypt in *Histories*, Herodotus asserts that after Xerxes re-conquers Egypt and writes an end to the rebellion, he leaves the country in a condition of servitude worse even than what the Egyptians had already endured. Persian kings in Egypt are therefore hardly a positive force in *Histories*: particularly in the person of Cambyses, they are savage, disrespectful of both their own gods and others', and as violent towards their allies as they are to the people they have subjugated. Allying Colchis so strongly with Egypt-under-the-Persians casts Aetes as the same. He is not merely an eastern tyrant or barbarian king; he is a poetic avatar of Egypt's Persian masters.

There are fewer specific parallels between Aetes and Cambyses than there are Aetes and Antigonus, but there are nonetheless points of comparison to be made. One

of Aetes's defining characteristics is his ability to inspire fear in others;¹⁹⁶ in that, he finds a true companion in the Herodotean Cambyses. Dreading the power of Persia, Amasis feared to refuse Cambyses his daughter in marriage (*Hist.* 3.1); the royal judges feared to give an answer that would displease him (*Hist.* 3. 33); Prexapes, having just lost his son to the king's cruel whim, makes no protest at the boy's death, but instead out of fear for his own safety compliments Cambyses's marksmanship (*Hist.* 3. 36). These sentiments are not dissimilar from those entertained by the men who interact with Aetes in the *Argonautica*. When Aetes demands that Alcinous return his daughter, Alcinous, too, is wary on account of Aetes's power; Aetes, he says, has a fleet he could sail all the way to Greece if he wished, and so he is loath to cross him unless he must (*Arg.* 4. 1101–3). Too, the Colchians who fail to reclaim Medea for her father also fail to return home. The force that sailed with Apsyrtus scatter along the coast of the Black Sea when they realize that they cannot avenge his death; they are too fearful of Aetes's anger to return to Colchis (δὴ γὰρ τε Κυτταίδος ἦθεα γαίης/ στύξαν ἀτυζόμενοι χόλον ἄγριον Αἰήταο: *Arg.* 4. 511–12). Likewise, the Colchians that broke off to pursue Jason and Medea along a different sea path ask Alcinous to allow them to settle on Drepane when he refuses to turn Medea over to her father; they, too, do so explicitly out of fear of the threats the king issued before they sailed (*Arg.* 4. 1209–10).

Like Cambyses, Aetes also has little use for established religious custom, though his expression of that contempt takes a less extreme form than does Cambyses's. He does not desecrate corpses or graves; instead, he actively disavows his duties as a host. Nor does he do so because he is 'Other' and not bound by the customs that govern Greek

¹⁹⁶ M. Williams 1996: 467, 472.

society; the Greek ritual of hospitality governs the welcoming of guests at Colchis. Aetes himself reveals this with his initial welcome of his grandsons and the Argonauts: he orders a bull slaughtered and seats his grandsons and their guests at his table for a meal. Too, he reveals that his understanding of hospitality extends to the sanctity of a guest's person: upon learning that the Argonauts have come for the golden fleece, he replies that had they not already eaten at his table, he would have cut off their tongues and hands and then sent them on their way as a warning to other men (*Arg.* 3. 377-380). Despite the violence of his threat, this conditional statement initially suggests that Aetes is mindful of a guest's right to safe conduct: as much as he might *like* to mutilate and exile these strangers, he is not about to do so.¹⁹⁷ That impression does not long survive. By the time Jason finishes explaining to him that their purposes are peaceful, Aetes sees but two options open to him: he can kill the Argonauts where they sit, or he can force them to endure a trial of their strength (*Arg.* 3. 396-399). Vian argues that in electing the latter Aetes demonstrates a wish to respect the laws of hospitality,¹⁹⁸ but that is not precisely true. By the time Aetes replies to Jason's conciliatory explanation of his purpose, he has already decided to destroy him. Had he not, had he genuinely been searching for a way to balance hospitality to strangers with his rage, he would have offered the Argonauts a choice: stay and attempt the trial, or leave empty-handed now.¹⁹⁹ He does not. As Jason rightly ascertains (*Arg.* 3. 427-431), he instead puts his guests in an impossible position. If Jason accepts the ἀεθλον Aetes offers, he will die: he is

¹⁹⁷ Like the beginning of Aetes's speech, this section has given rise to various interpretations: F. Vian :1980 states that A. is trying to balance the laws of hospitality with his desire to kill the Argonauts; A. Rose 1984 follows the lead of P. Handel 1954 in considering his compliance 'specious'; M. Campbell 1994 believes that there is genuinely 'no breach of etiquette on Aetes's part.'

¹⁹⁸ Vian 1980

¹⁹⁹ This is, it should be noted, essentially the challenge Pindar's Aetes offers Jason in *Pythian* 4; Jason must complete the task if he wants the fleece, but he is not compelled to try.

neither the son of Helios nor the equal of Ares, and as such he cannot match Aeetes's strength. If, on the other hand, he refuses, he will die all the same: Aeetes swears that should Jason run, hesitate, or fail, he will make an example of him as a warning to others who think to challenge those better than themselves (*Arg.* 3. 435-439). He has ordered his guest to perform a task he knows full well will kill the man, or else accept death at his hands as the alternative. This does not inspire confidence in Aeetes's respect for sacred custom. Nor does his promise to cut down the sacred grove as kindling for the Argonauts' funeral pyre at *Arg.* 3.576-84, a threat which echoes the act for which Paraebius was punished at *Arg.* 3.475-86.

Cambyses shares two of Antigonus's qualities—one of character, one of circumstance—that have already been discussed: his tendency to treat his allies in the same manner as his enemies and the image of a monster with a single eye. The first is obvious: Herodotus not only explicitly states it at *Hist.* 3.38, but gives numerous examples thereof. The second is both more subtle and more imaginative. The resonances between Aeetes and the Homeric Polyphemus serve primarily to associate Aeetes with Antigonus the One-Eyed, but it is worth considering the image of a single eye in Egyptian terms, as well. As Stephens notes,²⁰⁰ Aeetes's status as the son of Helios meshes well with a pharaoh's status in Egyptian religion, for a pharaoh, too, presented himself as the incarnate son of the Sun. Particularly when enthroned, a pharaoh was seen not as a reflection of Horus but rather Horus himself, the son of Ra²⁰¹—whose sigil was a single eye. Again, the temporal shift to Egypt-under-the-Persians that the allusion at *Arg.* 2. 1010-25 demands is critical. Apollonius is not associating all Egyptian pharaohs with

²⁰⁰ S. Stephens 2002: 176

²⁰¹ E. Turner 1984: 132, 168

the famous Homeric monster; the association is limited to those who ruled during the time about which Herodotus was writing. That association is appropriate, for Cambyses and his successors appropriated the iconography of Egyptian kingship upon their rise to power.²⁰² They, too, presented themselves as sons of the Sun; in the iconography of kingship, they, too, identified with Horus.

The final important aspect of the temporal shift to Egypt-under-the-Persians is the significant distance it puts between Aetes and the Ptolemies. By the time Apollonius is writing the *Argonautica*, the Ptolemies have been ruling in Egypt for at least two generations. If Colchis is a nebulously Egyptian space within the poem, then portraying its king as savage, treacherous, foul-tempered and blasphemous is perhaps not the wisest course of action for a court poet dependent for patronage upon his own king's good will. If, however, Colchis is a *Persian-Egyptian* space within the poem, then portraying its king as savage, treacherous, foul-tempered, and blasphemous is hardly problematic. Apollonius is associating Aetes with the unpopular predecessors of his own patron's family, not his patron or family themselves.

In conclusion, then, in addition to drawing selectively upon earlier literary incarnations of Aetes, Apollonius seems to have drawn upon two historical models for his Colchian king: Antigonus the One-Eyed and, to a lesser extent, the Persian kings in Egypt, particularly the mad Cambyses. Intriguing as those parallels may be, they raise the question: why did Apollonius choose to incorporate them in the *Argonautica*? The answer lies in the depiction of Alcinous, the other critical king of the poem. Responsible for breaking Aetes's power and providing asylum for the Colchians desperate to escape

²⁰² J. Ray 1988: 258

their king's vengeance, he is the opposite of the Colchian king: confident instead of arrogant, calm instead of angry, peaceful (but prepared) instead of violent, and reliant upon diplomacy and negotiation instead of dependent upon brute force. It is the last quality that is the most important, for Alcinous knows, above all, how to deal with embassies and kings. In his depiction, the role of the kings becomes clear in the *Argonautica*, for Aetes is not the only king to mirror a ruler from the Hellenistic world.

Alcinous

Familiar from Homer's the *Odyssey*, Alcinous enjoys significantly fewer pre-Apollonian attestations than does Aetes. He is mentioned in passing in a fragment of Aeschylus, where his name is linked with Oedipus, and in Thucydides, where the historian relates that an area of Corcyra is sacred to both Zeus and Alcinous (*Hist.* 3.70.1). In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates swears he is not about to offer a tale as lengthy as the one Odysseus told Alcinous (*Rep.* 614b); in *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, Aristotle mentions the name but twice: when he approves of the manner in which Odysseus distills the tale of his sojourn on Scheria in conversation with Penelope (*Rhet.* 1417a), and when he discusses how Odysseus revealed his identity by bursting into tears at Alcinous's court (*Poetics* 1455a). The only significant comparanda we have for the Apollonian Alcinous is therefore his previous Homeric incarnation. As is the case with Aetes, the variations Aetes effects on his character are significant.

The characteristics of the Homeric Alcinous are simple. One of fourteen kings who rules on Scheria, he is an excellent, although imperfect, host. Generous with his resources and glad to offer help and hospitality to travelers, he nonetheless does not always observe the proper forms of behavior: so startled is he by Odysseus's sudden

appearance in his hall that he must be upbraided by one of his captains before moving to raise his guest from the ashes of the hearth; so eager is he to hear the stranger's tale that he begins to question him before Odysseus has had a chance to finish his meal. Too, Alcinous rules a peaceful people: the Scherians are seamen but not soldiers, and so they have neither a standing army nor military fleet. His treatment of Odysseus and his decision to attempt to placate Poseidon by sacrifice reveals his piety;

The differences in the Apollonian Alcinous are marked. He is, first of all, not one of several kings on his island, but the only king on his island; he rules all of Drepane alone. More importantly still, he is far from the peaceful king of the *Odyssey*. He tells Arete that, if necessary, he could raise an armed force to drive off the Colchians waiting on his ~~shore~~ as those Colchians have already been described as a enormous host (*Arg.* 4. 1001–2), this suggests that Alcinous has considerable naval power at his disposal. Likewise, when Alcinous comes to deliver his judgment on Medea, he is accompanied by rank upon rank of the best of his warriors, all of them armed for battle (*Arg.* 4. 1180). Equally striking is the difference in location of Alcinous's kingdom within the context of the poems. The Homeric Alcinous and his people are very much removed from the purely human realm: kin to the gods and kin to the Cyclopes, they are willing to ferry lost travelers home, but they otherwise have little to do with the world of men. They are not bound by allegiance or alliance to other realms, to other kingdoms; on their island they form an isolated society that is complete in and of itself. The Apollonian Alcinous does not enjoy a similar state of affairs. The kingdom he rules is closely bound up with the others in the Mediterranean; Arete advises him to help the Argonauts on precisely those grounds. She argues that the Argonauts, who hail from Greece and are therefore near

neighbors, would be more useful allies than a king who dwells halfway across the world; for that reason, among others, she believes that Alcinous should back Medea in her quest to stay with Jason rather than return to her father. Alcinous, conversely, acknowledges that he could indeed decide in favor of the heroes, but that Aeetes has a long arm and a long memory, and could easily cross the sea to find his daughter if he wished (*Arg.* 4.1078–1109).

In all three of these qualities, Alcinous in the *Argonautica* is distinct from the *Odyssey*'s Phaeacian king. Yet as was the case with Aeetes, the characteristics that Apollonius himself adds, rather than those he merely inherits and adapts, are particularly telling. Much like the Hesiodic kings, the Apollonian Alcinous is deeply concerned with justice:²⁰³ when faced with the conflicting interests of the Argonauts and Colchians, the basis of his decision is his concern for the upright justice of Zeus; when he goes forth to make his judgment known to the Colchians, he does so with the appropriate accoutrement, a golden staff of justice, in his hand. Yet as concerned as he is with being just, Alcinous is also concerned with being diplomatic: as he tells Arete, it is right for him to come to a decision that is not only appropriate but that will meet with the approval of all. His desire to uphold Zeus's justice does not render him a high-handed autocrat, but complements his desire to arrive at a decision that can be agreed upon by all sides. Adding weight to both these characteristics is his attitude toward warfare. Alcinous appears to be in possession of a fleet and is certainly in possession of soldiers, but he is not inclined to put either of them to immediate use. When the Colchians first arrive, raging, at his shore, he does not immediately drive them off, nor yet allow them to run

²⁰³ R. Hunter 1995

roughshod over his own land; instead he checks them in their eagerness for battle at the shore, as he hopes to broker an agreement that will end the strife between them and the Argonauts (*Arg.* 4. 1008–10). A similar preference for diplomacy appears when he discusses his intentions with Arete—though he *could* drive the Colchians off without much trouble, he is unwilling to needlessly risk the wrath of Aetes—and when he announces his eventual decision to the Colchians, as well. With an army at his back, it is clear that he is prepared to fight if necessary, but he does not offer battle. He merely advises Aetes’s troops that if they do not accept his judgment, as they are bound by oath to do, they would be wise to ever after stay far from his harbors and shore. This preparation for war but preference for diplomacy and reliance on justice is perhaps the strongest difference between Alcinous and Aetes. And again, as was the case with Aetes, the model for this attitude comes not from previous poetic incarnations of Alcinous but from a king of the Hellenistic world.

Alcinous and Ptolemy

In his ‘The Divine and Human Map of the Argonautica,’ Hunter has already noted some similarities of circumstance that Alcinous shares with Ptolemy.²⁰⁴ Both occupy similar geographic space: Alcinous rules on an island that will one day fall within the sphere of influence of North Africa; Ptolemy rules in North Africa itself. Both are in possession of formidable fleets and wealth: Alcinous rules an island specifically identified as ‘fertile’ (*Arg.* 4. 982) and has the resources to load down the *Argo* with guest-gifts as the Argonauts depart; Ptolemy rules a kingdom renowned in antiquity for its

²⁰⁴ R. Hunter 1995

seemingly endless natural resources and the wealth that they provided for the crown.²⁰⁵ Stretching the parallel a generation further to encompass Ptolemy II as well, Hunter identifies two additional similarities. Both are wed to female relatives: Alcinous is, according to Homer, Arete's uncle or brother,²⁰⁶ and Ptolemy II's wife is also his sister. And Arete herself is certainly an appropriate reflection of the greater political roles Hellenistic queens like Arsinoe II assume.

The nature of Arete's power in the *Argonautica* deserves some discussion, for the parallels to Arsinoe II are perhaps more specific than Hunter perceives.²⁰⁷ As Kyriakou notes, the Scheria episode in the *Odyssey* emphasizes the personal/public split between Arete and Alcinous.²⁰⁸ The Homeric Arete displays a private concern for and personal interest in her suppliant: she names him her own *xeinos* (*Od.* 11. 336–8); she calls upon the Phaeacians to bring him gifts (*Od.* 11.338); she warns him to guard Alcinous's gifts to him against her own subjects on his return voyage to Ithaca (*Od.* 8.442-45). Her actions are clearly predicated on her understanding of how a host should treat a guest and a benefactor aid a suppliant; nothing in her behavior, however, reveals a particular view of how a *queen* should treat a guest or aid a suppliant, or of whether she considers her behavior to be reflective of her status. On the other hand, glad though Alcinous may be for personal reasons to accept Odysseus not only as a guest but as a son-in-law, his view of his responsibilities towards a guest and a suppliant is informed by his understanding of his public status. At *Od.* 11.352–3, he notes that he has a particular interest in and

²⁰⁵ G. Shipley 2000: 194

²⁰⁶ It is worth noting that Apollonius does not repeat the Homeric identification of Arete as Alcinous's niece. Hunter is somewhat coy in his description of why: we may 'imagine many reasons' why Apollonius elected not to identify her as such.

²⁰⁷ A. Mori 2001 deals with many of these same issues, though her focus is somewhat different.

²⁰⁸ Kyriakou 1995: 156–8

responsibility for Odysseus's safe conduct back to Ithaca, since he is, after all, the man in charge.

A similar division seems at first to apply to Arete and Alcinous in the *Argonautica*, as well. Swayed by Medea's emotional plea, Arete seeks to convince her husband to aid the Argonauts on account of her own sympathy for Medea's plight; cognizant of the complexity of issues involved in such a decision, Alcinous, though sympathetic, grounds his eventual judgment in diplomacy.²⁰⁹ Yet it is worth noting that Arete frames her argument in considerably more sophisticated terms than sympathy alone. She may not possess as clear an understanding as her husband of the ramifications his decision could unleash—she dismisses Aeetes as too distant to be a worry to them, while Alcinous recognizes the full extent of his power—and she may well be genuinely distressed for Medea, but she nonetheless offers an argument for political expediency in favoring the Argonauts: Alcinous ought to decide in favor of Medea, since the Argonauts represent the interests of their Greek neighbors. She is not acting merely out of personal responsibility for a suppliant; she is acting, too, out of a queen's responsibility to her people. It is a considerable break from the Arete of the *Odyssey*.

Nor is it the only difference that divides the two queens. The Homeric Arete exercises considerable influence in her husband's court—the very fact that her daughter instructs Odysseus to supplicate the queen rather than the king for aid is proof enough of that—but she does not take a truly active role. The entire hall is struck silent by Odysseus's sudden appearance and plea, but it is not Arete who rouses Alcinous to his duties as a host; Echenus speaks instead. Likewise, it is not Arete who raises Odysseus

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

from the hearth and displaces her son to seat him at the royal table; though she herself was the one Odysseus supplicated, Alcinous rises to see to it. And although she speaks in public defense of Odysseus before the Phaeacians and calls upon them to bring Odysseus gifts, she must wait for her husband's word before she sees her command obeyed: Echenus explicitly reminds the Phaeacians that as wise and persuasive as their queen may be, before they act they must wait on their king's command (*Od.* 11.336–8).

The Apollonian Arete operates under a similar constriction—she too is bound to wait on her husband's word—but she is significantly more proactive while doing so. She occupies a somewhat less visible position than does her Homeric counterpart—she never speaks in public—but takes a far more active role in effecting the outcome she wishes for her suppliant. Upon hearing Alcinous's decision that Medea must be returned to her father if still unmarried and left with Jason if already wed, she calls a herald, relates to him her husband's decree, and tells him to take the message to Jason and his men (*Arg.* 4. 1121–3). Her actions, not her husband's, decide the fate of Medea. Perhaps more importantly, they decide, too, the position of Drepane in the conflict between Aeetes and the Argonauts. Arete is not merely directing the outcome of Medea's supplication; she is affecting international policy.

The magnitude the consequences of Arete's actions carry points the way toward Arsinoe II as a potential model from the Hellenistic world. J. Quaegebeur argues that the Egyptian titles Arsinoe II acquired, such as 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt,' speak to extraordinary political influence she exercised at court, for such titles, customary for a

pharaoh, were unusual for a queen.²¹⁰ More importantly still, Ptolemy II issued a decree concerning his favorable view of Greek autonomy in accordance ‘with the policy of his ancestors and his sister,’ which certainly suggests that his sister had a considerable amount to say on the subject—and, more importantly, that she was listened to. How well such titles and credit accurately reflected her real power in Egypt is of course debatable,²¹¹ but the fact remains that such public proclamations of her influence created at the very least a perception of her power.²¹² In this, the Apollonian Arete is her match.

Ptolemy II’s decree speaks to the second characteristic the two queens share: they not only exercise power but do so in conjunction with and under the auspices of their husbands. Much has been made of the ‘deception’ that Arete perpetrates upon Alcinous in warning the Argonauts of his plans. Vian in particular finds it problematic; for its model he points to Hera’s deception of Zeus in *Iliad* 14.²¹³ Even Hunter, who does not see it as dangerously deceptive, concedes that Arete manages to circumvent her husband’s will.²¹⁴ Yet such readings ignore the fact that Alcinous is potentially complicit in Arete’s plan. For when he tells her his decision, he already knows full well that Medea is not yet married. She told Arete as much during her repeated supplications throughout the evening; even if Alcinous had not been present for each of them, it is unlikely that he was absent from them all. Moreover, even if for some reason he had been, Arete tells him that since Jason promised to marry Medea but has not yet kept his vow, Alcinous

²¹⁰ J. Quaegebeur 1971: 205–8. The extent of Arsinoe II’s power in Egypt is debatable; for conflicting views, see particularly Pomeroy 1984: 17–20 and S. Burstein 1982: 197–212.

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²¹² R. Hazzard 2000: 99 notes that the status Arsinoe II enjoyed was interpreted by both the Ptolemaic court and those outside of it as power, particularly after the promotion of her cult in 268.

²¹³ F. Vian 1981: ad 4.1072.

²¹⁴ R. Hunter 1995

should favor the Argonauts so that an innocent man is not forsworn. The 'innocence' of Alcinous's subsequent actions are therefore somewhat suspect. Aware that Medea is still unwed and that his wife does not wish to see her sent back to Aeetes, he announces that the decision he will proclaim in the morning depends upon her marital status and promptly goes to sleep. In doing so he gives his queen the time, tools, and opportunity to arrange matters to her liking. Nor does he later seem either distressed or surprised at her actions: unlike Zeus, who angrily berates Hera at *Il.* 15. 14–33 for her deception, Alcinous never upbraids his wife for sending a herald to the Argonauts. And as the nymphs who dance and sing at the celebration of Jason and Medea's marriage specifically praise Hera for inspiring Arete to reveal her husband's judgment (*Arg.* 4. 1197–1200), it is unlikely that Alcinous is ignorant of what she has done.

That marriage song and, again, Ptolemy II's proclamation form the backbone of the final similarities that bind the two queens. The blending of Arete and Hera in a song praising a queen's wisdom brings Arsinoe II unavoidably to mind; her cult titles associated her with both the Phaeacian queen and the goddess.²¹⁵ Likewise, Arete's argument that Alcinous should favor the Argonauts because they represent the interest of their Greek neighbors, rather than the Colchians who represent the interest of a distant king, echoes the interest Arsinoe II took in the autonomy of the Greek states.²¹⁶

These four similarities between Arete and Arsinoe II, combined with the distance between the Apollonian Arete and her Homeric model, argue that the character of Arete, like that of Aeetes, is fashioned from a model in the Hellenistic world. Strengthening this argument is the fact Medea specifically calls Arete a *basilea*. Neither Hypsipile, who

²¹⁵ P. Fraser: 1972: (vol. 1) 237–8

²¹⁶ H. Hauben in van't Dack, Desse; and van Gucht 1982: 99–127

rules Lemnos, nor Cleite, wed briefly to Cyzicus is mentioned as such; Asterodeia and Eidyia, the former lover and present wife of Aeetes, respectively, do not garner such a title, either. The only other women referred to as 'queens' in the *Argonautica* are the Amazons, whose lands Jason and his crew pass on their journey to Colchis. That in Dionysius of Miletus the Amazons, too, conform to the ideal of a Hellenistic king²¹⁷ should probably not go unremarked upon, as the allusion seems deliberate.

This portrayal of Arete as a poetic avatar of Arsinoe II creates a more complicated reading of Alcinous's character in the poem. On the one hand, Alcinous shares obvious similarities with Ptolemy Soter, particularly since his rival Aeetes is so clear an avatar of Antigonus the One-Eyed. On the other, Alcinous's wife shares obvious similarities not with Ptolemy Soter's wife (either of them), but with his daughter-in-law instead. It is possible, of course, to read this as a simple conflation of the two Ptolemies: if Apollonius is praising the first Ptolemy as the only truly successful king among the *diadochoi*, it is politic for that praise to extend to his son. Yet another possibility presents itself: that Ptolemy Soter was indeed the only successful king among the *diadochoi*, but that his son is even more successful than he.

Alcinous's defining characteristic in the *Argonautica* is a preference for diplomacy rather than war, tempered by a willingness to take up arms nonetheless if necessary. This is not a characteristic that can be accurately assigned to Ptolemy Soter. It is true, of course, that he paid attention to establishing alliances, both with his fellow kings and with Hellenistic cities. By 321 he had already struck treaties with local rulers in Phoenicia, an accomplishment Antigonus did not match until 314. When shortly

²¹⁷ S. Stephens 2003: 67.

thereafter Antigonus issued the Decree of the Macedonians, announcing his intention that all Greek cities be autonomous and ungarrisoned, Ptolemy, alone of the other *diadochoi*, responded with a proclamation reading that he, too, cared for the autonomy of the Greek cities. Too, he maintained regular diplomatic communications with Seleucus from Alexander's death to at least 310. Yet Ptolemy Soter was, first and foremost, a soldier, and his position as a king was legitimated not through his talent at negotiation or compromise, but through his military conquests.²¹⁸

Soter's successor, on the other hand, did not have similar opportunities to prove his worth on a battlefield: long-lived as his father was, by the time Ptolemy II came to power the boundaries of the *diadochoi*'s kingdoms had been all but permanently established. This is not to say he neither enjoyed military successes nor suffered military defeat: with Lysimachus dead, he acquired Samos in the Aegean, and as a result of the first Syrian War he acquired territory in Asia Minor. He likewise emerged the victor from his half-brother's revolt on Cyrene, though his support of Sparta in the Chremonidean War lost him ships in two naval battles and control of the League of Islanders.²¹⁹ Our lack of evidence renders his foreign policy impossible to reconstruct as a whole, but it seems likely that it was marked by at least as much diplomacy as it was military endeavors: Appian tells us that in 252, for example, Ptolemy claimed friendship with both Carthage and Rome and offered to mediate their dispute (*App. Syrian* 1). Such an offer of mediation and proclamation of neutrality would have been alien to Ptolemy

²¹⁸ See E. Gruen 1985 for a discussion of the delay between Antigonus's claim to kingship and Ptolemy's: Ptolemy had to wait until he effected a military victory roughly commensurate with Demetrius's destruction of his fleet to claim kingship. G. Shipley 2000: 202 states that Ptolemy's role was generally that of an onlooker who occasionally profited from the interactions between his rivals; this seems an oversimplification.

²¹⁹ G. Shipley 2000: 202–3

Soter, who was steadfast in joining any alliance that would preserve the balance of the power in the Mediterranean and the Near East,²²⁰ but it finds a strong echo in the *Argonautica*, with Alcinous's arbitration of the dispute between the Argonauts and the Colchians. The result of that arbitration in the poem suggests that Ptolemy II's methods for dealing with powerful enemies was somewhat more effective than his father's. For it is difficult to read Aeetes sending his trusted son east at the head of a fleet as anything other than a poetic re-imagining of the fleet Demetrius led against the Ptolemaic navy off Cyprus in 306. The motivation, of course, is different—Antigonus hardly dispatched his son to reclaim a wayward daughter—but the parallels of geography and the ties between Demetrius and Apsyrus, coupled with the sharp break from earlier Argonautic tradition, are strong enough to make the association almost impossible to ignore. As such, the conclusion of the episode contains two startling elements: there is no great battle off the Drepane shore, as Alcinous is dedicated to finding a peaceful solution to the dispute, and it is the avatar of Antigonus, not of Ptolemy, who loses his ships and his men.

The possibility that Antigonus intended this episode as a corrective model for Ptolemy Soter's rule intrigues. For Ptolemy, unlike Alcinous, elected to meet a fleet from the East with force rather than with an initial attempt at diplomacy. His decision resulted not only in the destruction of his fleet but in the elevation of his rival to the status of 'king,' an honor which he himself would require two further years to obtain.²²¹ This contrasts sharply with the consequences of Alcinous's decision: the Colchians beg him to accept them as allies and, when accepted, settle on his island. Not only does Alcinous not lose any of his own men or resources, but he acquires the men and half the fleet of

²²⁰ P. Green 1997b.

²²¹ For the chronology of the diadochoi proclaiming themselves kings, see E. Gruen 1986.

Aeetes, as well. Is Apollonius explicitly averring that had Ptolemy Soter relied on diplomacy rather than force, he would not have lost his fleet to Demetrius? Unlikely. Is he suggesting that diplomacy, when backed with a show of military strength, is a more effective tool than military action alone? Yes. And through the strong association *Arete* shares with Arsinoe II, Apollonius is marking that virtue as belonging to Ptolemy II, not Ptolemy Soter. The portrayal of Alcinous is therefore indeed a conflation of the two Ptolemies, but not one meant to merely allow the son to bask in the glory of the father: it is the son's abilities that assure the father's success.

The Lesser Kings

The remaining kings of the *Argonautica* do not have such specific models from the Hellenistic world. It is easy to see Cassander in Pelias, of course, a king in Greece who has disinherited the rightful king and rules now in his stead, and there is more than a touch of Lysimachus in Amycus, as well. Yet rather than endeavoring to find a one-to-one parallel for each of the four kings—an endeavor which is destined to fail, for they lack the numerous parallels that bind Alcinous to the Ptolemies and Aeetes to Antigonus—it is more profitable to consider them as exempla of the various ways in which Hellenistic kingship can fail. For of the six kings in the *Argonautica*, only Alcinous emerges with his kingdom secure.

What precisely constitutes the idea of early Hellenistic kingship is complicated by the nature of the evidence. There is no single text, no continuous narrative that provides a portrait of the Hellenistic kings, only a variety of Greek, Demotic, and Babylonian sources that offer slivers of the whole. Independently, these sources tell us little, for they either present definitions of kingship so broad that the subtleties are lost or else relate

anecdotal evidence in regard to particular kings. Yet those sources agree on at least two aspects of Hellenistic rule: in light of the problems fledgling kings faced in the wake of Alexander's death, eight qualities of character and circumstance were essential for any man who wished to acquire, hold, and one day bequeath to his descendants a stable and prosperous kingdom.

First among those sources is the Byzantine *Suda*, whose definition of kingship is presumed to have a Hellenistic source:

οὔτε φύσις οὔτε τὸ δίκαιον ἀποδίδουσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰς βασιλείας, ἀλλὰ τοῖς δυναμένοις ἡγεῖσθαι στρατοπέδου καὶ χειρίζειν πράγματα νουεχῶς. (*Suda*, beta, e. 147)

Neither nature nor justice renders kingships to men as their due, but to those able to lead an army and to manage affairs with sense.

There is, too, the substantially later *Syriaca* of Appian, which acquaints us with the qualities of Seleucus, and Theocritus's Idyll 17, which offers a glowing portrayal of Ptolemy. That the latter two texts are rife with flattery is certain, but that does not, as Shipley rightly asserts, render them useless for determining the essential aspects of a Hellenistic king. From these three texts Shipley arrives at the seven characteristics he considers necessary for successful Hellenistic rule: divine ancestry, great power, a large territory, wealth, victory, generosity, and piety.²²²

The first three influence the public's perception of their ruler, and hence are essential in gaining support for and acceptance of a fledgling king. Such a king must first of all be able to claim divine ancestry or honors. Particularly in Egypt and the eastern satrapies, where the concept of kingship long since encompassed the idea of royals as

²²² G. Shipley 2000: 61. Shipley doesn't engage in the reasons that these qualities are necessary, or how and why they relate to one another; he merely gives a list and moves on to other topics.

divine, this sort of claim lends legitimacy and stability to new political authority by establishing it within a familiar political and religious framework.²²³ Egyptian pharaohs had since the beginning of the Old Kingdom presented themselves as the incarnate sons of Ra; to appear a legitimate heir to that royal line, a new king must needs follow its traditions. Even in the kingdoms where such a tradition does not exist, divine honors are nonetheless important, for they level the playing field between the men thus honored and those considered by their subjects to be the sons of gods.²²⁴

Of equal significance are the second and third qualities Shipley ascribes to a successful Hellenistic king: piety and generosity. These qualities, too, contribute to the stability of a king's position in his realm. Piety—or at least the appearance thereof—serves much the same purpose as divine honors, for it throws religious weight behind a king's political muscle. It serves, too, as a bulwark against the machinations of rival claimants for the throne: being able to claim a man impious is a powerful tool for enemies seeking to foment rebellion.²²⁵ For a king seeking to maintain his throne, an equally powerful tool is found in generosity, both towards friends and on occasion towards enemies. Generosity towards allies or subjects assures their support and affection,²²⁶ an invaluable resource in a world where kingdoms are easily shattered and powerful men lured to betray one court for another;²²⁷ generosity towards enemies can make an ally of a former rival and so co-opt wealth and resources to strengthen one's own position. Like the claim to divine ancestry or assumption of divine honors, both of

²²³ S. Stephens 2003:163; see also W. Sharon 1985 and R. Felding 1953 .

²²⁴ R. Errington 1973

²²⁵ Demetrius is an obvious example; see Plutarch, *Demetrius* ch.

²²⁶ Bosworth 2002 in particular deals with the necessity for euergetism in establishing a stable and successful kingdom.

²²⁷ For examples of men who were *philoï* to more than one king, see H. Lund 1996.

these qualities help establish a king's initial authority over the kingdom he claims. A king regarded as an open-handed equal of the immortals is in a considerably more stable position than one perceived to be a miser despised by the gods: his allies have no reason to depose him, and his enemies fewer tools with which to do so.

Also essential to a king's stability are the fourth and fifth qualities Shipley presents: control of expansive holdings and possession of a great deal of money. The importance of both is self-explanatory, as the amount of land and hence the amount of resources a king controls, in addition to the amount of wealth available to fund military expeditions and public works, determines the scope of his influence. The more lands and wealth a king can claim, the more easily he can interfere in the affairs of his fellow kings and the greater an effect he can have on the Mediterranean world. The extent of those lands and wealth, however, is largely dependent on the sixth of Shipley's qualities: the ability to achieve consistent military victories. In addition to its obvious aspect of a king emerging victorious from a battlefield more often than not, this characteristic also demands a healthy respect for the power of one's rivals and sense enough not to engage in battle against them when all signs suggest that one cannot win. Such a talent is obviously critical for early Hellenistic kings, for in a world where bloodlines are initially no guarantee of a diadem and throne, the only way to acquire or keep land, resources, and wealth—and, by extension, influence—is to take or defend them successfully in war.

Like Shipley's first three qualities, the second three, too, strengthen a king's position in his own realm and the greater Mediterranean world. Unlike Shipley's first three qualities, however, they do so by addressing something more concrete than the public's perception of its king. Divine honors, piety, and generosity all help a king

establish his authority over the kingdom he usurps; wealth, land, and victory give him the tools to use that authority to preserve his kingdom for his sons. For despite the royal titles the diadochoi adopt and the pains some take to present themselves as the rightful heirs to the thrones they claim, none of them is a legitimate king. Even they regard their kingdoms as spear-won;²²⁸ with that sentiment in mind, the extent of their realms and the fate of their anticipated royal lines depend entirely on what they can take and hold from others. In such an environment, kings who have not only a great deal of money but also the resources that come from a great deal of land and a talent for emerging victorious from battle enjoy a stronger position than those who do not, for they are in a position to hold on to what they have claimed. It is significantly more difficult to wage successful war against a talented general who has the wealth to keep his soldiers and mercenaries paid than it is against one whose understanding of tactics is spotty and his soldiers discontent. Divinity, piety, generosity, lands, wealth, and an ability to effect consistent military victories—these are the qualities Shipley asserts can make or break a Hellenistic king.²²⁹

In light of the historical record, that assertion seems a fair enough assessment. Of the twelve generals who originally went to war for Alexander's kingdom, and the sons of

²²⁸ See particularly the primary evidence in M. Austin 1993; also the conclusions of A. Bosworth 2002 and H.S. Lund 1992

²²⁹ Shipley in fact lists seven qualities, power being the last. The classification is problematic. The observation that power is essential for a ruler is accurate and obvious, but the description of it as a 'quality' is misleading. A king's power is the product of his other characteristics, not one of them. Though it can be measured in a variety of ways—the number of soldiers he can put in the field, the quality of soldiers whose loyalty he can command, the potential for military victory revealed by his record of triumphs and defeats, the wariness of his enemies and the loyalty and resources of his friends—the legitimacy and stability offered by the previous six always determine its extent. Though divinity, piety, generosity, wealth, lands, and the ability to effect military victories are all inarguably bound up with one another, there is a cause-and-effect relationship among none of them: generosity can exist without wealth; divine honors are not a prerequisite for land; the ability to effect victory on a battlefield does not require piety. The same does not hold true for power, for it is not a thing one can adopt or acquire on its own.

those generals who joined them in their quest, only six survived to assume the title basileus: Antigonus, Cassander, Demetrius, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. Of those six, only the two who possessed all six of Shipley's characteristics succeeded in establishing prosperous kingdoms and in promoting themselves as successful kings. Antigonus and Demetrius were acclaimed divine by the Athenian people, held both considerable land and considerable wealth, were preeminent on early Hellenistic battlefields and rewarded well those who were most loyal to them—yet nonetheless they overreached themselves against their rivals, and died for it. Moreover, the rampant impiety of Demetrius in particular gave his enemies fodder for effective propaganda that weakened his status among his people. The kingdom his son eventually reclaimed from the wreckage of both 301 and 286 was significantly weaker than that which Antigonus had forged in the wake of Alexander's death. Antigonus and Demetrius are not alone in their failings. Cassander had wealth and land and took pains to adhere to the religious customs appropriate to a Macedonian king, but his generosity was hardly boundless, and having once underestimated both Antigonus's strength and cunning he never entirely recovered from the near-disaster that followed. The kingdom inherited by his heirs was, like that of Demetrius, considerably weaker than the one he had taken from Polyperchon. Likewise, though Lysimachus had a respectable amount of land to his name, spent his coin wisely, rewarded his followers well, and was rightly known for his skill and courage on the battlefield, he did not have enough power to quell the rebellions that rose in the wake of his eldest son's assassination. The subsequent civil unrest, unchecked, left his kingdom open to Seleucid infiltration and control, and Lysimachus's lands were soon after absorbed into Seleucid territory. For each of these ultimately unsuccessful kings,

the absence of one or more of Shipley's essential qualities led to his failure to safeguard his kingdom for his heirs.

Weighed against these four rulers, however, are Seleucus Nicator and Ptolemy Soter, each of whom possessed in abundance all six characteristics of a successful Hellenistic king. After Seleucus twice defeated Antigonus to establish himself as king in Asia, he was shrewd enough to obtain divine honors from his civic ruler-cult. So close an association with the gods lent religious strength to his already formidable political authority. At his fingertips he had the wealth of the Babylonian treasury, estimated in 323 at 50,000 talents of gold, and at his death in 281 his territories were expansive enough to encompass the realms of seventy-two satraps. His victories routinely outnumbered his defeats: although he lost Babylonia to Antigonus in 316, in 312 he managed to retake the capital city; by 305 he had repulsed Antigonus's attempt to regain the satrapy and subjugated the majority of the satraps in the east. In addition, throughout his kingship his generosity towards both friends and enemies was legendary. He rewarded his followers well for loyal service, and when he chose he could be generous towards his enemies, as well. When Demetrius was eventually forced to submit to Seleucid captivity, despite the long hostility between the two men that captivity was, by all accounts, a gentle one. Moreover, after Demetrius's death, Seleucus combined his generosity with piety when he sent the man's ashes home in honor to his son. The combined effect of these essential qualities lent significant strength to Seleucus's position, which in turn allowed him to build a kingdom secure enough to survive his death.

The same precept applies to Ptolemy Soter, for Ptolemy, too, exemplified each of Shipley's characteristics throughout his reign. His claim to divine ancestry is clear in how he portrayed his position in Egypt: from the very beginning of his reign as satrap, he presented himself as a legitimate pharaoh of the Egyptian people, the incarnation of the son of Ra.²³⁰ Moreover, though his early history lacks the crackle of military success and ambition that ignited the careers of his rival kings, his power was nonetheless formidable: alone among the successors, he ruled his lands continuously from the death of Alexander to his own. Those lands were extensive; though his power base remained in Egypt, his interests were not limited to the eastern corner of north Africa: having lost Cyprus to Demetrius in 306, he recovered it in 295, and during the last decade of his life he wielded not inconsiderable influence over the Aegean League of Islanders. His wealth was likewise impressive. Upon arriving in Egypt after the initial settlement at Babylon, he found himself in possession of the 8,000 talents Alexander's satrap Cleomenes had secured during his tenure and in control of the vast natural resources Egypt commanded. Furthermore, as was true of Seleucus, the magnitude of Ptolemy's victories surpassed that of his defeats. Although the king lost both the majority of his fleet to Demetrius during the disastrous battle off Cyprus as well as various territories outside Egypt to his rivals during the succession wars, he nonetheless survived those wars with the heart of his kingdom intact: despite the best efforts of Perdikkas, Demetrius, and Antigonus, none of the diadochoi managed a successful invasion of Egypt while Ptolemy ruled. That this was due to luck and his own good sense is certain; that he seemed on excellent terms with his gods could not have hurt. Throughout his reign Ptolemy was careful to cultivate an

²³⁰ We see this in both literary and artistic portraits; see particularly Stanwick 2002.

image of piety by offering appropriate worship to both the Greek and Egyptian divinities; Arrian relates that one of his first acts upon moving his capital from Memphis to Alexandria was to designate sites for temples of the Greek gods as well as Egyptian Isis (*Successors*, 3.1.5), which won him the support of both the native Egyptians and Greek diaspora in Alexandria. His generosity towards friends and, on occasion, enemies likewise served him well: Perdiccas's attempted invasion of Egypt turned quickly sour when his troops began deserting him for the other side. For Ptolemy, like Seleucus, Shipley's qualities of kingship were the keys to claiming a kingdom and holding it safe for his heirs.

Which of those qualities is the most critical to a king's success has long been open to modern debate. Shipley himself gives precedence to none; his presentation suggests instead that all are equal prerequisites for a king's success. M. Austin, on the other hand, argues that victory in warfare must be considered the primary factor for determining success in Hellenistic kingship. In his view, the power of Hellenistic kings depends in a large part on the wars at which they succeed and the plunder which they obtain: the more victories and spoils a king has to his credit, the greater his authority and more stable his position.²³¹ According to *The Life of Demetrius*, the Macedonians may well have concurred: Plutarch reports that the soldiers under Demetrius, when abandoning him for Seleucus, were ἔκ τε τοῦ παλαιστάτου καὶ βασιλικώτατον εἰθισμένοι νομίζειν τὸν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις κράτιστον (*Demetrius*, 44.7).²³² A. Bosworth, on the other hand, agrees with E. Gruen in noting that Austin's description, while accurate, does not

²³¹ M. Austin 1985.

²³² Austin doesn't quote Plutarch in his article. I am uncertain as to why.

encompass the entire truth.²³³ For as important as warfare is for gaining lands and wealth, he argues, victory alone is hardly the key to holding onto a kingdom. Of equal importance are the personal characteristics of the king himself: the ways in which he interacts with his soldiers, with his allies, with his rivals, with his gods.

All three interpretations have merit, yet Shipley's is the one the careers of the diadochoi uphold. That the ability to effect consistent victories was paramount cannot be disputed; the post-Alexander world was shaped by the wars won and lost among his successors. Yet for men carving their kingdoms at sword-point from an empire conquered not more than eleven years before, success cannot be measured only in terms of what those kings won for themselves alone. Their intent was to forge realms that would survive their deaths intact; they considered themselves founders of dynastic lines equal to that of the now-defunct Argead kings.²³⁴ Their success therefore cannot be evaluated only by the strength of the kingdoms they acquired; it must be measured by the stability of the kingdoms they passed on to their sons. In that distinction lies the difficulty in claiming the capacity for victory on a battlefield as the most critical to a king's success. Victory on a battlefield did not necessarily ensure a king a stable future for his realm, anymore than defeat promised inevitable disaster. All the military success in the world could not have mitigated the crisis of confidence that arose after the assassination of Lysimachus's eldest son; with civil unrest spreading out from the capital to engulf the countryside, the outcome of the battle at Corupedion was almost moot: even

²³³ A. Bosworth 2002:17–22; it is mentioned as well in E. Gruen 1985, though not as specifically.

²³⁴ Again, see particularly the primary evidence in M. Austin 1993; also the conclusions of A. Bosworth 2002; H.S. Lund 1992; and E. Gruen 1985.

had Lysimachus won, his kingdom would still have been falling to ruin around him.²³⁵ Ptolemy Soter provides a different but equally relevant example, as his military record during the succession wars is perhaps the least impressive of the diadochoi. Defeats peppered his first years in power and a truly spectacular rout later lost him Cyprus and his fleet, but he nonetheless founded a kingdom that would rise to political, artistic, and cultural prominence under his son. Were the capacity for consistent victory the most essential quality of a Hellenistic kingship, Lysimachus would have been the successful king, Ptolemy the failure. Instead, the careers of both of these kings bear witness that although success on a battlefield may result in more lands and wealth and hence more immediate power for a certain king, it does not promise that such power will endure. It does not promise a stable future for a kingdom; it does not promise a *legacy*. And for men styling themselves the founders of dynasties, the strength of their legacies is the only true marker of their ultimate success. The idea of each of Shipley's characteristics being of equal value is therefore the most accurate way to evaluate the qualities necessary for a Hellenistic king. The ability to bring about consistent military victory is obviously critical; without it, divinity, generosity, and piety are of little use, for a king has no way to gain lands and wealth and thereby power. Yet by the same token, without divinity, generosity, piety and the resources that extensive lands and wealth brings to the king who controls them, the ability to effect consistent military victories is likewise meaningless. It cannot exist in a vacuum; without the framework of legitimacy and stability established by the five other qualities, even the shrewdest of generals will not see his kingdom survive his reign.

²³⁵ See particularly H. Lund 1992.

Qualities of Kingship in the *Argonautica*

Matters of kingship are little different in the *Argonautica*, for it is Shipley's qualities—as well as one other—that Apollonius imports for each of the kings Jason encounters in the poem. As was true among the successors, not all of the *Argonautica*'s kings measure up to that standard in its entirety. As was also true among the successors, failure to do so results in disaster, while the adoption of all six qualities results in success.

The first *basileus* of the *Argonautica*, Pelias, possesses only one of the critical six qualities: he is the son of Poseidon (*Arg.* 1.13) and as such can claim descent from the divine. In regards to the extent of his holdings, wealth and generosity, Pelias comes up short. His holdings are limited specifically to Iolchus, and the catalog of heroes (*Arg.* 1. 24–227) makes it clear that Pelias's kingdom is only one of many in Greece. His wealth is left open for debate. He is, presumably, wealthy enough to feast not only his city but his subjects in the surrounding countryside (1. 8–14), and his son Acastus wears a beautiful double-folded cloak (*Aeg.* 1.325–26) in contrast to his companion's black bull's-hide; on the other hand, a description of Pelias's palace or resources is manifestly lacking, and the matter of who, precisely, has paid for the hawsers and snug-dowelled timbers (*Arg.* 1. 365–369) of which Argus the shipwright is so proud is never addressed. Is the Argo specifically the king's ship, which he has offered for Jason's use, or does she belong to one of his subjects, who has offered her for the same? The answer is unclear. Very clear, however, is that the sacrifice offered at the beginning of the voyage is not done at the kingdom's expense: Jason specifically provides the victims from his own herds (*Arg.* 1. 406–407). This last is of particular importance, as it indicates that Pelias's generosity to his people is less than kingly. Though his private motivation for sending

Jason to Colchis is personal gain, his public one is not: he announces that the only way Zeus's anger towards the Aeolids will ever abate is if the golden fleece returns home (*Arg.* 3. 336–339). If Jason is acting for the good of Pelias's kingdom, it therefore seems that the least Pelias could do is provide the man with bulls for fair winds and a safe voyage. That he does not casts him as niggardly at best, a miser at worst. It does not bode well for his success as a king.

His piety and potential for consistent victory is likewise problematic. His attitude towards the gods is made explicit in the first fifteen lines of the poem. He is mindful of divine prophecy and observes appropriate feasting days, but when preparing a sacrifice for his father and the other Olympians he neglects to include Hera among the gods being honored. The slight is deliberate; he does not forget her but rather purposefully excludes her (*Arg.* 1. 14). In addition to portraying him as purposely disrespectful towards the goddess, his actions also immediately earmark him for destruction rather than victory: any reader of Greek epic can prophesy the fate of a man foolish enough to cross Zeus's queen. Apollonius not only references this fate twice more during the poem, but also conveys it through the very structure of the poem itself. In Book 3 Hera tells Aphrodite she is aiding Jason so that Pelias, he who in his hubris neglected her while sacrificing, does not escape his well-merited doom (ὄφρα μὴ ἐγγελάσῃ /ελίης κακὸν οἴτον ἀλύξας, ὅς μ' ὑπερηγορέη θυέων ἀγέραστον ἔθηκεν: *Arg.* 3. 64–5). Though she goes on to add that in any case Jason has long since been her pet, her wish to see Pelias punished is her primary motivation: the καὶ δ' ἄλλως (*Arg.* 3. 66) that opens her explanation of why Jason is dear to her confirms his status as an afterthought. Book 4, too, boasts a reminder of Hera's coming vengeance. As Jason and Medea flee the Colchian fleet, Apollonius

relates that the winds, obedient to Hera's will, blow strong and true so that Medea might come swiftly to Greece as a destruction for the house of Pelias (ὄφρ' ὄκιστα κακὸν Πελῖαιο δόμοισιν Αἰαίη Μήδεια Πελασγίδα γαῖαν ἵκηται: *Arg.* 4. 241–3). There is no compelling narrative reason for Apollonius to describe Medea as a destruction for the house of Pelias here; neither plot nor poetry requires it. He is merely reminding his audience once again of Pelias's approaching fate. Both of these instances emphasize that Pelias will not long survive the Argonauts' return home. The narrative of the Argo's journey as a whole promises the same. Pelias sends Jason east with the specific hope that he will lose his homecoming on the water or amid foreign peoples (*Arg.* 1. 16–17); with each storm the Argo weathers and each people Jason either successfully befriends or destroys (or, in the case of the Doliones, befriends and destroys), Pelias's eventual destruction takes a clearer shape, and any prospects of his victory, and survival, dwindle. Combined with his other failings, it shows him as a far from successful king.

The nature of his impiety and of his potential for defeat rather than victory secures for him one further quality which complicates our notion of Hellenistic kingship, as in it we find yet another characteristic of the Hellenistic kings. Unlike those enumerated by Shipley, this one is not necessary to success; it is instead frequently a defining characteristic of failure. In his *Demetrius* Plutarch explains that the adoption of the royal title worked adverse change upon the personalities and temperaments of the diadochoi, for it inflated their pride, fed their ambition, and made them obnoxious in their dealings with other men (*Demetrius*, 18). Though Plutarch is obviously a much later source, his assessment nonetheless has merit, for arrogance is frequently recognized as a hallmark of

early Hellenistic kings.²³⁶ More to the point, arrogance is frequently recognized not only as a hallmark but more specifically as the downfall of early Hellenistic kings. Demetrius is again the obvious example, particularly in regards to the reason for which his troops were said to have deserted him en masse in 287; his father Antigonus is another. Pelias, in the *Argonautica*, is a third. His hubris is specifically what turns Hera against him: in her explanation of purpose to Aphrodite in Book 3, she tells her that he neglected her sacrifice out of arrogance (ὕπερηγορέη: *Arg.* 1.64) He is the first of the *Argonautica*'s kings to display this particular kind of impiety openly, but he will not be the last.

Lacking as Pelias is in five of Shipley's six qualities, his power as a king is far from either formidable or absolute. Though he can order Jason to set sail for Colchis and retrieve the golden fleece—both Jason himself (*Arg.* 1. 298-300) and the Pelasgians (*Arg.* 1. 246) acknowledge that the journey cannot be avoided—he lacks the ability to command the obedience of his subjects: both his son Acastus and the shipwright Argus join the quest in direct defiance (παρὲκ νόον: 321-323) of their king.²³⁷ Too, Pelias has no say in the constitution of Jason's crew. Though the Pelasgians consider him the moving force behind the entire expedition (πόθι τόσσον ὄμιλον ἠρώων γαίης – αναχαΐδος ἔκτοθι βάλλει: *Arg.* 1.242-3), he is in no way in charge of it. He has not sent out messengers across Greece to demand the presence of warriors and priests at his palace; he has not sent out messengers across Greece even to request the presence of warriors and priests at his palace. Orpheus joins the Argo's crew at Jason's urging (*Arg.*

²³⁶ Vian, *Argonautica III*, pp.

²³⁷ That the παρὲκ νόον here translates as 'against the will' rather than 'without the knowledge of' is made clear by the other use of the phrase within the poem, where the will of Eurystheus is specifically contrasted with Heracles's own wishes: αὐτὸς δ' ἢ ἰστέτι παρὲκ νόον Εὐρυσθέος ὠρμήθη (*Arg.* 1. 129-30).

1.32-34); Jason's uncle Iphicles offers his services because he is family (*Arg.* 1. 45-48); the spearman Phalerus and his brothers are sent by their father Alkon (*Arg.* 1. 100); Heracles comes of his own accord upon hearing news of the muster and brings his squire with him (*Arg.* 1.124-131).²³⁸ None of them asks permission of Pelias to join the quest, anymore than Jason asks permission to take them with him. As soon as Jason appears on the scene, he, not Pelias, is clearly the power in Iolchus. This impression is heightened by the manner in which Pelias's subjects bid Jason farewell. Women wail and pity his mother (*Arg.* 1. 247–252); men marvel at the strength of the heroes Jason has assembled and wonder at Pelias's purpose in sending them away (*Arg.* 1. 238–43); the old priestess of Artemis comes down to greet him, kisses his hand, and is left on the roadside unable to speak with him for the press of people sweeping him towards the harbor (*Arg.* 1. 310–16). That the Iolchians are as distressed as they seem over Jason's departure does not speak particularly well of Pelias's position as king—nor does the fact that Alcimede thinks nothing of freely speaking of the evil command of Pelias the king (*Arg.* 1. 279).

Also symptomatic of Pelias's weakness is his status among the other sons and descendants of Poseidon who assemble in the city. Poseidon granted his grandson Periclymenus the gift of assuming any physical form in battle (*Arg.* 1. 158-60), and his son by Europa can run across the sea so swiftly he only dampens the soles of his feet

²³⁸ The voluntary nature of the expedition also raises the question of whether Pelias ever intended for such men to accompany Jason in the first place. The trial Pelias devises upon recognizing Jason as his bane is specifically for him, alone (οἱ ἕθλον ἔντα: *Arg.* 1.14-15)—not for him and the sons and grandsons of the gods who flock to undertake it with him. While it is unreasonable to assume that Pelias expected Jason, like Heracles, to sail off alone in a giant golden cup across the sea, it is equally unreasonable to assume that he was best pleased with the quality of men who came to join the great adventure. Pelias's reason for sending Jason to Colchis is explicit: he hopes that the man will never again come home (*Arg.* 1.15-17; *Arg.* 3. 333-9). It seems rather odd, then, that he would be keen on seeing such a congeries of heroes come to crew the Argo, for Jason's chances of survival increase with every uniquely gifted warrior who takes up an oar.

(*Arg.* 1.182-84), but Pelias has no such unusual gift. Nor does he even merit the epithet 'godlike' that is bestowed on his twin (Νηληϊός θεϊοιο: *Arg.* 1. 158), or the claims to excellence in war and seamanship that Poseidon's other two sons Erginus and Ancaeus make for themselves soon after (*Arg.* 1. 188-89).²³⁹ Though he is certainly Poseidon's son, he is nonetheless a thoroughly ordinary man, possessing neither favors granted by his divine father nor any exceptional skill at human pursuits. Such absences contribute to the picture already sketched by Jason's reception in Iolchus and Pelias's own lack of control over his son: Pelias is far from the absolute ruler of his own kingdom.

Cyzicus, the poem's second *basileus*, also fails to meet the criteria for a successful Hellenistic king, though in displaying four of the six necessary qualities he comes significantly closer to it than Pelias does. In addition to being able to claim divine heritage—the Doliones consider Poseidon to be the founder of their race (*Arg.* 1. 951–2), and Cyzicus himself can claim the divine Eusoros as his grandfather (*Arg.* 1. 949)—he combines respect for the gods with generosity. Obedient to the prophecy which commands him to welcome, not offer battle to, a group of heroes descended from the gods, Cyzicus immediately befriends the Argonauts upon their arrival at his shore: he ushers them into the harbor and gives them sheep and wine for their sacrifice upon landing (*Arg.* 1. 961–72), and later he prepares a feast for his guests and forsakes the company of his new wife to spend the evening talking with Jason and his men (*Arg.* 1. 978–80).²⁴⁰ His generosity towards them is a result of his piety, but no less genuine for

²³⁹ Ancaeus's, at least, is more than empty boasting: he assumes the position of helmsman after Tiphys's death.

²⁴⁰ P. Händel 1954 notes at p. 53 that Apollonius likely included the oracle to explain the friendliness of the Doliones, but this interpretation seems at odds with the evidence of the rest of the passage, which portrays them as a genuinely hospitable people.

it: the prophecy demands that he not fight the Argonauts; it does not specify that he must freely share with them the best of what he has. That ‘best’, as it turns out, is very good indeed, for his wealth, while not ostentatiously displayed, is nonetheless unmistakable: he recently won his new wife with particularly rich gifts (*Arg.* 1. 977), his city is walled and gated (*Arg.* 1. 1026), and the resources of his kingdom are great enough to allow for funeral games upon his death, not only for his own people but for Jason and his men as well (*Arg.* 1. 1060).

Yet although he commands the obedience and affection of his subjects—his men follow him without question into a night battle against unknown enemies (*Arg.* 1. 1022–25) and later grieve bitterly at his death (*Arg.* 1. 1070–4)—the narrow boundaries of Cyzicus’s kingdom give him little power beyond his isthmus and plain. He shares his peninsula peaceably with a violent aboriginal race, but it is not any personal quality of his that keeps the monsters in check. Rather, the earthborn leave his people be on account of Poseidon (Ποσειδάωνος ἀρωγῆ: *Arg.* 1.950–1). The precise form of this ‘help’ is unclear—do the monsters fear some nebulous assistance Poseidon might offer in time of need, or has Poseidon specifically instructed them to leave the Doliones in peace?—but regardless it is the god, not the king, who commands their respect. Too, though Cyzicus has extensive knowledge of the surrounding cities, neither his influence nor his knowledge extends beyond that: he cannot tell Jason and his men anything about what lies beyond the Propontis gulf (οὐ μὲν ἐπιπρό ἡεῖδει καταλέξει ἐελδομένοισι δαῖναι: *Arg.* 1. 983–4). Though his power is greater and his territory more extensive than those of Pelias, they are nonetheless still clearly limited.

The limits placed on that power clearly impact his potential for victory. Their effect quite obviously finds its clearest expression in the outcome of his battle with the Argonauts; the following dawn finds his corpse mired in dust and blood (*Arg.* 1.1056). Yet two further elements in the episode foretell his defeat, as well. The first is the prophecy, of unknown origin, which advises Cyzicus to befriend rather than make war upon the Argonauts. Unlike those that govern the actions of Pelias and Aetes, this $\phi\acute{o}\rho\alpha\tau\iota\varsigma$ promises no specific doom, but its very nature hints at destruction: presumably, Cyzicus is forbidden to offer battle to the Argonauts because Cyzicus cannot win.²⁴¹ The second, closely bound up with the first, is his inexperience in warfare. Brave, resourceful, and armed with bronze though they may be, the Doliones are no warriors. They have not had the chance to develop their military skills against the earthborn, for the two races have coexisted peacefully for at least several generations, and when the earthborn are eventually destroyed it is not Cyzicus and his men but the Argonauts who see to their destruction (*Arg.* 1. 989–1002). Nor have the Doliones had a chance to learn war in battles with their neighbors: they are on good enough terms with the tribe across the water for Cyzicus to have won his new bride through gifts rather than as spoils of war (*Arg.* 1. 977–79). This inexperience ultimately costs Cyzicus his life, for when alerted that sailors have landed on his coast by night he does not pause to ascertain who they are, merely assumes them to be Pelasgian raiders and attacks (*Arg.* 1. 1022–5). As Rose notes, his failure to communicate with potential enemies is what kills him.²⁴² It is not a mistake a seasoned warrior would have made. The Lemnian women, versed only in the

²⁴¹ That Cyzicus was warned not to offer battle to the Argonauts because he would win, and thereby derail Hera's vengeance, seems unlikely: in the night battle on the beach, only the Doliones suffer casualties: the Argonauts escape entirely unharmed.

²⁴² A. Rose 1984: 117–18.

slaughter of their husbands and sons, made such an error; upon seeing the Argo in their waters, they assumed her to be a Thracian ship before ever ascertaining the identity of her crew and prepared themselves accordingly (*Arg.* 1.633-39). The crew of the Argo, the most accomplished warriors of their age, did not: upon arriving on Lemnos, they immediately sent a herald to announce their arrival to the Lemnian queen and apprise her of their peaceful intentions. It is essential to note, too, that it was not Jason, every bit as young and inexperienced in warfare as Cyzicus is, but rather the heroes as a group who dispatched their swift herald from the ship (Τείωσ δ' αὖτ' ἐκ νηὸς ἀριστῆες προέηκαν Αἰθαλίδην κήρυκα θεόν: *Arg.* 1.640-1). Lacking comparable experience in warfare, Cyzicus lacks, too, the talent for victory necessary for a successful king, and both he and his people suffer for it.

The third king Jason and his crew encounter is Amycus, the boxer king of the Bebrycians, who meets four of the criteria for a successful Hellenistic king. Like the preceding kings, he, too, is a son of Poseidon (*Arg.* 2.3) and hence can claim divine descent. Unlike Pelias and Cyzicus, however, he is the ruler of a vast kingdom: his lands stretch inland from the shore on which Jason and his men land to the other side of the Clashing Rocks (*Arg.* 2. 135-42). His power seems commensurate with the size of his realm: his propensity for killing visitors in boxing matches aside, we later learn from Lycus that Amycus spends much of his time cheerfully carving out chunks from his neighbors' lands to add to his own kingdom (*Arg.* 2. 792-5). Moreover, though he is described as little more than a rough herdsman—his cloak is made of thick dark cloth in opposition to Polydeuces's, close and finely woven, and his scepter is no more than a poorly carved shepherd's staff (*Arg.* 2. 30-4)—in terms of natural resources his wealth is

considerable: Bebrycia's orchards, iron mines, and farmlands are rich enough to have long since given rise to frequent border wars (*Arg.* 2. 138–141), and the flocks his shepherds tend are countless (*Arg.* 2. 143).

Yet even before Polydeuces shatters the king's skull, it is clear that despite his past success in terrorizing his neighbors and any unfortunate sailors who arrive on his shore, Amycus has come to the end of his victories. When Polydeuces first accepts the challenge the king offers, Amycus is likened to a lion, an image which would initially suggest strength and victory—but as that lion is dying at the end of a hunter's spear, the simile is hardly an omen of success. Though there remains an element of danger — that the lion keeps his eyes fixed on the man who struck him first but has not yet killed him (*ἐπι δ' ὄσσεται οἰόθεν οἶος ἄνδρα τὸν ὃς μιν ἔτυψε παροίτατος οὐδ' ἐδάμασσεν* : *Arg.* 2. 28–9) implies that, though wounded, he may well yet take the hunter with him—in his guise as hunter Polydeuces is nonetheless forecast as the victor of this match.

Subsequent similes strengthen the foreshadowing of Amycus's doom. Immediately following his portrayal as wounded beast to Polydeuces's hunter, Amycus is recast as a son of Gaia or the earth-born Typhaon, while Polydeuces is seen as the evening star:²⁴³

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἢ ὀλοοῖο Τυφωέος ἠὲ καὶ αὐτῆς
Γαίης εἶναι εἶκτο πέλωρ τέκος οἶα πάροισεν
χωομένη Διὶ τίκτεν· ὁ δ' οὐρανίῳ ἀτάλαντος
ἀστέρι Τυνδαρίδης, οὐπερ κάλλισται ἕασιν
ἔσπερίην διὰ νύκτα φαινομένου ἀμαρυγαί.
τοῖος ἔην Διὸς υἱός . . .

Arg. 2. 37–43

²⁴³ This passage has given rise to various interpretations, some of them stranger than others but all of them valid. Among the most popular is that of Fränkel 1952: 146, and Lawall 1966: 133, who both see it as a struggle between Olympian and chthonic forces and so link it not to qualities of the characters themselves but rather to the theme of disruptive forces endeavoring to undermine the cosmic order of the world, which must then be restored. See also Kohnken 1953.

One could have passed as the offspring of monstrous Typhaon
or as the child of the Earth herself, such as long ago she bore when
enraged at Zeus, but the other, the son of Tyndareus,
was like to a star of heaven, whose beams are loveliest
when it shines through the night sky in the gloaming.
Such was the son of Zeus . . .

There are three separate aspects of this passage that allude to Amycus's fate. The first is his identification with a son of the creature Typhaon, born on account of Hera's fury with her husband. We have already seen similar creatures in the poem. The Γηγενέες who shared Cyzicus's peninsula were likewise the result of anger at Zeus; when describing them, Apollonius relates that they were bred up by Hera as a trial for Heracles (κεῖνα θεὰ τρέφεν αἰνὰ πέλωρα Ἴηρη, Ζηνὸς ἄκοιτις, ἀέθλιον Ἡρακλῆϊ: *Arg.* 1. 996–7). The allusion, as well as Polydeuces's identification as Διὸς υἱός, specifically forecasts Amycus's defeat. In Book 1 the Γηγενέες initiated violence against guests and were killed on a beach by a son of Zeus; Amycus, likened to a son of Gaia, has also initiated violence against guests and is about to spar on a beach with another of Zeus's sons. The parallel indicates that this episode is not going to end well for the Bebrycian king. Of equal ill omen is the specific reference to Typhaon, the last monster Zeus slays in his bid for rule of the heavens. Again, the naming of Polydeuces as Διὸς υἱός is critical, as it brings the Hesiodic myth firmly to the fore: just as Zeus destroyed Typhaon, his son will destroy a man likened to Typhaon's offspring.²⁴⁴ Before king and Argonaut ever come to blows, then, the audience knows full well what the outcome of their duel will be. Amycus's string of victories is broken before he ever dons his gloves. The description Apollonius gives of his henchmen as they ready him for the duel confirms for us this

²⁴⁴ Though it comes significantly later in the poem, Phineus's assertion that Typhaon was struck down by Zeus for lifting his hands against him seems to echo and support the interpretation of this simile.

knowledge: neither man, Apollonius writes, realizes that they are strapping their king's gloves to his hands for the last time (*Arg. 2. 65–66*).

The talent for victory is not the only one Amycus is lacking. Generosity is hardly the king's strong suit: instead of greeting his guests with the gifts for sacrifice the Doliones offered, he bids them welcome by demanding one of them get down and fight him, or else suffer unspecified consequences. Nor, obviously, is he concerned with the idea of piety. In this regard, however, it is both unfair and irrelevant to cite—as Rose and others do—his blatant disregard for Zeus ξένιος, for Zeus ξένιος is on absolutely no one's mind for the entire length of the poem. What is relevant, however, is the vocabulary employed in his description. The first description Amycus merits is that he is the most outrageously arrogant of men (ὑπεροπληέστατον ἀνδρῶν: *Arg. 2. 4*); soon thereafter he is also blustering (μέγα φρονέων: *Arg. 2. 19*) and routinely inclined towards speech which is arrogant, as well (ὑπερβασίησιν: *Arg. 2. 9*; ὑπερφιάλοισι *Arg. 2. 54*). In this language is the proof of his impiety, for such behavior is by Greek custom deeply offensive to the gods. In this language, too, we find another dangerously hubristic king whose arrogance brings about his downfall: like Pelias, Amycus is spurred by his hubris to acts which will result in his death and the splintering of his kingdom. Despite his gifts of great territory and power, then, in terms of the Hellenistic world Amycus—impious, ungenerous, and marked for death—cannot possibly succeed as a king.

Arrogance is not, however, a difficulty with which the Argonauts need concern themselves in their encounter with the fourth king of the poem, Amycus's enemy Lycus. Lycus exhibits only three of Shipley's essential qualities: generosity, wealth, and possession of a good deal of land—and the third is somewhat suspect. The first two are

evident in the manner in which he welcomes the Argonauts to his city. By the time Jason and his crew arrive in the kingdom of the Mariandynoi, Lycus has already heard of Amycus's death and hence knows the Argonauts for his friends. He therefore welcomes them gladly into his city and invites them both to a feast and to lengthy conversation (*Arg.* 2. 759–61). Nor does he need stint in his generosity while doing so: he is in the possession of both sufficient resources to stage a day-long feast in honor of his guests and a palace in which to comfortably host them. Yet while both his largesse and his wealth are certain, his third quality, possession of considerable holdings, is rather more ambiguous. When Jason first arrives on his shore, he seems to have a fair amount of land; in addition to his own holdings, he has also taken the iron-rich land (σιδηροφόρου . . . γαίης: *Arg.* 2. 141) that once belonged to the Bebrycians. Whether he will be able to keep that land, however, is open to debate.

The uncertainty of whether his reclaimed land will long remain his own stems from one of the other qualities in which the Mariandynoian king is lacking: his talent for victory, which is uncertain at best. Though he has recently plundered Bebrycian villages and farmlands to win back some of his lost lands, he nonetheless has spent most of his rule watching his kingdom grow ever smaller in the face of Bebrycian inroads into his territory (*Arg.* 2. 796–8). Moreover, he neither won any part of that kingdom himself nor inherited it from a man who did: the tribes that were once subject to his father—at least some of which, one can assume, are still subject to him—were made so by Heracles. Both these circumstances mark Lycus's power as less than impressive. His inability to protect his own lands is troubling enough, but substantially more problematic is his habit of relying upon stronger men to fight his enemies for him. He tells Jason that as a young

man he watched Heracles break the surrounding tribes to his father's rule, but he makes no mention of having fought at Heracles's side. His age at the time is no excuse. He describes his younger self as νέον χνοάοντα παρειάς (*Arg.* 2. 779); the phrase recalls, in specific contrast, the eminently more capable Polydeuces on the Bebrycian shore, when he too is described as ἔτι χνοάοντας ιούλους ἀντέλλων (*Arg.* 2. 43–44). Unlike Cyzicus (also, it should be noted, νεῖόν . . . ὑποσταχόεσκον ἴουλοι: *Arg.* 1. 972), Lycus did not lack the opportunity for warfare, merely the interest in participating in it.

Nor is Heracles the only man he has relied upon to win his battles, for he is now equally dependent on Jason and his crew. In offering the Argonauts his thanks he cheerfully declares himself their inferior and in their debt: whatever favor (χάριν: *Arg.* 2. 799) he can offer for the killing of Amycus is theirs, he promises, for such is the responsibility of weaker men to those stronger than they who lend assistance (*Arg.* 2. 799–801). While this attitude bodes ill for the success of any future military endeavors he may be forced to undertake, it speaks particularly poorly of his potential for success as a king: he is not only lacking power; when the opportunity presents itself, he is perfectly willing to give that power up.

The final two of Shipley's qualities that Lycus lacks are both religious in nature: divine blood and overt piety. Alone among the *Argonautica's* kings, Lycus is fully mortal: he is short not only a parent who is divine but even a distant divine ancestor. His bloodline reinforces the weakness revealed through his negligible potential for victory: without divine ancestry, he has neither extraordinary powers (such as Aeetes has) nor divine protection (such Cyzicus enjoys), but can instead rely only and entirely on other men for assistance. That same weakness determines his attitude towards the gods, as

well. Though he claims he did not act without the will of the gods when he attacked Bebrycia at the same time that Polydeuces killed its king (*Arg.* 2. 796–8), he seems curiously indifferent towards the immortals. He sets no feasts for them, as Pelias did, offers no sacrifices, as did Cyzicus, invokes none in thanks for Amycus's death and the restoration of his kingdom. His indifference, however, does not mean that the idea of divinity is entirely absent from this episode. Upon the approach of the Argonauts, the Mariandynoi, rejoicing at Amycus's death, mob Polydeuces as though he were a god (*ὥστε θεὸν: Arg.* 2. 756); as the Argonauts prepare to depart, Lycus promises to build and dedicate to him a temple, and to set aside as though for the gods (*οἷα θεοῖσιν: Arg.* 2. 809) some fertile fields for him outside the city. Both scenes are initially curious, and both scenes have been read by Green and others as an allusion to the practice of awarding divine honors to Hellenistic rulers.²⁴⁵ The interpretation is accurate, but its significance has been ignored: these honors are not being awarded *to* a king but *by* one. Allusive though these episodes are to the practice of awarding royalty divine status, the allusion has been reversed, and not to Lycus's benefit. His people do not treat him as a god, but rather shower such attention on a stranger; he does not receive worship, but offers it to another. Read in conjunction with the rest of Lycus's qualities of kingship, particularly that of his entirely human blood, both scenes contribute substantially to his status as the weakest king of the poem. Along with his other faults of character, his habit of granting others senior status within his own kingdom indicates that he may well not hold it safe for his heirs.

²⁴⁵ Green 1997b; Vian 1980.

The tendency to grant senior status to others within his own kingdom is not a fault one can lay at the door of the *Argonautica*'s fifth king, Aeetes, who lays claim to three of Shipley's six qualities of kingship. Like that of the first three kings, his divine ancestry is clear: Aeetes is the son of Helios.²⁴⁶ Moreover, his connection to the divine world is particularly strong. He is the equal of Ares on a battlefield (*Arg.* 3. 1205), resembles the god Poseidon (*Arg.* 3. 1240–45), wears armor forged by Hephaestus (*Arg.* 3.223); his bulls, adamantine plow and palace were offerings from Hephaestus to his father (*Arg.* 3. 230–4), the dragons' teeth he sows a gift from Athena to him (*Arg.* 3.1184). His lands are the most extensive of any king Jason and his men have yet encountered: they begin at the mouth of the Phasis (*Arg.* 2. 1277–8), incorporate the territories of countless Colchian tribes (*Arg.* 2.1205), and stretch north and east to the boundaries of the Sauromartian kingdom. His power is likewise formidable. Half a world away Alcinous acknowledges that οὐ . . . τις βασιλεύτερος Αἰήταιο (*Arg.* 4. 1202) and that the Colchian king could bring war all the way to Hellas if he wished.²⁴⁷ That capability, and hence much of his power, stems from the great fleet under his command, which is so immense it could be mistaken for an endless flight of birds soaring wing upon wing across the deep (*Arg.* 4. 239–40). The Colchian fleet is unique among the *Argonautica*'s kings: save for the Argo herself, there are no other ships in the poem. Aeetes's ability to raise this navy is a mark, perhaps, of his wealth, which is likewise unrivalled among the kings of the poem. Not only does he have a towered citadel crowded with marvels Hephaestus wrought, all of

²⁴⁶ Structurally, this makes a certain amount of sense: the kings Jason encountered on the water were Poseidon's descendants; the king he encounters at the eastern edge of the world is Helios's.

²⁴⁷ This is at odds with the perception of him in Pelias's city at *Arg.* 1. 243–6, when the crowd murmurs that the Argonauts could reduce Aeetes's palace to smoking ruins within a day if he did not willingly surrender the fleece to them.

them so lustrous that Jason, star-struck, stands gazing about the courtyard upon arrival (*Arg.* 3. 215-229), but he holds the golden fleece and bears arms so dazzling an onlooker may well mistake him for his father (*Arg.* 3. 1225-30). Too, when the Argonauts first arrive in Colchis Aeetes does not feast them on sheep and wine, as did Cyzicus (gladly) and Amycus (unknowing); Aeetes's resources are such that he can order the extravagance of an entire bull being killed and cooked for seven men (*Arg.* 3. 271-2).

The Argonauts' arrival introduces two of the three qualities Aeetes lacks: generosity and piety. His treatment of Jason neatly encapsulates his attitude towards generosity: though he adopts its appearance, he has little of the actual characteristic itself.²⁴⁸ He orders baths and food prepared for his unexpected guests, a task which costs him nothing, but then proceeds not only to refuse both Jason's request for the fleece and offer of payment, but to set him a task he knows full well should kill him. This attitude bleeds into his treatment of his own people as well. Rather than offering rewards for services rendered, Aeetes offers punishment for services gone undone: he promises to visit his own destruction upon the head of his soldiers should they fail to bring back Medea and the fleece (*Arg.* 4. 230-35). His expression of piety is similar, in that it, too, is no more than surface deep. He is mindful of divine oracles (*Arg.* 4. 594-605), calls upon the gods in times of trouble and vengeance (*Arg.* 4. 229), and swears only his respect for the responsibilities of a host keeps Jason's blood from the palace floor (*Arg.* 3. 377-9),²⁴⁹ but he, like Amycus, is a dangerously hubristic king.

²⁴⁸ Vian 1980. These two qualities of Aeetes have garnered surprisingly little scholarly attention, but see Frankel 1969; Williams 1996; and Bettenworth 2004.

²⁴⁹ There are a variety of opinions concerning the sincerity of this statement; see n 90 above.

Referenced once (*Arg.* 2. 1202) before the Argonauts ever beach the Argo at Colchis, Aeetes's arrogance is evident from the first line the Colchian king speaks as he welcomes his grandsons unexpectedly back home: 'grandsons of my daughter and of Phrixus, whom I honored above all guests in my hall. . . .' (παιδὸς ἐμῆς κοῦροι Φρίξοιο τε, τὸν περὶ πάντων ξείνων ἡμετέροισιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔτεισα (*Arg.* 3. 304-305). The phrase is problematic. M. F. Williams notes that by addressing his grandsons as the children of Phrixus, a man he once honored above all other strangers in his house, Aeetes is indicating respect, particularly for Phrixus and also for Phrixus's sons.²⁵⁰ Were that indeed the manner in which Aeetes addresses his grandchildren, this would be a valid and excellent point. Yet Aeetes does not immediately greet them as the children of his old ξείνος Phrixus; he greets them first as the children of *his daughter*, and only then does he tack Phrixus's name on at the end. This is striking. For all the begats and begots that Apollonius includes in his work, the mother's name, when given at all, comes only infrequently before the father's; when it does, she is of greater worth.²⁵¹ Aeetes is not simply recalling the virtue of his Greek son-in-law here, as Williams states; he is pointing out that his Greek son-in-law was not his daughter's equal – and, more importantly, that his daughter is of great worth only because she is his. He refers to Chalcioppe not by her name, but only as παιδὸς ἐμῆς: hence, whatever status she possesses comes from him alone. It is a lovely bit of subtle self-aggrandizement, and it is immediately echoed in how he speaks of Phrixus. Though Phrixus fled Greece as a child, has just died of extreme old age, and presumably spent the dozens of intervening years in the halls of

²⁵⁰ M.F. Williams 1996: 426.

²⁵¹ Calliope at 1. 24. In other cases where the mother's name alone is given, she is always the daughter of a god, while the unnamed father is presumably not.

Aeetes, Phrixus is still a ξείνος—not a son.²⁵² After at least a generation in his company, Aeetes still considers Phrixus an outsider, all these long years later. Furthermore, while Phrixus might in truth have been a man worthy of being called τὸν περὶ πάντων ξείνων ἡμετέροισιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔτεισα, Phrixus himself is not the focus of this phrase. This is the second time in as many lines that Aeetes has used a possessive pronoun—ἐμῆς, in line 304, and ἡμετέροισιν, here in *Arg.* 305—and in tandem with the first person verb ἔτεισα they serve to highlight the Colchian king, not the man he hosted. It is Aeetes's daughter Phrixus married, Aeetes's house in which Phrixus lived,²⁵³ Aeetes who fixed the value of Phrixus's worth. However great that worth might have been, Phrixus nevertheless played a distinct second fiddle to the king. In his carefully worded welcome of that man's sons home again, Aeetes is therefore not reminding them of the father's greatness; he is reminding them of his.²⁵⁴

This arrogance directs the rest of Aeetes's opening speech. After inquiring into their reasons for coming home so soon, Aeetes reminds his grandsons that they should have listened to his advice and never tried to make such a lengthy voyage to begin with, the dangerous distance of which he warned them against before they ever left.²⁵⁵ Yet he does not simply remind them of his advice and move on; he takes further pains to mention that his knowledge of their proposed route was gleaned from the time he and his

²⁵² This is a nice variation on *Odyssey* 7. 313, where Alcinous, acquainted with Odysseus for barely an evening, tells him he wishes he would remain in Scheria as his son-in-law (ἐμὸς γαμβρὸς: *Od.* 7. 313)

²⁵³ It is telling that Aeetes, unlike Alcinous, appears never to have offered the stranger who married his daughter a house and possessions of his own; Argos makes an oblique mention of this at *Arg.* 2. 1151, where he states that Phrixus, a young man when he arrived in Colchis, had died of extreme old age in Aeetes's house (ἐν Αἰήτῳ δόμοισιν).

²⁵⁴ At 3. 302 M. Campbell 1994 notes that Aeetes's use of παῖδός and κοῦροι denotes his 'senior status,' but leaves it at that. The ἐμῆς seems to me to be particularly important, since Aeetes is not emphasizing that he is merely older than his guests but fundamentally better than they are.

²⁵⁵ It seems appropriate here to note Ursula LeGuin's iron rule for dialogue in fantasy fiction: no one who says *I told you so* has ever been, or will ever be, the hero.

father Helios escorted his sister Circe to her new home (*Arg.* 3. 307-313). That Aeetes is showboating is obvious,²⁵⁶ but he is not merely showing off his knowledge of geography: the fact that he gives his father's specific name is key. Presumably, Argos and his brothers know who their great-grandfather is; in choosing to remind them Aeetes is seizing yet another opportunity to boast of his divine ancestry—an opportunity he is never, as Argos warned Jason at the Phasis, slow to take. Likewise, his remark that he and his sister were whirled along in Helios's chariot on this trip is similarly designed to highlight his unique capabilities.²⁵⁷ For unlike Phaethon, another of Helios's sons who famously took his father's chariot out for a spin, Aeetes survived not only one trip, but two: presumably, he and his father returned to Colchis in the same manner they left it. For the Argonauts and the Phrixides, the allusion is impossible to miss; Aeetes's half-brother tumbled so recently from the heavens that his broken body is still burning (*Arg.* 4. 596-598). For the reader, the allusion is somewhat more subtle, but still marked: the name Phaethon has been mentioned not fifty lines before (*Arg.* 3. 245), where Apollonius gives it as the nickname for Aeetes's son.²⁵⁸ It is difficult to see that name and not be reminded of the myth; with that in mind, it is likewise difficult to soon after read ἐν ἄρμασιν Ἡελίου (*Arg.* 3. 309) without noting, along with Jason and his crew, that Aeetes did not share Phaethon's fate. Aeetes's message here is clear: you, puny children, could not hope to accomplish this task; I, on the other hand, could do it in a day . . . and you, people I do not yet know, take note of my magnificence. Aeetes may well be wealthy, powerful, and half-divine, but his defining characteristic is his arrogance. That

²⁵⁶ M. Campbell 1993: ad 3. 281

²⁵⁷ Williams 1996 rightly notes this, but does not address the fact that Aeetes himself is the one calling attention to the abilities in question.

²⁵⁸ M. Fusillo 1985 et al. note this as an ill omen for Aspyrtos's eventual fate.

characteristic proves to be his undoing, for it directly impacts his talent for victory. Certain that he has correctly understood his father's prophecy, and equally certain that Jason cannot successfully complete the trials he sets for him, Aeetes sets his own destruction in motion with the challenge he offers Jason in his hall.

In contrast to the five previous kings, Alcinous, the final king of the poem, possesses all six qualities of kingship. He is descended from the divine: he and his people are descended from Uranus (*Arg.* 4. 991–2). His generosity is considerable, especially toward strangers; he and his people welcome Jason and his men to Drepane as though they were feasting the return of their own sons (*Arg.* 4. 997), and upon the Argonauts' departure he offers them guest-gifts, as well. Moreover, he is generous even to his enemies, for he grants asylum to the Colchian soldiers who fear to return home without Medea (*Arg.* 1205–1210). His piety directs his course of action: alone among the kings—indeed, almost alone among the characters of the *Argonautica*— he specifically mentions fearing the wrath of Zeus (*Arg.* 4. 1100). His holdings are fertile (*Arg.* 4. 982–3), and his wealth is impressive, for in addition to the many guest-gifts he gives the Argonauts upon their departure, Arete offers twelve slaves, as well (*Arg.* 4. 1221–2). Moreover, his talent for victory is the most marked and complex of the kings of the poem. Though in possession of an apparently formidable military, Alcinous knows both when to fight and when to negotiate, and he has a healthy respect for the power of his fellow kings. Because of that talent, he alone emerges as a successful king at the end of the poem: he has not only survived the invasion of his waters by the Colchian fleet, but by accepting their plea for asylum he has acquired new allies and their ships. His kingdom is stronger than it was before the Argonauts arrived, and so he meets the

necessary criterion of being in a position to hand down a stable legacy to his heir. This criterion introduces the seventh essential characteristic of a Hellenistic king: he needs to have children to inherit his kingdom upon his death. For no matter the qualities of the man who rules it, a kingdom cannot survive without an heir.

Heirs

The seventh quality of a successful king, offered by Gruen²⁵⁹ and later elaborated upon by Bosworth, is perhaps the most critical: the assurance of dynastic continuity. It is not enough, Gruen argues, for a king simply to be a charismatic leader of his people and a frequent victor on the battlefield; as formidable as his own martial and diplomatic achievements may be, they mean little if he cannot sire and raise legitimate sons to inherit his kingdom. The immediate reason is obvious; with no heir, a king has no one upon whom to bequeath his realm when he dies. Of even more importance, however, is the role a king-in-waiting plays during his father's lifetime: he projects an image of permanence and continuity, a visible promise that the royal line will endure. It is that promise, Gruen argues, that determines much of the success of any Hellenistic king: with it, a kingdom has the potential to thrive; without it, the kingdom will certainly fall. In light of the historical record, this seems a fair enough assessment, for by the end of the fourth century the diadochoi were (rightfully!) preoccupied with matters of inheritance and succession. Antigonos Monophthalmus in particular showed himself mindful of the power invested in dynastic promise, but the actions of Ptolemy Soter and Seleucus Nikator are telling as well. Each of these men was careful to present an heir to his people

²⁵⁹ E. Gruen 1985: 256-7.

well in advance of his own death, and each was equally careful in his selection of that heir.

Plutarch writes of Antigonus's rise to kingship with customary drama: a courier from Salamis, coming to tell Antigonus of his son's great victory, strides into the palace at Antigoneia and hails the Phrygian satrap as basileus, making him the first man to be addressed as such since the assassination of Alexander IV. In their joy at the news of Demetrius's triumph, Antigonus's followers immediately seize upon this happy notion of royalty and declare Antigonus and his son kings. Antigonus is crowned by his friends on the spot, and soon thereafter he dispatches to his son a diadem, the symbol of kingship, and a letter addressing him, too, as a basileus of Macedon.²⁶⁰ The tale is a fine one, to be sure, but the crowning of Antigonus—and, more importantly, Demetrius—was hardly as artless as it appeared. That the seemingly spontaneous double acclamation at Antigoneia was in fact a political maneuver carefully orchestrated by Antigonus and his advisors has long been noted,²⁶¹ and its importance cannot be overstressed. Antigonus did not win only a kingdom by it; he made clear provisions for the kingdom's inheritance. Though Demetrius was nominally given the same rank as his father, he was nonetheless a sort of 'junior king': Antigonus was acclaimed by his people and crowned by his advisors with great pomp at the capital of his new kingdom; Demetrius, years younger, received both crown and title only from his father's hand.²⁶² Both the manner of his crowning and, later, the lead role Antigonus took in the governance of their kingdom therefore presented Demetrius not as an equal and independent king but rather an heir already in nominal

²⁶⁰ Plutarch, *Demetrius*

²⁶¹ First mentioned by F. Granier 1931: 99, it plays a key role in the arguments of, particularly, H.W. Ritter 1965: 84, and R.M. Errington 1978: 123-5.

²⁶² E. Gruen 1985 notes this, but does not follow it through to its logical conclusion.

possession of his father's power. Therein lies the brilliance of Antigonus's plan. As Gruen notes and Bosworth²⁶³ elaborates upon, such a step speaks directly to the stability of Antigonus's kingdom: unlike Alexander, who died without naming an heir, and unlike the warring generals Alexander's fragmented kingdom had seen during the two decades since, Antigonus was creating something specifically meant to survive his death intact. Amid the chaos of continually shifting borders and alliances that followed Alexander's death, that kind of stability lent security to Antigonus's position and legitimacy to his claim to power.²⁶⁴ As a successful, charismatic soldier with an equally successful, charismatic heir, he promised to fill the gap left by the now-defunct Argead kings.

Demetrius's success and charisma speak directly to the matter of inheritance and stability. For what Gruen and Bosworth do not note, and what is essential for properly understanding this characteristic of a successful Hellenistic king, is that it was not enough for a king simply to present a child of his blood as his heir. In order to lend stability to his father's rule, that child needed already to have proven himself worthy of a throne. Demetrius was Antigonus's son and heir, true enough, but more importantly he was, in 305, an eminently capable soldier who had just reduced more than a hundred ships of the Ptolemaic fleet to kindling. His victory was the excuse his father used to claim a kingship; his victory also points to the characteristic absolutely essential in the heir of a successful king: the ability to show himself as fit a leader as his father. Gruen's assessment of the importance of dynastic continuity therefore requires modest revision. To maintain a kingdom into the following generation, a man must father not only sons, but sons able to show themselves as effective as he in winning and governing a realm.

²⁶³ A. Bosworth 2002

²⁶⁴ R. Errington 1973 and Gruen 1985

Alexander did not, and his kingdom splintered for it. Likewise, nearly thirty years later, the kingdom of the diadochos Lysimachus suffered a similar fate, for a similar cause: Lysimachus's son Agathocles was popular, capable, and well-respected by both his soldiers and his people – but Agathocles's assassination, either orchestrated or at least sanctioned by his father, in favor of a younger and less capable son led to revolts that left his father's realm open to Seleucid control.²⁶⁵ The proven competence of an heir determines the fate of a kingdom.

Like Antigonus, Ptolemy Soter, too, was concerned with these issues of inheritance and stability. Even before he assumed the title *basileus*, he was plotting matters of dynastic succession as early as 309; the oath sworn between him and the Iasians stipulated that the Iasians would be the allies not only of Ptolemy himself but of his descendants in perpetuity (*Inscr. Iasos* 2. 3). The stipulation that the alliance included both Ptolemy and his heirs is critical, as it purposely gives the impression that Ptolemy has created a kingdom stable enough to survive into the next generation.²⁶⁶ Ptolemy's efforts at actively presenting the promise of this kind of continuity emerge particularly two years before his own death, when he named one of his sons his co-ruler. So clear a designation of the king-in-waiting ensures a smooth transition of power upon the old king's death.²⁶⁷ For Ptolemy, that assurance was particularly important, because there was the very real possibility of a succession war upon his death: he had chosen to establish his royal line through his second wife Berenice, which left his eldest son

²⁶⁵ For a well-reasoned discussion of the role Agathocles's death played in the downfall of Lysimachus, see particularly H.S. Lund 1992.

²⁶⁶ A. Bosworth 2002: 274 notes that in this case 'the Iasians conceived themselves as entering into a formal relationship with a dynastic power which was expected to continue into an beyond the next generation', but it seems unlikely that Ptolemy himself had no hand in the wording of the oath.

²⁶⁷ G. Shipley 2000: 57

Ptolemy Ceraunos effectively disinherited. It is unclear precisely why Ptolemy chose to continue his line through his second wife instead of his first, yet the unpredictable violence that gave Ceraunos his name should not be overlooked. Ptolemy's choice speaks directly to the importance of an heir's character and accomplishments. Seleucus Nikator elected a similar course of action, though he did not have Ptolemy's preoccupation with a civil war breaking out among his sons. When Seleucus II came to power at the death of his father, he, like Demetrius and Ptolemy II, had for some years already been in nominal possession of his father's power. More importantly, before being named his father's co-ruler, he had demonstrated himself eminently capable of defending and ruling a kingdom on his own.

Matters are little different in the *Argonautica*. Though Jason encounters six different kings throughout the course of the poem, there is the promise of true dynastic succession for only one: Alcinous. Father though he is, Pelias nonetheless has no reliable heir. His trouble with his children is evident from the very beginning of the poem, when his son Acastus joins Jason's quest in direct defiance of his father's wishes (*Arg.* 1. 321-3). This episode points to two immediate problems facing the Pelasgian king. The first is the very real danger that, with Acastus aboard the *Argo*, Pelias will soon be deprived of his son. He has, after all, designed the expedition to be a deadly one, in order that Jason might die at the hands of foreign peoples or thanks to a storm at sea (*Arg.* 1. 15-17). There is therefore no assurance that Acastus will enjoy the *nostos* of which Pelias is so eager to deprive Jason, for the crew is presumably unlikely to survive any encounter in which their captain dies—particularly since it is a sea storm, not a foreign war, that

Pelias is counting on to prevent Jason from returning home.²⁶⁸ It is conceivable that some of the Argonauts could survive a military engagement in which Jason was killed; it is less likely any would survive the sinking of their ship at sea. Acastus's decision to join the Argonauts, then, is a direct threat to the stability of his father's kingdom: as Acastus is his father's only son,²⁶⁹ his death would leave Pelias without a male heir. The possibility of losing him to a shipwreck is not, however, Pelias's only care. The second problem facing him emerges with the seemingly egregious mention of Acastus's sister at *Arg.* 1.326, where Apollonius describes the cloak Acastus wears as one which his sister Pelopeia made for him (τήν οἱ ὄπασσε κασιγνήτη Πελόπεια). Such a reference is unlikely to escape the notice of anyone familiar with how the tale of Pelias ends: Pelopeia is one of the daughters who will at Medea's orders help cut her father to pieces and boil him in a cauldron like a stew. Not only has Pelias alienated his heir and put him in immediate and potentially lethal danger, but he is the father of children who will eventually be his doom. Both of these elements highlight the insecurity of his position as king.

Cyzicus and Amycus face a different kind of problem, for neither of them has sons, ill-omened or otherwise, to inherit their kingdoms upon their deaths. Little more than a boy himself—like Jason, he is just old enough to have started growing a beard (*Arg.* 1.972)—Cyzicus is only recently married, and his new wife is not yet pregnant (*Arg.* 1.973). Thanks to the night battle in which he engages with Jason's men, he dies before he can father children. It is this lack of a son, more so even than his own death,

²⁶⁸ J. Murray 2005, 90: the positioning of the Greek suggests that Pelias believes the weather will doubtlessly destroy Jason, even if foreign warriors do not.

²⁶⁹ Apollonius makes no mention of other sons of Pelias, nor do the scholia note earlier or variant traditions that give Acastus brothers.

which leads to the collapse of his kingdom: stricken with grief at his death and the suicide of his wife, his people cannot bestir themselves even to grind grain or cook their food, but instead eat it raw (*Arg.* 1.1071-4). He has left them no leader to inspire them, no new king around which to rally. His line therefore does not survive, and his kingdom passes into other hands, for his people eventually give way to the Ionians who dwell on the island in Apollonius's time (*Arg.* 1.1075-8). Particularly relevant in this case is that Apollonius made a deliberate choice to leave Cyzicus without a child: a scholiast reveals that in the variant tradition of Neanthes, Cyzicus had a son who bore his name.²⁷⁰

Amycus, too, appears to die without an heir, for Apollonius makes no mention of a son and his people scatter leaderless after his death. His second in the boxing match with Polydeuces is only a *θεράπων* (*Arg.* 2. 51), in the brief catalog of Bebrycian fighters Apollonius makes mention of Amycus's squire (*Ἀμύκοιο . . . ὑπέροπλος*; *Arg.* 2.110) but not of a child. Though he has spent much of his rule expanding his kingdom, it shatters upon his death: Lycus is already reclaiming the borderlands as he dies, and instead of rallying around an heir to reclaim them the Bebrycians travel inland through the country to bring news of their king's defeat. Particularly relevant here, too, is that Apollonius wrote of Polydeuces killing rather than merely defeating the Bebrycian king. In yet another variant tradition, a scholiast writes, Amycus merely emerges the bruised and battered loser of the boxing match and the Argonauts sail on (Wendel, 172).

Lycus, the *Argonautica*'s fourth king, is again in a unique position among the kings of the poem. He not only has an heir who carries no apparent ill omens; his heir is

²⁷⁰ Sch. Ap. Rh. 1. 1063 (Wendel, 93-4). S. Jackson 2004: 48-9 argues that Apollonius made this choice primarily to increase the pathos of Cleite's death; while that is a perfectly acceptable interpretation, it works as well in regards to the fate of a kingdom with no clear heir.

both already grown and evidently capable enough a warrior to join Jason's expedition. His heir does not, however, remain in his kingdom: Lycus sends him with Jason in payment for his own debt (*Arg.* 2. 803), and Apollonius never writes of him again. His absence from his father's kingdom leaves Lycus in a tenuous position, particularly as it is far from likely that Dascylus will ever return home. The Argonauts, after all, specifically follow a much different route on the voyage back to Greece.

That the problem Aeetes faces is much the same as Pelias's—though he has children, he lacks a reliable heir—is revealed the first time Apollonius introduces his son Apsyrtus at *Arg.* 3. 241-6:

ἄλλω δ' Ἄψυρτος ναῖεν πάϊς Αἰήταο
τὸν μὲν Καυκασίη νύμφη τέκεν Ἀστερόδεια
πρὶν περ κουριδίην θέσθαι Εἰδυῖαν ἄκοιτιν,
Τηθύος Ὠκεανοῦ τε πανοπλοτάτην γεγαυῖαν,
καὶ μιν Κόλχων υἴες ἐπωνυμίην Φαέθοντα
ἔκλεον, οὐνεκα πάσι μετέπρεπεν ἠιθέοισιν.

In that [tower] lived Aeetes 's son Apsyrtus,
whom the Caucasian nymph Asterodeia bore
before [Aeetes] took as his lawful wife Eidyia,
the youngest daughter of Tethys and Ocean.
And the sons of the Colchians called him Phaethon,
the shining one, for he stood pre-eminent among all
of his bachelor companions.

From the viewpoint of the Hellenistic world, this passage presents three critical problems with Apsyrtus as an heir. The first is his status as Aeetes 's son. Apsyrtus is the eldest of Aeetes 's children, but he is also illegitimate: his mother Asterodeia was never the κουριδίην . . . ἄκοιτιν (*Arg.* 3. 243) of Aeetes that Eidyia is. Asterodeia's status as a mistress is immediately problematic: in matters of succession, bastard sons are not the same as trueborn heirs.²⁷¹ Too, there is the matter of Apsyrtus's nickname Phaethon. As

²⁷¹ Ogden 1996: 10.

Fusillo and others have long noted, Phaethon is hardly a name of cheerful omen.²⁷²

Considering his well-known fate, it is impossible to separate the name from thoughts of ruin; it is therefore impossible to separate Apsyrtus from the same. His name promises that he will come to no good end; his bastardy *and* his name promise the same for his father's dynasty, as on both counts Apsyrtus offers little promise of successful transmission of power. Adding to this gloomy picture is the last piece of information with which Apollonius provides us: Apsyrtus is still unwed (ἠιθέοισιν: *Arg.* 3. 246) and hence presumably still childless. His bachelorhood emphasizes the possibility that the male line of Aetes will end with him; combined with the other elements of this passage, his bachelorhood in fact makes such a possibility a near certainty.

That certainty takes shape in the fourth book of the poem, when Apsyrtus dies in pursuit of his sister. For obvious reasons, his fate initially seems far more problematic for him than for Aetes; Apsyrtus is, after all, the one who has been killed. Yet his death reveals that Aetes is in a tenuous position, for without Apsyrtus Aetes has no immediate heir. His grandsons are aboard the Argo with Jason; even should they one day return to Colchis, Aetes is unlikely to name them his successors after such a betrayal.²⁷³ Nor will he find an heir in his daughters: he knows that the ἄτην . . . πολύτροπον (*Arg.* 3. 600) of which his father's prophecy warned began with them (*Arg.* 4. 9–10).²⁷⁴ As formidable and far-reaching as Aetes's power is, the status of Apsyrtus in the poem suggests that it will end with him.

²⁷² M. Fusillo 1985 et al.

²⁷³ Aetes is, frankly, unlikely to let them live after such a betrayal: his intentions towards his grandsons are already murderous.

²⁷⁴ As an interesting side note, Eumelus states that the Colchians called Medea back to Colchis after the death of Aetes, to rule them as his heir.

Only when we come to the last of the kings do we find the promise of dynastic continuity. When Jason and Medea arrive at their shore, Alcinous and Arete are still childless, but any reader of Greek epic knows that they will not remain so forever. More, any reader of Greek epic knows precisely what kind of children they will someday have. They have more than one son, ensuring that the ruling line will continue even should their eldest die before he weds and fathers sons, and their daughter Nausicaa is a model of propriety and grace. Of course, this promise of continuity is complicated by the fact that the eventual fate of Alcinous and his kingdom in the *Odyssey* is deeply uncertain: the last we hear of the Phaeacians, they are preparing to sacrifice bulls to Poseidon in hopes of averting his anger. It is possible that they fail: Poseidon's anger is not easily placated, and he does seem rather eager to throw a mountain in front of their port. It is equally possible that they succeed: because their story ends with the preparations for sacrifice, there is no way to be certain of their eventual fate. Such uncertainty is not uncommon in the Alexandrian poetic discourse on kings: Callimachus, too, is frank about his uncertainty of the future.²⁷⁵

By the standards of the Hellenistic world, then, the first five of the *Argonautica's* kings—even those who survive their encounter with the Argonauts—are destined ultimately to fail in their respective roles. Only Alcinous, in possession of all seven characteristics of the ideal Hellenistic king, prospers. The other kings' failures and his success points the way to one final essential point in Apollonius's commentary on Hellenistic kingship: the relationship between kings and cities. For in the interactions between the kings and the Argonauts, we find a potential model for Jason and his men:

²⁷⁵ See. S. Stephens 2003: 165–73 for a discussion of this.

not Greek colonists first exploring trade routes across the Mediterranean,²⁷⁶ not Alexander's men carving a path across the east,²⁷⁷ but a Hellenistic polis on the move.

Kings and Cities

In her *Le Monde Hellenistique*, C. Preaux asserts that kings and cities emerge as the two central power structures of the Hellenistic world.²⁷⁸ Cities in Asia Minor and in northern Greece had for long since found a way to co-exist with ruling monarchs, but only the rise of the early Hellenistic kingdoms forced the majority of the classical *poleis* to do the same. Such an adjustment was simple for neither the cities nor the kings, as balancing these new negotiations of power was a lengthy and delicate process. Cities needed to come to grips with the fact that *autonomia* was now a favor conferred by kings, not a right assured by birth;²⁷⁹ kings needed to recognize that while they may have claimed their kingdoms by skill at arms, military force alone could secure neither their borders nor their throne: the goodwill of cities was an essential prop to their power. Through royal benefactions to cities kings could acquire the practical and ideological support they required; through gifts and formal compliments to kings cities could acquire enhanced reputation and political status. In 307, for example, Antigonus Monophthalmus offered 150,000 *medimnoi* of grain to Athens, in an effort to win her allegiance during the wars of the successors;²⁸⁰ the Athenians, likewise, later offered diadems to and conferred

²⁷⁶ F. Vian 1974

²⁷⁷ R. Hunter 1995

²⁷⁸ C. Preaux 1978. P. Bilde 1996, 9, argues that kingship is the more important of the two; G. Shipley 2000: 59 follows Preaux in considering them balanced.

²⁷⁹ For contrasting views of *autonomia* in classical Greece, see M. Hansen 1995: 21–43, and J. Davies in L. Foresti 1994, 61–2; for the idea of *autonomia* in the early Hellenistic kingdoms, see G. Shipley 2000, 73–4, for his interpretation of Diod. 18. 56, Austin 29, and Austin 31.

²⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Dem.* 10

divine honors upon Antigonus and his son, in an effort to secure their own best interests in the volatile Mediterranean world.

Considering the relationship between the Argonauts and Apollonian kings in terms of the manner in which Hellenistic cities and kings dealt with one another is admittedly not the most obvious of arguments. In the course of their travels, the Argonauts vote divine honors upon no one. No king—including Aeetes, who is explicitly surrounded by the trappings of majesty—wears a diadem, and Jason and his men certainly do not offer one to any. The freedom of the Argonauts is a point of contention at only two points of the poem, and their goodwill is hardly a treasure the kings spend their time seeking. Too, the one visual aspect of Hellenistic kingship that appears in the poem, a procession with accompanying paeans, is associated with the Argonauts rather than with the kings: Jason is borne down to the Iolchian harbor by a press of spectators as he first leaves on his adventure (*Arg.* 1. 234–41; 1. 306–16); the Mariandynoi escort the Argonauts from the harbor up through the city to Lycus's palace when the crew arrives at their shore (*Arg.* 2. 752–60); and Alcinous offers them a similar reception when they arrive on Drepane with Medea and the fleece in tow (*Arg.* 4. 989–97). None of these scenes of course matches the extravagance of Hellenistic processions—having liberated the Mariandynoi from an oppressive enemy, Polydeuces is mobbed from all sides and greeted as a god, but he does not merit the formal paeans, hymns, and exhibitions that marked Demetrius Poliorcetes's arrival in Athens;²⁸¹ likewise, while the Argonauts walk rejoicing through the crowds as Alcinous and his people offer happy sacrifices for the Argo's arrival at their shores (*Arg.* 4. 989–97), their welcome lacks the pomp of a

²⁸¹ For the hymn, see Austin 35.

Ptolemaic procession²⁸²—but all three scenes nonetheless recall the lavish displays associated with the Hellenistic kings. As such, their association with the Argonauts seems to support not an identification of the Argonauts as a Hellenistic polis, but rather the assertion that in his style of leadership Jason represents a Hellenistic rather than Homeric ethos of leadership—²⁸³that he is, in fact, a kind of Hellenistic king himself.²⁸⁴

The argument that Jason represents a new kind of leadership is neither new nor particularly wrongheaded. Much scholarly attention has rightly found focus on his assertion that the captain of the Argo's expedition should be capable of striking treaties with foreigners (*Arg.* 1. 332–40). The preference for diplomatic talent before strength and military skill, coupled with the disappearance of Heracles before the end of the first book of the poem, has led scholars to a variety of interpretations of Apollonius's intent, ranging from the belief that Apollonius is deliberately eschewing the battlefield ethos of Homer in order to distance himself and his work from Homeric epic²⁸⁵ to the argument that he is endeavoring to reduce heroic figures to human stature in order to better portray their psychological struggles²⁸⁶ to the contention that he is portraying Jason as unskilled or at the least uninterested in military matters to better draw attention to his qualities as an erotic rather than epic hero.²⁸⁷ None of these interpretations is necessarily inaccurate—all are, in fact, supported by other evidence within the poem—but none address precisely what Apollonius means by 'foreigners' at *Arg.* 1. 340. For Odysseus,

²⁸² For a description of Ptolemy II's coronation festivities, see Austin 219.

²⁸³ A. Rose 1984.

²⁸⁴ S. Stephens 2003: 218–37 treats him as such when she investigates the claiming of the Golden Fleece as an analog to the Egyptian Night Voyage of the Sun, though acknowledges that despite the Egyptian subtext of kingship in the scene Jason is hardly an

²⁸⁵ G. Lawall 1966: 119–169.

²⁸⁶ H. Frankel 1957: 1–19.

²⁸⁷ C. Beye 1969: 31–59.

for example, 'foreigners' has a wide variety of connotations: in his travels home he and his men encounter and speak with nymphs, princesses, two varieties of flesh-eating monsters, queens, kings, goddesses, demi-gods, sorceresses and rude young Phaeacian nobles, and when he himself is pretending to be a foreigner in Ithaca he has dealings with a swineherd, a servant, and another pack of discourteous young men of noble birth. Jason and his crew do not face such variety, for once they set out on their voyage the only speech Apollonius records is to divinities or to rulers, their representatives, and their families.

On Lemnos, Apollonius has Jason speak to two women: Iphinoe, the herald of Hypsipile, and Hypsipile herself (*Arg.* 1. 712–16; 1. 793–841; 1. 888–99). Though the young women of Lemnos throng eagerly about him as he follows Iphinoe to the palace (*Arg.* 1. 774), they do not speak to him, nor he to them; though during their sojourn on the island the Argonauts and Lemnian women share dances, banquets, sacrifices, and beds with the Lemnian women, Apollonius does not offer their conversations for consideration in the poem: as the Argonauts make ready to depart, he writes only that the women gripped the hands of the Argonauts and prayed for their safe return (*Arg.* 1. 884–7). A similar pattern appears on Bear Mountain. Cyzicus and his men together ascertain the identity of the Argonauts and welcome them to the harbor (*Arg.* 1. 961–3); Cyzicus alone listens to their tale and offers his knowledge of the surrounding lands (*Arg.* 1. 980–84). The Argonauts mourn with the Doliones after the king's death (*Arg.* 1. 1054–61), but with Cyzicus dead Apollonius offers neither direct conversation nor even a summary of conversation between the Argo's crew and their hosts. The same holds true at their next port of call—Hylas never hears the voice of the water-nymph who drowns him;

enthralled by his beauty, she pulls him into the spring in silence (*Arg.* 1. 1229–36)—and on Thynia, as well. For despite the citizens who throng Phineus offering help and seeking an oracle, Jason and his men speak only to the former Thracian king (*Arg.* 2. 311–425). When his neighbors come calling, Phineus speaks with and dismisses them before dining with the Argonauts; the one man he keeps back is dispatched almost immediately to fetch sheep for sacrifice (*Arg.* 2. 448–466).

A similar pattern governs the rest of the conversations between the Argonauts and other characters in the poem. In Phrygia, only Amycus challenges the Argonauts (*Arg.* 2. 11–18), and Polydeuces therefore replies only to Amycus (*Arg.* 2. 22–24). Lycureus, the squire of the Phrygian king, provides both parties with boxing gloves, but he does so in silence, and after Amycus is killed his men fight the Argonauts without speaking (*Arg.* 2. 98–144). Matters are similar among the Mariandynoi, where again despite thronging crowds it is only Lycus who listens to the Argonauts' tale and offers them advice and promises (*Arg.* 2. 759–814), and also in Colchis, where the Argonauts must deal first with the king's grandsons, then with the king, and then with the king's daughters. In Colchis this exclusivity is of particular note in Jason's first conversation with Medea. The setting of course strongly evokes Nausicaa's encounter with Odysseus in *Od.* 6,²⁸⁸ but Nausicaa's handmaidens play a far more active role in the scene than do Medea's. Nausicaa calls upon them to bring Odysseus food and clothes and to escort him to the river to help him bathe, and Odysseus himself speaks to them to ask that they leave him to wash alone. Jason, on the other hand, interacts with Medea's not at all: Apollonius writes that by the time Jason approaches Hecate's shrine, Medea's women have

²⁸⁸ J. Clauss 1993, 1997; R. Clare 2002

withdrawn in order to leave their mistress alone with the stranger (*Arg.* 3. 965–6). At Drepane, while Alcinous and his people greet the Argonauts with sacrifices and joy (*Arg.* 4. 989–97), the only speech act they specifically share is Medea’s supplication of Arete and the message relayed to Jason from Arete through her courier. And in Libya, there are no native peoples for the Argonauts to encounter: they engage only with the autochthonous goddesses (*Arg.* 4. 1318–29) and the Hesperidae (*Arg.* 4. 1432–49).

That the Argonauts’ conversations with foreigners are limited to those in power makes it tempting to read such dialogue as diplomatic exchanges. The fact that despite his position as the leader of the expedition, Jason does not decide matters on his own during their journey, but rather consults the Argonauts in an assembly, makes it equally tempting to read such dialogue in terms of diplomatic exchanges between a city and kings—particularly since the dynamics of those exchanges suggest that such a reading is possible. Alcinous is, after all, the only one of the *Argonautica*’s kings who strikes the appropriate balance between authority and negotiation when dealing with Jason and his crew. Pelias demands service of Jason without allowing him the option to refuse, and so finds himself defeated when Jason finds allies more powerful than he—in both the other Argonauts, whose presence makes it less likely that Pelias will succeed in his goal of ridding himself of his nephew, and Medea, who will eventually destroy him. Cyzicus, fails to communicate effectively with the Argonauts, and so finds himself and his people destroyed.²⁸⁹ Amycus, like Pelias, makes arrogant demands of the travelers before ever allowing them to speak, and pays for his error with his life. Lycus, on the other hand, does not demand enough: he gives up too much to the Argonauts, freely confesses them

²⁸⁹ A. Rose 1984 notes the importance of effective communication between peoples in the newly expanded world of the Hellenistic period.

his betters, and so sees his kingdom substantially weakened as they leave in company with his son. Aeetes, like Amycus and Pelias, deals harshly with Jason and his men, and is therefore forced to face the consequences of his choice. Only Alcinous manages to strike an effective balance in his dealings with the Argonauts. He welcomes them gladly to his shore but does not allow them to run roughshod over his authority; he fetes them as though they were his countrymen but does not immediately grant them aid against or sanctuary from Aeetes merely because they ask. Likewise, he makes no exorbitant demands of them when they first put in to his harbor, but instead agrees to shelter them while he debates the most appropriate and just course of action in regard to Medea. In the success of his actions, and in the failures that the actions of the other kings effect, we find an echo of the most critical of the tasks the Hellenistic kings faced: learning how to balance the absolute authority that they could lay claim to as kings with the independent authority Greek cities had so long enjoyed.²⁹⁰

Conclusion

Though at first glance the title *basileus* in the *Argonautica* seems unremarkable, the pattern that governs its use reveals one of the major narrative structures of the poem. The six men referred to as such function as avatars either of specific Hellenistic kings, as do Aeetes and Alcinous, or else demonstrate the variety of factors which can contribute to a king's failure in the Hellenistic world. Moreover, in their interactions with Jason and the Argonauts, they exemplify the struggles kings faced in reconciling their own authority with the former independence of the Greek states.

²⁹⁰ G. Shipley 2000; A. Bosworth 1996; E. Gruen 1985.

Chapter 4: Supplication

As discussed in Chapter 1, the social institutions familiar from the Homeric world appear in considerably different guises over the course of Apollonius's poem. The variations he effects on Homeric hospitality scenes offer his audience a way to interpret Jason's world as a mirror of the Hellenistic, and in doing so offer a reason why Apollonius chose to distance them so considerably from their Homeric roots: in drawing attention to their models from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, he indicates that they have something to reveal about Jason's world. The same principle applies to his kings, who reflect not the familiar kings from Homer but again an aspect of the Hellenistic world. And the same applies, too, to his treatment of supplication scenes in the *Argonautica*, which provide a way for us to interpret the principles that govern Jason's world. What we find at the heart of supplication scenes is not the familiar Homeric motif of shame and potential sacrifice, but an ever-evolving norm of suspicion, self-importance, a willful neglect of the will of Zeus, self-interest, and the expectation of immediate reciprocity, blended in certain cases with an emphasis on blood relations. A survey of these scenes reveals a larger narrative pattern that complements the pattern already established by the depictions of *Argonautica*'s kings: much of Jason's world can be read as a poetic re-imagining of the early Hellenistic Mediterranean, where those qualities played essential roles in the relationships among the diadochoi and between the cities they ruled.

As a ritual supplication is somewhat difficult to define, as it shelters a wide variety of behavior and its associated vocabulary. It is, broadly, a ritual act which

acknowledges and defines respective levels of social power: in begging for aid, mercy, or any combination of the two, the suppliant uses his position of weakness to highlight and hopefully manipulate his potential benefactor's position of strength.²⁹¹ Supplication scenes in epic, whether Homeric or otherwise, by default occupy key positions in the text.²⁹² they are the hinges on which the story swings, in one direction or another. As such, they are an essential aspect of the epic genre as a whole. To date, however, they have been curiously neglected in the study of the *Argonautica*. While individual scenes have been treated in commentaries and character studies,²⁹³ only M. Plantinga has addressed the supplication scenes as something approaching a whole, and her study is incomplete.²⁹⁴ This neglect has left a significant gap in Apollonian scholarship, for a survey of the variations Apollonius essays on this standard Homeric trope more than repays the inquiry. Not only does it illuminate another aspect of Homeric reception in the *Argonautica*, one different from the customary studies of philology and narrative construction,²⁹⁵ but it also reveals the underlying reason for the dissimilarities—and there are many!— that those variations express.

Supplication rituals in Homer fall into two categories: *physical supplication*, in which a suppliant is typically begging for his life or for aid he requires for survival, and *figurative supplication*, in which a suppliant may be begging for anything from a hot

²⁹¹ R. Seaford 1994:70

²⁹² M. Plantinga 1994:139

²⁹³ On the Lemnos episode: J. Clauss 1993; R. Clare 2002: 62–5; on the supplications in Book 2: D.C. Feeney 1991: 69; M. Cuypers 1997: ad. 2.215ff. On the supplications in Book 3: F. Vian 1981: v.2; R. Hunter 1989b, M. Campbell 1993. On the supplications in Book 4: E. Livrea 1973, and F. Vian 1981: v. 3, 47–53.

²⁹⁴ As she writes at p. 106, she has selected only 'scenes of explicit supplication' for her paper; she therefore does not include Aethalides's supplication of Hypsipile, Hera's of Aphrodite, or Aphrodite's of Eros. The boundaries of her study justifies their exclusion, but these scenes are critical to understanding the Apollonian supplication motif as a whole.

²⁹⁵ The bibliography on Apollonian reception of Homer is obviously a weighty one; for relevant bibliography and principal arguments, see particularly, Merkel 1854, Erbse 1953, Giangrande 1967, 1970, 1973a–c, Livrea 1972, Campbell 1981a, Fantuzzi 1988, 2001, and A. Rengakos 1993, 1994a, 2001.

meal to help against his enemies to a fair wind to blow him home.²⁹⁶ In a physical supplication, a suppliant must incorporate specific gestures into his plea: much as Thetis does when beseeching Zeus for glory for her son (*Il.* 1.498-527), a suppliant crouches or kneels and then grasps the knees and chin of his potential benefactor while making his appeal. Again like Thetis, he does not release that grip until his request has been granted (or refused), or unless he is physically pulled loose (usually by a third party).²⁹⁷ The vocabulary employed in such scenes—by either the suppliant or sometimes the narrator—is likewise specific: in order to emphasize that he is at both the knees and the mercy of his potential benefactor, the suppliant may begin his plea with γουνάζομαι or γουνοῦμαι;²⁹⁸ in such scenes, the narrator may likewise describe him as λισσόμενος or another similar term and make specific mention of the fact that he has taken hold of his potential benefactor’s knees.²⁹⁹ In the course of his entreaty, the suppliant also makes mention of Zeus, sometimes but not always in his guise as Ἰκεστός, as a reminder that suppliants are to be treated gently, in accordance with the will of the gods.³⁰⁰ As the vengeance Zeus visits upon mortals who cross his will is well-known, this reminder can double as an implicit threat towards the potential benefactor: if the request is refused, divine vengeance may follow. If all of these aspects—particularly the touch—are managed successfully, it is rare for a physical supplication to be refused.³⁰¹ in humbling

²⁹⁶ Both terms are specific; ‘figurative supplication’ comes from the seminal study on Homeric supplication by J. Gould 1973: 77, ‘physical supplication’ from S. Goldhill 1991: 73.

²⁹⁷ Agamemnon wrenching Adrastus loose from Menelaus at *Iliad* 6. 63 is a good example of this; Lykaon releasing Achilles to beg for mercy at *Iliad* 21.114-116 is an obvious and fatal exception.

²⁹⁸ For example: Lycaon to Achilles at *Il.* 21.74; Leodes to Odysseus at *Od.* 22. 312 and Phemius to Odysseus at *Od.* 22. 344.

²⁹⁹ For λισσόμενος as a specific term of supplication, see A. Corlu (1966), 293.

³⁰⁰ For example: *Il.* 24. 570; *Od.* 13. 213.

³⁰¹ Cairns 1993: 115.

himself so profoundly, the suppliant appeals to the αἰδώς³⁰² of his potential benefactor and therefore leaves him little choice but to accede to his wishes.³⁰³ For this reason physical supplication is not engaged in lightly: the favor asked is always a matter of survival, as in the case of the warriors who beg for their lives on battlefield outside of Troy, or is else something so close to the suppliant's heart that he cannot risk having it denied, such as Priam's plea that the body of his son be returned to him (*Il.* 24. 477f).

Figurative supplication is a less formal and, ultimately, less binding form of the same ritual. Though it too casts Zeus in the role of guardian and avenger of suppliants' rights, it lacks both the physical component and the self-abasement of its more formal counterpart: at no point does the suppliant touch his potential benefactor, and when he asks for help he does so on his own two feet. As Odysseus shows at the Cyclops's cave (*Od.* 9. 269), figurative supplication frequently involves merely proclaiming oneself a suppliant and hoping that this proclamation will be enough. Alas for the unfortunate suppliant, it occasionally is not. Lacking that essential physical appeal to the benefactor's sense of shame and honor, figurative supplications are far easier for a potential benefactor to deny. Without the full weight of physical ritual, the social norms do not demand that the potential benefactor accept the suppliant as his responsibility.³⁰⁴ As such, this type of supplication appears most often in circumstances where the suppliant's life is not immediately at stake. Having lost both his ship and his men and therefore having no other recourse should Arete and her husband refuse him, Odysseus

³⁰² J. Gould 1973: 85-88, presents the concept of αἰδώς as far more specific in tragedy than it is in Homer, but its presence in Homeric supplications is nonetheless marked.

³⁰³ Odysseus's actions in Euripides's *Hecuba* are relevant here. He is unwilling to accede to the request for mercy Hecuba wishes her daughter to make; from Polyxena's response to him at *Hec.* 342-344, we learn how he expresses that unwillingness: he averts his face and hides his hand so that she cannot physically supplicate him.

³⁰⁴ R. Seaford 1994: 70, disagrees, as he reads the ritual as emphasizing the powerlessness of the suppliant over the unenviable position in which a supplication puts a potential benefactor.

throws himself at the knees of the Phaeacian queen (*Od.* 7. 142), but when both ship and men are still in his possession, he keeps his feet before the Cyclops (*Od.* 9. 264-271).³⁰⁵ He uses supplicatory language when addressing Polyphemus (τὰ σὰ γούνα ἰκόμεθ': *Od.* 9. 266-7), but he does not carry out the ritual actions of a physical supplication. Thetis follows a similar pattern in the *Iliad*. When begging that her son be granted glory that will live forever, even if he himself will not, she goes to her knees before Zeus's throne; seeking armor that she knows, for all the skill of its forger, cannot prevent his death, she, like Odysseus, relies only on language rather than on touch: she tells Hephaestus that she has come to his knees (τοῦνεκα νῦν τὰ σὰ γούναθ' ἰκάνομαι: *Il.* 18.457) while sitting beside him. Figurative supplication is therefore, to use Parker's classifications,³⁰⁶ generally reserved for the 'help me' rather than the 'save me' supplications.³⁰⁷

Apollonius effects a number of critical variations on this Homeric trope. In form and function, the ritual of Apollonian supplication is clearly meant to recall that of Homer; in each instance, resonance with Homeric vocabulary abounds, and frequently there is a similarity of situation or a shared circumstance, as well.³⁰⁸ The concept of supplication, however—what, precisely, is expected from both the suppliant and potential benefactor—differs in a variety of ways, from the attitude of the suppliant to the motivation of the potential benefactor to the very principles that govern the ritual itself. Sometimes only one of these elements is at odds with its Homeric model, sometimes all, sometimes none. A survey of the *Argonautica*'s supplication scenes reveals the pattern

³⁰⁵ It is worth noting here that Odysseus was prepared to throw himself at Nausicaa's knees at *Od.* 6. 141-4 but worried that she would balk if he did so.

³⁰⁶ R. Parker 1983: 181.

³⁰⁷ The obvious exception to this at *Il.* 11.22-44, when Peisander and his brother beg Agamemnon to spare them from the relative safety their chariot, seems easily explained: the brothers fear that if they get out of the chariot, Agamemnon will kill them before they have a chance to grasp his knees. This fear is not, as it turns out, unfounded.

³⁰⁸ M. Plantinga 1994: 105-28.

that determines the relationship of each scene to both its Homeric model and, more importantly still, to the other supplication scenes of the poem: geography. Much like the map of the *Argonautica*'s hospitality scenes, that of the poem's supplications matches the map of the early Hellenistic world. Though the intensity of the attitudes, motivations, and principles may heighten as Jason travels east, between Greek and Colchis the underpinnings of each supplication scene are identical and non-Homeric: suspicion, self-importance, neglect of the will of Zeus, self-interest, and the expectation of reciprocity are evident in each, and the importance of blood kin in all but one. On the other hand, exclusively Homeric principles govern Medea and Jason's supplication of Circe on the western side of Italy; likewise, on Drepane, off the northeastern coast of Africa, the principles which direct the actions of Arete and Alcinous are neither Homeric nor Apollonian, but instead something new. Apollonius's variations on Homeric hospitality scenes established the parallels between Jason's world and the Hellenistic; Apollonius's treatment of the *basileus* established the *Argonautica*'s kings as poetic avatars of different kinds of Hellenistic kingship. A similar principle applies to the *Argonautica*'s supplication scenes: the manner in which he varies the elements of Homeric supplications reflects the tenor of the relationship among the diadochoi, between the diadochoi and the Hellenistic cities, and among the cities themselves, as well.

Lemnos

The first supplication scene of the *Argonautica* appears a little more than six hundred lines into the poem, when Jason pauses at Lemnos to beseech Hypsipile for aid. Unenthused about the prospect of spending the night at sea with a wind dying quickly in their sails, the Argonauts anchor their ship in the Lemnian harbor and dispatch their

herald Aethelides to the city, where he cajoles the Lemnian queen into allowing them to stay in Lemnos's harbor (*Arg.* 1. 633-652). This passage introduces five variations on the Homeric tradition. The first is the suspicion with which Hypsipile and her women view her suppliants. Upon first seeing the Argonauts approach the island, the Lemnian women take up arms and march swiftly for the shore, convinced that the Thracians have come to punish them for killing their own husbands and sons (*Arg.* 1.630-9); even when they later realize that the argonauts are unaware of an y crime committed on the island, the Lemnian women remain convinced that should the men learn of it, they will spread the news far and wide and bring disaster down upon Lemnos (*Arg.* 1. 657-66). This attitude is understandable given the circumstances of the Lemnian women, but it nonetheless marks the beginning of a pattern that will appear in various permutations throughout much of the poem: a benefactor's first consideration of a suppliant is tinged with visible suspicion. On Lemnos, that suspicion is a direct result of the actions of the potential benefactor; later, it will require no such understandable foundation.

The second variation on Homeric tradition, a suppliant's sense of self-importance, is perhaps better described as a lack of deliberate humility. On Lemnos it is introduced by the presence of a κήρυκα in a scene of supplication.

Τείως δ' αὖτ' ἐκ νηὸς ἀριστῆες προέηκαν
 Αἰθαλίδην κήρυκα θοόν, τῶπέρ τε μέλυσθαι
 ἀγγελίας καὶ σκῆπτρον ἐπέτραπον Ἑρμείῳ
 σφωιτέροιο τοκῆος . . . (*Arg.* 1. 640-43)

Meanwhile from the ship the heroes sent
 Their swift herald Aethalides, to whose care
 They entrusted their messages and the scepter of Hermes,
 his own father. . .

Heralds in Homer perform a variety of functions—they attend the suitors in Penelope's hall (*Od.* 1. 109) and are later dispatched to bring her gifts (*Od.* 18. 290); they pour out

wine for guests to drink (*Od.* 1. 143) and water with which to wash their hands (*Od.* 1. 146); they ferry messages across a great hall (*Od.* 7. 476-481), from shores to cities (*Od.* 16. 328), across army camps (*Il.* 4. 192), and across battle fields (*Il.* 3. 116); and they act as escorts for official embassies (*Il.* 9.170; 24. 577)—but they do not act as intermediaries between suppliants and potential benefactors. *Il.* 9. 170 (κηρύκων δ' Ὀδίοσ τε καὶ Εὐρυβάτης ἅμ' ἐπέσθων) makes this explicit: Odios and Eurybates have not been entrusted with delivering Agamemnon's words to Achilles; they have been charged only with escorting Odysseus and his companions to Achilles's tent. Likewise, at *Od.* 10.59, Odysseus reports that he took both a herald and a shipmate with him to the house of Aeolus (. . . ἐγὼ κήρυκά τ' ὄπασσάμενος καὶ ἑταῖρον), but he alone begs the god for another satchel of winds to replace the one his shipmates have already loosed. The Argonauts' use of Aithalides in this context is therefore curious.

Another element in this passage offers a possible explanation: the epithet *θεόν*. Strictly in terms of plot, the choice of vocabulary is odd, for Apollonius has no need to describe the Argo's herald as quick: speed is not essential to the success of the Argonauts' purpose at Lemnos. Yet the phrase *κήρυκα θεόν* unavoidably brings to mind another famously swift messenger: Hermes, whom Zeus dispatches on errands throughout *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and who, as *Arg.* 1.642 reveals, is the father of this very Aithalides. The allusion is immediately strengthened by the fact that Aethilades is not merely described as his son, but described as carrying Hermes's scepter. An association of a herald with Hermes itself is not particularly compelling, for it is a common enough parallel, but its context at *Arg.* 1. 640–3 is intriguing. Hermes never appears in the

suppliant to secure the aid he sought. This attitude highlights a clear shift from the Homeric concept of supplication: as Odysseus shows at *Od.* 6. 149 and *Od.* 9. 264–71, Homeric suppliants frequently trust that their status as a suppliant alone will be enough to secure them aid from even a reluctant benefactor. Such assurances do not exist in the Apollonian world. Much of that uncertainty stems from the fact that Apollonian suppliants do not share the semi-sacred status of their Homeric counterparts; the idea that the Argonauts should be welcomed in accordance with the will of the gods is conspicuously absent from both the herald's speech to Hypsipile (as Apollonius elects not to give it) and the subsequent debate among the Lemnian women. As is appropriate for someone whose aid is sought by travelers, Hypsipile advocates stocking the Argo with food, wine, and other gifts that the men may find useful on their voyage (*Arg.* 1. 655–660); however, she does so not because she believes the gods demand that Lemnos offer any assistance it can, but rather in order to give the Argonauts no cause to come inside the city, where they will invariably discover the crime the Lemnian women still hide (*Arg.* 1. 660–665). No mention of the will of Zeus, or even fear of the vengeance of Zeus, is ever made. Likewise, when Polyxo proposes her own plan to the assembly, she too advocates sending out gifts to the Argonauts, since according to her reasoning 'to give is better' (ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄρειον ὀπάσσαι: 1. 676.) Initially this brings to mind the ἀμείνω δ' αἴσιμα πάντα of both Alcinous (*Od.* 6. 310) and Menelaus (*Od.* 15.78), who tell their respective guests that moderation is better,³¹¹ but Polyxo is not merely rewording a host's standard pleasantry. To give in this case is indeed better — for the Lemnian women. As Polyxo explains, by making the Argonauts welcome and by portraying themselves as

³¹¹ For work on how this statement speaks to the quality of the Homeric host in question, see especially A. Baird 1973: 117–21.

hospitable hosts, they have a chance of winning new husbands and bearing new sons to replace the ones they killed (*Arg.* 1.675-696). She does not argue that it is better to give because the gods require it; she argues that it is better to give because a boon will come to them by doing so.

Hypsipile's and Polyxo's reasoning marks the strongest variations on Homer that this supplication scene offers as a whole. It is no longer αἰδώς that governs the transactions between a potential benefactor and a suppliant, but rather self-interest: a benefactor accepts a suppliant only after determining that at the least his own interests will not suffer by doing so and at the most he will gain something by it. Jason and his crew are eventually welcomed not because the Lemnian women fear the consequences of ignoring Zeus's demand that suppliants be treated gently, but only after they have determined that to welcome these strangers is in their best interest. Homeric benefactors not only rarely pause to weigh the consequences of offering help, but occasionally court danger to themselves in granting it.³¹² At Lemnos, however, help is offered only if that potential benefactor sees no risk to himself.

By the end of the convention of Lemnian women, then, four variations on Homeric supplication have appeared: suspicion on the part of the benefactor, lack of humility on that of the suppliant, a neglect of the will of Zeus and a concern for self-interest. Hypsipile's and Polyxo's reasoning marks a brief introduction, too, of the fifth variation on Homeric supplication that Apollonius effects: the idea of reciprocity. While it is erroneous to argue that supplications in Homer are entirely lacking in this quality—at the heart of both Homeric supplication and hospitality scenes is the understanding that

³¹² Achilles, for example, in *Iliad* 24, where he risks the anger of his fellow Achaeans in giving up the body of Priam's son; Ino, in *Odyssey* 5, who invites her father's wrath when she keeps Odysseus from drowning.

one treats a suppliant or guest well in the hopes that he himself will one day be treated the same—benefactors in Homer are not immediately compensated for their help. In accepting a suppliant, they acquire not a benefit but frequently a burden. By accepting Priam into his tent and surrendering Hector's body, for example, Achilles has left himself open to the potential wrath of the other Achaean commanders (*Il.* 24. 650–7); by accepting Odysseus and offering him their help, Arete and Alcinous have invited the wrath of Poseidon and set in motion the events that will culminate in one of their ships and a crew of their sailors turning to stone (*Od.* 13. 161–4). This principle does not hold true in the *Argonautica*. The Lemnian women contemplate turning the Argonauts away precisely *because* the men will be a burden; they eventually accept them only because they see that the men can potentially be a benefit, instead. Such self-interest on the part of the benefactor will appear in a more complicated incarnation for much of the rest of the poem. On Lemnos only the benefactor is aware of the good that may come to her from accepting a suppliant; later, not only will both parties be aware of the potential for benefit, but the suppliant will rely on that benefit to aid him in his request.

The first supplication scene of the poem therefore introduces five of the six variations on Homeric supplication that appear in the *Argonautica*: a benefactor will be visibly suspicious of her suppliant; suppliants no longer necessarily assume an aspect of deliberate humility; the will of Zeus is absent among the reasons a potential benefactor entertains when deciding whether to accept a suppliant into her care; self-interest plays a prominent role in the benefactor's decision to offer aid; and, closely allied with the fourth, immediate reciprocity has entered into the relationship between potential benefactor and suppliant. While it would not be difficult to argue that each variation is

merely the result of the unusual circumstances on the island, the problems with such an interpretation are two. First and most importantly, both the Lemnian women and the Argonauts greet these variations on the Homeric norm with no surprise at all. Their reactions are telling, for they suggest that far from being an anomaly, such behavior is instead expected. Suspicion and arrogance, impiety and self-interest, and the expectation of immediate reciprocity are not merely variations on the norm; they instead are the norm. Moreover, the supplication at Lemnos is only the first, not the only, such scene in the poem. Each of the five variations on Homer will recur in the supplication scenes on Jason's journey east, the next of which is at Thynia.

Thynia

In the second supplication scene of the *Argonautica* (*Arg.* 2. 209-261), Jason and his men encounter the starving Phineus, a former Thracian king cursed for revealing too much of the future to mortals. Unable to eat for the pestilence dripped upon his food, he begs the Argonauts to drive off the Harpies who hound him; despite his assurance that they are appointed his saviors by prophecy, however, he must first formally swear that they will not lose divine favor before they will grant him their help. The five variations on Homer introduced at Lemnos appear again here, though in slightly more prominent guises, and one more, which will become essential at Colchis and on Olympus, first appears.

The first variation on Homer that Lemnos offered, the suspicion with which benefactors view their suppliants, is of equal import on Thynia. On Lemnos, it seemed perhaps endemic to the island and its women; having killed their husbands and sons and waiting for their crime to be discovered, the Lemnian women had good reason to be

suspicious of any travelers who came to their shore. Yet in the rather inexplicable distrust with which the sons of Boreas view Phineus, Apollonius indicates that suspicion, however natural on Lemnos, is also an integral part of supplications in this poem. Phineus asserts at the beginning of his supplication that through Apollo's gift of prophecy he knows all (*Arg.* 2. 212–13); hence he can assert at the end of his speech that the gods have decreed the Boreads as his salvation (*Arg.* 2. 234–5). These assertions, however, are not enough to convince the Argonauts to come to his aid. Sympathetic toward Phineus though they may be, the two Argonauts reveal their suspicion of him by their demand that he formally swear their aid will not render them vulnerable to the wrath of Zeus. The precise reasons for their suspicion are unclear: either the Boreads are uncertain whether Phineus has the power to know the decrees of heaven, and therefore to assert that it is indeed the θεσφατόν (*Arg.* 2. 234) that he be freed from his plague, or else they fear that he is actively lying to them, and is so desperate to escape his own punishment he feels no compunction about visiting the same upon others. Precisely because of its inexplicable ambiguity, their attitude begins to suggest that suspicion of others is simply a normal, and accepted, quality of their world. Furthermore, the manner in which they respond to that suspicion, by demanding information before aid, will recur in later supplication scenes of the poem.

The lack of humility on the part of the suppliant in this passage is likewise familiar from Lemnos. Though Phineus is at the feet of the Argonauts when he begs them for their help, he does not fall to his knees because he thinks it the appropriate position for a suppliant to assume before his benefactors; he falls to his knees because he

is too weakened by starvation and age to stand upright.³¹³ Moreover, though he prefaces his plea with flattery of his potential benefactors—they are, he says, the Πανελλήνων προφερέστατοι (*Arg.* 2. 209)—and refers to himself as an ill-fated, terrified, piteous man (*Arg.* 2. 222-225), he simultaneously calls their attention to the very real power that still remains to him: though he is blind, weak, and helpless on his own threshold, he still retains the gift of omniscience. Likewise, in his very supplication there are subtle threats of what fate awaits the Argonauts if they do not help him as he swears Zeus desires them to. As M. Plantinga notes, he purposefully emphasizes the fate of those who thwart Zeus's will: he refers to the ἀλιτροῖς (*Arg.* 2. 215) for which Zeus metes out vicious punishment, a category of religious offenses into which denial of a suppliant certainly falls. Furthermore, the detailed description of his punishment, following so closely upon his invocation of the god who ordered it (*Arg.* 2. 220-33), suggests to the Argonauts the sort of fate that awaits them if they fail in obedience to Zeus's will.³¹⁴ Neither his claim to omniscience and the favor of Apollo nor his careful choice and juxtaposition of words is the work of a man who believes himself, or portrays himself, completely at the mercy of his potential benefactors. This attitude echoes Jason's at the isle of Lemnos, where he presented himself to Hypsipile as an equal rather than a dependent.

The third and fourth variations on Homer Apollonius introduced at Lemnos are bound up with one another on Thynia: the lack of esteem in which the will of Zeus is held and the dominating role self-interest plays in a benefactor's decision to aid a suppliant. As was true on Lemnos, on Thynia Zeus has lost much of the respect he commanded in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in regard to the treatment of suppliants. Here his name, though

³¹³ M. Plantinga 1994: 108, notes the convenience of this for Phineus's purposes.

³¹⁴ M. Plantinga 1994: 108-109; D.C. Feeney 1991:

present, is also powerless: Phineus specifically entreats the Argonauts by Zeus Ἰκεσίος (Ἰκεσίου πρὸς Ζηνός; *Arg.* 2. 215), but the Argonauts nonetheless initially refuse him aid. The impact of this negligence towards Zeus's name is even more powerful here than it is on Lemnos, for unlike the Lemnian women, who had no example of Zeus's vengeance before them, in Phineus the Argonauts have before them direct evidence of what happens to those who cross divine will. Despite the example of that ruined body and the emphasis Phineus himself places upon it, however, the Argonauts do not immediately rush to his assistance, for like the Lemnian women, Boreas's sons must see themselves protected before agreeing to render aid.³¹⁵ They are not looking for a specific boon, as were Hypsipile and her women, but a similar principle applies to both supplications: unlike potential benefactors in Homer, they consider their own needs before those of their suppliant, and must believe those needs met before they move to act.

Reciprocity, the last of the variations familiar from Lemnos, begins to take a more specific form on Thynia. At Lemnos, Jason and his men were unaware that their very presence on the island was payment for their ship's supplies. The benefactors understood that in granting a favor they themselves could be granted a boon; the suppliants did not. The reverse governs Phineus's supplication on Thynia, for here it is the suppliant who adopts an attitude of active reciprocity. Once Phineus sees the Harpies driven from the shore, he begins to prophesy for the Argonauts. That he, at least, may consider this repayment for the help they have given him seems clear; shortly thereafter, *Arg.* 2. 450

³¹⁵ M. Plantinga 1994: 109 has this to say about this scene: 'However, it could be said that the seer is too successful in describing the wrath of Zeus so that the god-fearing Boreads, despite displaying all the right emotions as a result of the speech, are still hesitant and require an oath from the impatient seer to reassure them.' This interpretation is not incorrect; it is, however, too narrow. The Boreads do not simply hesitate to help him until they are reassured by his oath; they refuse until he swears it. More, it does not seem to be reassurance they seek, but definitive proof of his power.

reveals that prophecy is the coin with which he has bought food and company on Thynia: daily, his neighbors come with a share of food; in return, he shares his counsel with them. His attitude complements that of the Lemnian women and anticipates that of suppliants later in the poem. On Lemnos, Apollonius introduced the idea of a benefactor accepting a suppliant on account of the advantage that suppliant could offer; on Thynia, he introduces the idea of a suppliant, already aided, offering his benefactor an immediate advantage in exchange. The two attitudes will coincide in the supplication scenes later in the poem.

In addition to the five variations already familiar from Lemnos, Thynia sees the beginnings of one more, as well: the importance of kinship ties between suppliant and potential benefactor. Phineus ends his supplication of the Argonauts with this:

οὐδ' ὀθνεῖοι ἀλαλκήσουσιν ἔόντες
 εἰ δὴ ἐγὼν ὁ πρὶν ποτ' ἐπικλυτὸς ἀνδράσι Φινεύς
 ὄλβω μαντοσύνη τε, πατὴρ δέ με γείνατ' Ἀγήνωρ,
 τῶν δὲ κασιγνήτην, ὄτ' ἐνὶ Θρήκεσσιν ἄνασσον,
 Κλειωπάτρην ἔδνοισιν ἐμὸν δόμον ἦγον ἄκουτιν.

Arg. 2. 235-9

Not as strangers do they ward them off,
 if indeed I am that Phineus who was once among men renowned
 for wealth and the gift of prophecy, and if I am the son of my father Agenor,
 and if by my bride-gifts I led their sister Cleopatra to my home as my wife,
 when I ruled among the Thracians.

The simplest reading of οὐδ' ὀθνεῖοι ἀλαλκήσουσιν ἔόντες is as a rather elaborate introduction of himself: Phineus announces that the Boreads will not rescue him as strangers because the Boreads will know his name before they help him, and then goes on to furnish them with his identity. Such a reading is of course acceptable, but the kind of information Phineus elects to give along with his name offers a second possibility, as well. The prophet is specific that he was once the king of Thrace; at *Arg. 1. 213*, Apollonius was specific that the sons of Boreas, too, were Thracian. Phineus and the

Boreads are therefore countrymen; more, they are brothers-in-law, for, as Phineus remarks here at *Arg. 2. 238–9*, he wed their sister Cleopatra when he still ruled the Thracians. Phineus is therefore begging help specifically from his family, not from the Argonauts at large. Though he begins with a general plea to the assembled heroes for salvation, he narrows that plea to his kinsmen with his assertion that Zetes and Kalais, his brothers-in-law, are the ones appointed to save him (*Arg. 2. 234–5*). At this point in the *Argonautica*, it seems entirely possible that coincidence alone drove him to name the only two argonauts to whom he is related as his decreed salvation, but later incidents of a similar principle will make coincidence an unlikely explanation. For οὐδ' ὀθνεῖοι ἀλαλήσουσιν ἔοντες strongly foreshadows the supplications on Colchis and Olympus, where blood ties between suppliant and benefactor are likewise an essential aspect of the ritual of supplication.

Like Lemnos, then, the supplication on Thynia features a suppliant who does not declare himself completely at the power of his potential benefactors and features also benefactors who neglect the authority of Zeus, choosing instead to see that their own interests are protected before agreeing to offer a suppliant aid. Too, the benefactors are initially suspicious of their suppliant, and again the idea of reciprocity emerges between suppliant and benefactor—this time as a concrete exchange of services rendered. Unlike the supplication on Lemnos, however, Phineus's stresses the importance of kinship claims between benefactor and suppliant, a variation on Homeric supplication that will dominate the far side of the Black Sea.

Isle of Ares

The *Argonautica*'s third supplication—that of Jason by the shipwrecked Argus, grandson to Colchis's king—occurs at the Isle of Ares, a day's sail from the Colchian shore. Here again we find all six variations on Homer that Apollonius introduced on Lemnos and Thynia, but four begin to acquire particular importance: the benefactor's regard for his own self-interest, his suspicion of his suppliants, the role of reciprocity, and the importance of blood kin. Moreover, each of these principles begins to adopt a more significant or complex form. The idea of protecting or advancing one's own interests does not simply influence Jason in his role as benefactor, as it did Hypsipile or the Boreads; instead, it defines him entirely. Likewise, while suspicion was assumed at Lemnos and more strongly hinted at on Thynia, on the isle of Ares it is stated outright. The expectation of active reciprocity becomes an acknowledged aspect of supplication on both sides, and the importance of blood kin becomes paramount. None of these variations is new; we have seen each of them before. What is new, however, is the pitch to which they are raised. The principles that govern them find a far more intense expression at the Isle of Ares than at either Lemnos or Thynia. That intensity will govern the supplications on Olympus and at Colchis, as well.

Apollonius introduces the now-familiar variations on Homeric supplication as soon as Jason encounters his cousins. Shipwrecked and desperate, Argus initially seems to follow a Homeric model in his approach of the argonauts: in the name of Zeus, he calls upon them in distress, explains the cause of his trouble, and then asks for all aid and assistance that they can give him—again in the name of Zeus, this time with the added caveat that the god may well be watching (*Arg.* 2. 1123–1133). Though his plea initially seems the near mirror of any Odysseus might have made, a closer look at this scene

reveals that this is not an accurate parallel: Argus's posture, his word choice, and the double invocation instead evoke the now-familiar sense of a suppliant not throwing himself entirely upon his potential benefactor's mercy. Argus and his brothers are in need of clothes, food, and transport home; as such, they are in much the same position as Odysseus in *Od. 7*, when he supplicates Arete for help in returning home. Yet despite the severity of their situation Argus has not thrown himself to the sand at Jason's feet: he is standing instead on his own two. Furthermore, much like Phineus on Thynia, he folds implicit threats into his plea for help: just as the prophet drew attention to his pitiable state as concrete evidence for what happened to those who crossed the will of Zeus, Argus reminds the Argonauts that Zeus is ever watchful.

Bristling as it is with seemingly unreasonable distrust, Jason's response to this plea is likewise governed by a familiar principle: suspicion. It echoes that on both Lemnos and Thynia, though it is considerably stronger than any evinced so far in the poem.

Ταῦτα μὲν αὐτίκα πάντα παρέξομεν εὐμένεοντες·
 ἄλλ' ἄγε μοι κατάλεξον ἐτήτυμον ὀππόθι γαίης
 ναίετε, καὶ χρέος οἶον ὑπεῖρ ἅλα νεῖσθαι ἀνάγει,
 αὐτῶν θ' ὀμείων ὄνομα κλυτὸν ἦδὲ γενέθλην. (*Arg. 2. 1136-1139*)

Being well-minded folk, immediately we will furnish all these things.
 But come, tell me the truth about from what country you hail
 and what business compels you to sail across the sea,
 and your own names and illustrious lineage.

Unlike Nausicaa, who calls at once to her maids to tend to the begging Odysseus (*Odyssey*, 6. 209-210), unlike the sons of Boreas, who comfort Phineus even as they state the price of their aid, unlike even Hypsipile, who at least allows the Argonauts mooring space while debating whether to allow them access to the city, Jason takes no immediate steps to mitigate the sufferings of his new suppliants. Although he tells Argus that he and

his men will immediately (ἀντίκα: *Arg.* 2.1136) give them all the help they ask for, *immediately* appears to be a somewhat nebulous concept for Jason: he does not send his men running for food and clothes, but instead first demands that Argus tell him from what country he and his brothers hail, what names they are known by, why they are traveling, and to what race they belong—and he makes a point of ordering that Argus tell the truth (ἐτήτυμον: *Arg.* 2.1137). Though no information is ever required from Homeric suppliants before they have eaten or rested, though no such information was required from Jason at Lemnos before he had eaten and rested, here aid is only rendered after one's name and business are known, and one's name and business may be considered suspect. Furthermore, in this kind of aid that is promised but not yet given, there lies the unspoken possibility that, should the potential benefactor find fault with the suppliant's response, aid may not be rendered at all.

The difference from Homer is therefore strongly marked. Nausicaa's response to a shipwrecked sailor on a riverbank is to see him fed, bathed, clothed, and on his way to her city without ever knowing his name or purpose; Jason's is to demand to see the poor man's papers. The difference from the earlier Apollonian supplication scenes is likewise clear. Hypsipile knows neither Jason's name nor his business on her waters when she sends word that he and his crew may land,³¹⁶ nor, for that matter, when she offers him both herself and her throne. The distance from the episode at Thynia is less dramatic but still significant: though the sons of Boreas do indeed require a promise that they will not

³¹⁶ Hypsipile's initial ignorance of Jason's name and quest is evident only later in the Lemnos episode. At *Arg.* 1. 648, Apollonius skips over Aethilades's speech with 'but what need have I to speak at length of the words of Aethilades?' which leaves us uncertain as to what, precisely, those words (μύθους) were. It is only when Hypsipile later orders her own herald to convey her greetings to whoever may be in charge of the expedition (ὅστις στόλου ἡγεμονεύει: *Arg.* 1. 704) and when upon meeting her Jason declares he must refuse her offer of a permanent home because of unspecified harsh trails (λυγροὶ . . . ἄεθλοι: *Arg.* 1. 841) that it becomes clear she does not yet know the entire tale.

suffer for helping Phineus, they first swear that they will help their brother-in-law as soon as they receive his word that it is in truth safe to do so. Jason's demand of Argus for information before even the promise of aid is grounded in the suspicion already at work on Lemnos and Thynia, but on the Isle of Ares that suspicion is raised to a considerably higher pitch.

The importance of blood bonds between benefactor and suppliant likewise takes on a more important role. Jason's response to Argus's name and purpose neatly exemplifies the point: 'Since it is true that you are kin on my father's side, you pray that we, well-minded, will succor you in your plight.' (Ἦ ἄρα δὴ γνωτοὶ πατρώιοι ἄμμιν ἐόντες λίσσεσθ' εὐμενέοντας ἐπαρκέσσαι κακότητα. *Arg.* 2. 1160 –1161). Even once Argus has explained who he and his brothers are and how they came to be shipwrecked, Jason does not offer them help merely because they have now satisfied his curiosity, but only because, as nephews to Jason's grandfather, Argus and his brothers are family (γνωτοὶ πατρώιοι ἄμμιν). The positioning of the phrase and its attendant vocabulary are critical to this point. Jason does not promise his cousins aid and then explain why he has offered it; instead he offers the explanation of why he will help them (Ἦ ἄρα δὴ γνωτοὶ πατρώιοι ἄμμιν ἐόντες. . .) before intimating that he will (. . . λίσσεσθ' εὐμενέοντας ἐπαρκέσσαι κακότητα), effectively putting them on notice that the condition of their shared bloodline is what governs their reasonable expectation of his aid. The use of εὐμενέοντας, in particular, creates an atmosphere of uneasy ambiguity: had Argus not been a relative, would the argonauts still have been such 'well-minded folk' towards these sailors burdened by misfortune? Jason's use of Ἦ ἄρα δὴ suggests that they would not: *since it is true* that Argus and his brothers are kin on his father's side, they can

therefore ask for assistance with the assumption that it will be rendered to them. As Jason proved himself willing to at least listen to their pleas before he knew that they were his second cousins, his response does not imply that only kin are in a position to ask for favors, but does strongly suggest that potential benefactors are more likely to offer aid to blood kin than they are to others—and that, consequently, blood kin will be the most successful suppliants in a time of need. Much like the idea of requiring a name before granting help, this is a sharp break from the Homeric norm of supplication scenes. It is not, however, a sharp break from Phineus's plea on Thynia, for it echoes his appeal to the Boreads. It will find many resonances later in the poem.

These blood kin of Jason, destitute and desperate as they may be, nonetheless have the advantage of the Argonauts, for they embody the sixth principle of supplication that governed Phineus's supplication on Thynia and which Apollonius imbues with particular importance on the Isle of Ares: the role of reciprocity in interactions between benefactors and suppliants. On the far side of the Black Sea, one grants favors only to those from whom one can expect an immediate favor in return. Fortunately for Argus and his brothers, Jason is in desperate need of the favor they can offer him. He accepts them as suppliants because they are his blood, true enough, but more importantly still he accepts them as suppliants because they are the grandsons of the king he has come to Colchis seeking. As Jason himself immediately recognizes, these long-lost cousins are the help from the bitter sea that Phineus promised (*Arg.* 2. 388). Family ties aside, a strong sense of self-benefit therefore governs Jason's concession to help them, because without Argus and his brothers the Argonauts have no way of getting to Aetes's court.

Hinted at as soon as Jason realizes that his encounter with his cousins fulfills one

of Phineus's prophecies, his reason for offering aid is confirmed during the conversation he has with them after their joint sacrifice and feasting, when he encourages them to pay back their debt by taking him and his men to Aetes's court.

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ὄδε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐς Ἑλλάδα μαιομένοισιν
κῶας ἄγειν χρύσειον ἐπίρροθοι ἄμμι πέλεσθε
καὶ πλόου ἡγεμονῆες, ἐπεὶ Φρίξιοιο θυηλάς
στέλλομαι ἀμπλήσων, Ζηνὸς χόλον Αἰολίδησιν. (*Arg.* 2. 1192-95)

But come, since we are eager to bring the golden fleece to Hellas,
you yourselves in turn now give us a hand and be the navigators
of our voyage, since I am to atone for the intended sacrifice of Phrixus,
the cause of Zeus's wrath against the Aiolids.

That Jason considers this service to be a repayment is explicit; his request comes only after he reminds his cousins that he has already given them the help they sought (*Arg.* 2. 1179-1191). Having noted that Zeus saved their father from a disaster at sea and has just rescued them from the same,³¹⁷ and having further reminded Argos that through the grace of the Argonauts the Phrixides now have a good stout ship beneath them to boot, Jason opens his proposal with, 'But come, you yourselves *in turn* now give us a hand and be the navigators for our voyage . . .' (ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ὄδε καὶ αὐτοὶ . . . ἐπίρροθοι ἄμμι πέλεσθε καὶ πλόου ἡγεμονῆες). As was true with his initial offer of aid, it is the small words which are telling: the ὄδε here carries the implication of consequence. He has done his cousins a good turn; he expects now that they will therefore do him another. From Argos's reply, it is clear that such an expectation is standard practice: he does not object to the swift repayment of his debt, only to the fact that he believes the quest will get Jason, the Argonauts, and possibly himself and his own brothers killed (*Arg.* 2. 1200-1215). This idea of immediate repayment stands at a considerable distance from the supplications of

³¹⁷ Jason's emphasis on Zeus here initially seems odd, since he appears spectacularly unconcerned with the role of Zeus as pertaining to the status of suppliants while Argos is begging him for aid. But as *Argos* obviously attaches significant weight to it, seeing as he called upon Zeus twice, Jason zeroes in on the argument designed to appeal to his audience.

Homer, where any expectation of repayment is nebulous at best. It stands at a similar distance, too, from the episode at Thynia. The Argonauts were there repaid for their help with the prophecy that enabled them to reach Colchis, but that prophecy was freely offered by Phineus, without any prompting from his benefactors.

Its distance from the episode at Lemnos deserves some discussion, for at first glance the scenes seem bound by strong similarities. On Lemnos, the women invite Jason and his crew to land in hopes that the Argonauts will assume the roles of their murdered husbands; in Colchis, Jason gives Argus and his brothers safe passage in hopes that they will lead him to their grandfather. In both, it is obvious that the benefactor's offer is liberally laced with self-interest, and in both the benefactor is in a position to gain more than the suppliant. Though Jason and his men could easily drop anchor in the harbor and weather a night at sea, Hypsipile and her women are unlikely to find another crop of potential husbands washing ashore with the tide; though Argos and his brothers could, if pressed, find another way home, Jason is unlikely to happen upon a second *ὄνειρον* from the bitter sea. While the initial circumstances and motivations of these scenes are similar, however, what lies at the heart of each is not.

The key difference between these supplications at Lemnos and the Isle of Ares is the expectation of active reciprocity. Jason offers his cousins aid because he knows the precise favor they can offer him in return: piloting the Argo to the Phasis and introducing the Argonauts to Aetes. This favor requires conscious cooperation on the part of the Phrixides, for they must first choose to bestow it on Jason and his men and then take steps to see it carried out. The Lemnian women, on the other hand, never expect that the Argo's crew will consciously offer compensation for their help. While each strategy

Hypsipile and her followers conceive is designed primarily for their own benefit, that benefit is entirely independent of the Argonauts electing to repay them. According to Hypsipile's first plan, the Lemnian women intend to send sweet gifts of food and wine to the shore where the Argonauts are waiting. Doing so would give the men no reason to come inland for supplies and would therefore insure that the secret the Lemnian women share—that they slaughtered their husbands and sons—stays hidden (*Arg.* 1. 657-666). The preservation of that secret would be a benefit to them, certainly, but that benefit is a consequence only of their own actions, not those of the Argonauts. Hypsipile does not propose offering supplies with the condition that, upon receipt, the Argo immediately quit the Lemnian waters; she does not even propose offering supplies and then demanding that the Argo quit their waters as fair return for a freshly-stocked hold. She merely hopes that, once in possession of their desired supplies, the Argonauts will go away. In this scenario, the Argonauts remaining on the shore would therefore not be a service Jason chose to perform in fair exchange for the Lemnian women's help, merely a natural result of the course of action the women elected to pursue.

The same principle governs Polyxo's second plan, which the women eventually choose to put into action. Adorning herself with her best jewels and finery, Hypsipile invites Jason ashore, spins a pretty web of lies, and then offers her women as wives for his Argonauts and her island as a kingdom for him (*Arg.* 1. 793-834). As was true with the first plan the Lemnian women discussed, their second would benefit them greatly, but again that benefit is not couched in terms of repayment for help already given. Hypsipile does not tell Jason that because the Lemnian women are willing to help his crew, they should therefore settle on Lemnos and watch their new wives grow fat with many babies;

she tells him that it is foolish for him to hang back from the city and ask for only a little aid when he could have a wife, land, and a kingship for the taking. She presents the acquiring of all three as a choice he now has, not a payment he must tender. The manner in which she and her women later bid farewell to Jason and his crew strengthens this idea considerably. Far from thinking that Jason has somehow cheated her in deciding to leave, Hypsipile instead repeats her offer: should the Argonauts again pass Lemnos on their way home, Jason is still welcome to take over its rule (*Arg.* 1. 888-98). No such principle applies to Jason's first encounter with Aetes's grandsons. Jason expects immediate recompense; Argus expects—or is at least unsurprised by the request—to give it.

In Jason's meeting with the Phrixides, then, Apollonius manages two tasks. He reaffirms the six variations of supplication already familiar from the first two supplication scenes; more importantly, he introduces the idea that the first encounter with the Colchians raises four of them to paramount importance and strengthens the qualities of all. The geography of this introduction is critical. The initial variations on Homer appeared first on Lemnos, putting the *Argonautica's* audience on notice that the norms familiar from Homer did not govern even the familiar part of Jason's world. The supplication scene at Thynia presented those same principles in a different guise, to indicate that no matter Jason's geographic location, social interactions were governed by principles still familiar to him from home—with the addition of the importance of blood kin. On the Isle of Ares, a land that is close to but not yet part of Colchis, Apollonius continues this pattern with yet more elaborate trappings for the same principles of supplication. Vague suspicion narrows to a pointed demand for information; a disregard

for Zeus Ἰκέσιος strengthens into a disregard for all suppliants save family; the benefactor's regard for his own self-interest becomes the benefactor's expectation of immediate repayment for his help. This innovation takes full effect when the argonauts soon thereafter reach the *κολχίδα γαῖαν*, for each of newly powerful variations appears in the some or all of the supplication scenes in Colchian lands. With that effect, and in the manner of its expression, we find the first true resonance with the Hellenistic kingdoms.

κολχίδα γαῖαν: Olympus and Colchis

Before the supplication scenes themselves are addressed, a word must be said about the geographic region involved in this 'Colchian land' (*κολχίδα γαῖαν*: *Arg. 2. 1277*) of which Ancaeus speaks. As presented by Apollonius, the geography of Colchis is straightforward: Aetes's lands start at the mouth of the Phasis river, with his city a good distance upriver (*Arg. 2. 1266-1270*). The geographic frame of Colchis within the poem is somewhat more complex. Book 2 closes with Argos announcing that the argonauts have at last reached the *κολχίδα γαῖαν*; Book 3 then opens on Olympus, with Hera and Athena debating their best course of action in regards to the argonauts, and shortly thereafter Olympus bleeds back into Colchis as Eros wings down from Zeus's orchard towards Aetes's hall. This arrangement puts Olympus in a somewhat nebulous geographic position. Though the path Eros follows to the feasting hall (3.160-166) makes it clear that Olympus is nowhere near the Black Sea, its position in the narrative nonetheless strongly associates it with Aetes's kingdom. So, too, do the two supplication scenes that take place among the gods: that of Aphrodite by Hera, and of Eros by Aphrodite. In each of them appear the familiar variations on Homeric

supplication; like that on the Isle of Ares, each revolves primarily around suspicion, self-interest, reciprocity, and the importance of blood kin.

Suspicion is perhaps the most obvious of the set, and it plays a significant role in the most important supplication scene in the poem: that of Eros by Aphrodite. He does not require a name from her before promising his aid, but he does require information: namely, a vow that she will not cheat him out of his promised reward. For despite hugs, kisses, and much pinching of cheeks, Aphrodite's son does not immediately agree to do his mother's bidding. She must first swear an oath that he will indeed be given his prize (*Arg.* 3. 151-153) before he agrees to shoulder his quiver, pick up his bow and set off for Aetes's palace. Of particular interest here is his initial reaction to her promise that his services will win him a gilded cobalt ball: he seizes her chiton and beseeches her in turn to give him the ball not after he comes back from Colchis, but instead right this very minute (3. 145-148). Though such behavior initially seems to be nothing more than the antics of a selfish little boy—'But I want it *now*, Mama!' the child at the toy store wails in despair—his reaction to his mother's response belies that appearance: he is reassured and calmed not by a promise that the toy is his, and all he must do is earn it, but instead by Aphrodite's specific vow that she will not cheat him out of his prize.

Ἴστω νῦν τόδε σεῖο φίλον κάρη ἠδ' ἐμὸν αὐτῆς·
ἢ μὲν τοι δῶρόν γε παρέξομαι οὐδ' ἀπατήσω,
εἰ κεν ἐνισκίμψης κούρη βέλος Αἰήταο. (*Arg.* 3. 151-153)

Let now your dear head and mine be witness:
I shall give you a gift and shall not deceive you,
If you will fire an arrow at Aetes's daughter.

The choice of vocabulary here is critical, for it intimates that in pestering his mother to go fetch him the ball on the spot, Eros is not simply expressing a child's desire for immediate gratification; he is instead worried he will not be paid for services rendered.

This is somewhat curious, in that it suggests either that Eros has been cheated in such a way before or that he is at least well aware that he could be. It also alters the reading of the scene significantly. Instead of watching a child throwing a rather adorable tantrum, we are faced with a mercenary demanding his payment before he has ever taken on the job—a payment which, though it has been promised, he fears he will not get.

Modern scholarship tends to gloss over this point, as it focuses almost exclusively on the apparent deception Aphrodite carries out in this scene. Campbell,³¹⁸ Hunter,³¹⁹ and Fraenkel³²⁰ all make much of the fact that despite this vow Aphrodite takes not to cheat him out of his reward, it is unlikely her son will ever get his marvelous toy at all, that instead, upon returning home, he will find his mother sitting at ease in her boudoir, braiding ribbons into her hair while professing that she has no idea *what* he is on about. She promised she would *ask* Adrasteia about a toy, certainly, but have it ready to give to him . . . ? There is of course much appeal in this interpretation, derived in great part from sheer unholy glee at the thought of Eros getting his come-uppance. There are potential hints of its veracity in the text, as well. As Campbell and Frankel both point out, there is marvelous irony in hearing the phrase οὐδ' ἀπατήσω on Aphrodite's lips, as her history as a serial liar is well attested:³²¹ despite any promise she might make, she cannot be automatically trusted. Strengthening this idea considerably is that this characteristic of deception has already appeared in *Argonautica* as well: the first time a character speaks of her, it is to remind Jason of the treacherous assistance (δολόεσσαν ἀρωγήν: *Arg.* 2.

³¹⁸ M. Campbell 1994 ad 152f, 1983:19-20; this citation serves for ref. to M.C. for the rest of this paragraph and the next.

³¹⁹ R. Hunter 1989 ad 152f.; this citation serves for ref. to R.H. in the rest of this paragraph and the next.

³²⁰ H. Frankel 1969: 336; this citation serves for ref. to H.F. in the rest of this paragraph and the next.

³²¹ See, in particular, Gow-Page 1965 on 1093-94.

423) she can offer. Furthermore, Apollonius describes her as μειδιώσα (*Arg.* 3. 150) immediately before she swears on Eros's head and her own that she has no intention of deceiving him. As Hunter rightly notes, Aphrodite is frequently, and particularly, dangerous while smiling. Taken together with his argument that since Apollonius never writes of Eros receiving the promised δῶρόν Eros likely never gets it, the context creates an atmosphere of justified suspicion: Aphrodite is, by nature, deceitful, and as Hunter says 'we may suspect' that she has no intentions of honoring the bargain she struck with her son at all. If we accept this interpretation, then any suspicion on Eros's part would be directed solely at his mother, with justified cause. It would not be endemic to all supplications on this side of the world.

The greatest problems with this interpretation are two. The first is that Aphrodite's oath is modeled on that of Apollo in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, in which Apollo swears that if Hermes teaches him his skill at the lyre, he will shower the younger god with beautiful gifts and never deceive him until the end of time (δώσω τ' ἀγλαὰ δῶρα καὶ ἐς τέλος οὐκ ἀπατήσω: *Hymn to Hermes*, 1. 462). Though Hunter and Campbell both note this, neither addresses the immediate difficulty it raises in the context of the *Argonautica*: the allusion suggests that Aphrodite is telling her son the truth. On its own, of course, that suggestion is hardly proof; one could easily argue that Apollonius drew the parallel precisely to create an atmosphere of uneasy ambiguity, where the reader is no more certain of Aphrodite's intentions than Eros. Such an interpretation, however, speaks directly to the second problem with assuming that Aphrodite is lying: her initial response to Hera, as well as the way in which she deals with Eros, suggests otherwise. Aphrodite may well be an accomplished serial liar, but she is an accomplished serial liar

who is clearly frightened of her son, so much so that she says she dares not discipline him, either in public or in private, for fear that he will act on the threats he has made against her while angry (*Arg.* 3. 96-99). Her wariness of him is shortly thereafter echoed in the promise she makes Hera and Athena: she does not tell them that she will go find Eros and call upon him to poison Medea, as Hera asks (τεῶ ἐπικέκλεο παιδί: *Arg.* 3.85); instead, she promises to persuade and coax him (πειρήσω καί μιν μιλίξομαι.³²² *Arg.* 3. 105) into doing the same. Her choice of vocabulary strongly suggests that she is uncomfortable issuing commands to her child; the manner in which she later speaks to him affirms this impression. Though when she first finds him in Zeus's orchard she addresses him as an unspeakable brat (ἄφατον κακόν: *Arg.* 3. 129), there is no real force behind that epithet, for her subsequent chastisement of him is both mild and brief (*Arg.* 3. 129-130). Once she has offered him the terms of her bargain, her manner of denying him his reward before his service is equally gentle. Though Eros's reaction to the promise of a pretty toy is violent—he seizes and he tugs, and he will shortly toss his knucklebones into his mother's lap (or pocket) with the curiously strong βάλε (*Arg.* 3. 155)³²³—Aphrodite's response to such behavior is not: she speaks with gentle words (ἀγανοῖσιν . . . μύθοισιν: *Arg.* 3: 148-149) and gathers him in for hugs and kisses. Even her threat of the consequences of disobedience are far from harsh: she does not tell him that if he fails or delays he will lose the ball, merely that in such a case the χάρις will be greatly diminished (3.143-144).³²⁴ This laxity is not, as Campbell asserts, an example of

³²² It's worth noting that this is the same verb used of the herald's sweet-talking of Hypsipile at *Arg.* 1. 650.

³²³ R. Hunter 1989 ad 3. 155 notes the odd vehemence of this.

³²⁴ The use of χάρις here is interesting, as it's the same word Aphrodite uses at *Arg.* 3. 82, when telling Hera she expects no favor in return for her help. Is Eros going to get another, less thrilling toy instead?

bad mothering;³²⁵ rather, it is proof that the goddess whose wrath drove the Lemnian women to murderous jealousy and upon whom the entire fate of Jason's expedition hangs feels the needs to step carefully around her son.

That excessive caution considered, it therefore seems rather unlikely that Aphrodite is deliberately plotting to cheat her son of his promised toy. The οὐδ' ἀπατήσω may originally strike the reader as ironic, but its context demands that it be read as fact. If Aphrodite is, as she tells Hera, worried that Eros will take vengeance on her for a scolding, it stands to reason she would not court his justifiable wrath by breaking a solemn vow. Thus the difficulty in assuming Eros an impish boy about to be tricked by his infamously deceptive mother. It is true that in this scene she has managed to trick him, but the trick is that he is for once he is obedient to her will, a circumstance which neither Hera nor she was initially confident she could effect (*Arg.* 3. 25-27; *Arg.* 3. 91-92). Her success at doing so, not her delight in lying, is the reason she smiles as she swears Eros will get the toy she promised. For while the Sapphic, smiling Aphrodite is indeed a dangerous force with which to reckon, this μειδιόωσα at *Arg.* 3. 150 is a clear echo of Hera's, not fifty lines before (*Arg.* 3.106), where Hera, too, is smiling at having been granted the favor for which she asked.³²⁶ Eros's initial suspicion of being cheated is therefore not specifically associated with Aphrodite's notorious talent for lies—if anything, he would have cause to assume that she would be more honest with him than most—but is instead of a more general nature. It shares a strong resonance with the first

³²⁵ M. Campbell 1983: 19-20. He rightly notes here that Aphrodite cannot afford to be uncivil to Eros; why he doesn't reconcile the two ideas is unclear.

³²⁶ R. Hunter 1989 makes a good case at n106-7 for Hera's smile indicating deceit: at *Il.* 14.222-3 Hera also smiles after having tricked Aphrodite. The context of this scene in the *Argonautica*, however, is I think more important than the parallel: Hera has already gotten the favor she asked of her fellow goddess; she therefore has no cause to tell her flattering lies in an effort to butter her up. I hence agree with Campbell 1994 at n107, who describes it merely as a smile of 'superiority and self-assurance . . . blended with satisfaction at having got one's own way.'

initial scene Jason and Argos share, for it, too, indicates that even those who have neither a cause nor the ability to lie cannot necessarily be trusted, even when (perhaps particularly when) they are asking for help.

This scene between Aphrodite and Eros also stresses the importance of blood bonds between suppliants and potential benefactors. That the two are always related may, at first, seem coincidental rather than deliberate. Almost all the characters Apollonius introduces on Olympus and Colchis are family; it therefore stands to reason that suppliants and benefactors must needs be kin. Yet is worth noting that in this very tangled web of familial relations, it is always the kinsman with the strongest blood bond to the benefactor who does the supplicating. Jason is Aeetes's great nephew; as such, he should therefore have a better-than-average chance at securing aid from the Colchian king. Nonetheless, he lets Aeetes's grandson speak first on his behalf: in addition to already knowing the man, Argos is the closer relation. Likewise, though their leader is technically a cousin of Chalciopé's, and though he was chosen *as* their leader because of his ability to sweet-talk foreigners into friends, when the argonauts find themselves in need of the princesses' help they send not Jason but Chalciopé's son to plead their case. In turn, though it is his aunt's help he needs, Argos goes instead to his mother to ask her to beg Medea for help; Chalciopé in turn then beseeches her sister. The same idea holds true on Olympus. When in need of Eros's assistance in bewitching Medea, Hera and Athena do not go hunting for him in the orchards of Olympus themselves. They instead approach Aphrodite and ask her to beg help from him in their place. This instance is particularly telling, since Aphrodite explicitly states at *Arg.* 3. 91-92 that Eros would be

far more likely to obey Athena or Hera than he would her.³²⁷ All of these supplications, then, at both Colchis and on Olympus, are subject to the same principle introduced on Thynia and echoed in Jason's first encounter with his cousins: blood kin are the most successful suppliants in time of need.

Self-interest and reciprocity take on an essential role in the supplications on Olympus and at Colchis as well, for the idea of immediate return on favors granted is what governs every supplication in both. More, the suppliants themselves know this: while beseeching help from potential benefactors, the suppliants explicitly state the favors they will offer in return should their own be granted. This is a slight twist on Jason's first encounter with his cousins. Suppliants and benefactors no longer merely assume that an immediate favor will be demanded and granted in turn, as do Argos and Jason, respectively; that favor is instead offered by the suppliant while beseeching help. It is, perhaps, an effort to avert that unspoken possibility of refusal evoked with Jason's first demand that Argos tell him the truth: if they can offer something of value to their benefactor, their chances of winning aid substantially increase. Once Jason and his crew eventually arrive at the palace of Aetes, for example, Argos tells his grandfather that, in exchange for the fleece, the argonauts are prepared to put their military skills at Aetes's command and stay in Colchis until they see his kingdom strengthened. Jason adds that, in addition, he will spread word of Aetes's godlike renown throughout Greece when he and the fleece return home (*Arg.* 3. 350-355; 391-392). Soon after, Chalcioppe, ever the loving sister, offers not to come back from the dead and haunt Medea into madness if Medea helps her sons (*Arg.* 3. 703-704); after Medea has agreed to do what she can for

³²⁷ Campbell 1994: 86 writes this off as a weak attempt on Aphrodite's part to pass the buck ; considering her very real worry over Eros's power, a more serious reading of it may be called for.

her nephews, Jason makes her almost the same promise that he made Aeetes: if she does as he asks, he will spread word of her fame throughout his homeland (*Arg.* 3. 990-992).³²⁸ And Medea, likewise, later offers to fetch the fleece for the argonauts, but only if Jason gets her out of Colchis and swears to honor the vows he made to her at Hecate's shrine (*Arg.* 4. 87-91). In each of these cases, there is no sense of help being rendered for the promise of an unspecified return at some unspecified date. Instead, each involves a detailed bargain which benefits both sides—if not immediately, then at a specific point in the future.

Olympus, too, is subject to this law. Though Aphrodite specifically tells Hera that she will not ask for a favor (*χάρις*: *Arg.* 3. 82) in return if she can convince Eros to bewitch Medea,³²⁹ there is nonetheless a hint that Hera will indeed be making her an equal reparation, whether or not Aphrodite specifically requires it. As the goddesses bid her farewell, Hera takes Aphrodite's hand and tells her not to fret over her son's impudence, for he will change his ways hereafter (*Arg.* 3. 106-110). The touch may or may not be significant; while the vocabulary of Hera touching her gently on the hand (*τὴν δ' Ἥρη ῥαδινηῆς ἐπεμάσσατο χειρός*: *Arg.* 3. 106) is inconsistent with that of the formal swearing of oaths in the *Argonautica*,³³⁰ it is the only time that the goddesses

³²⁸ Similar as it is to the promise Jason makes to Aeetes, this is not precisely *la même promesse* of Vian 1974: 92. Jason offers Aeetes, proud of his divine parentage and martial talents, the chance to have another land know of his god-like renown (*Arg.* 3. 392); he offers Medea, sick with worry over her name and reputation, the chance to have a country know of her name and glory (*Arg.* 3. 992). Both are clever bits of persuasion on Jason's part, and yet another example that Jason is ἀμηχανέων only when he does not know what weakness of his audience he should, or can, play to. This quality is a strong if very odd echo of Medea in Euripides, where she likewise takes the measure of her audience and then adjusts her supplications accordingly.

³²⁹ The very fact that Aphrodite says this - as though it is an odd and unusual thing to do, this granting of a favor without naming one in return - strengthens the argument considerably.

³³⁰ For example: εἶλέ τε χειρός δεξιτερῆς (*Arg.* 3. 1066-1067) and χεῖρα παρασχεδὸν ἦραπε χειρὶ δεξιτερῆν (*Arg.* 4. 99-100), but see the ἐλὼν χερὶ χεῖρα γέροντος at *Arg.* 2. 243, where an offer of help is also implied but not formally sworn - and involves a scene of supplication, to boot. At n106-7, R. Hunter 1989 associates Hera's handclasp instead with 'friendly reconciliation,' citing Telamon's clasping of

touch, and Hera is not particularly well-known for impulsive gestures of comfort. Moreover, it is a clear echo of Hephaestus taking Thetis's hand at *Iliad* 18. 423, as he asks her what favor he can grant her; considering how strongly the setting and circumstance of this scene echoes its Homeric counterpart, it seems foolish to dismiss so obvious an allusion. The ambiguity of Hera's words allows for two interpretations:

Οὐτω νῦν Κυθήρεια τόδε χρέος ὡς ἀγορεύεις
 ἔρξον ἄφαρ· καὶ μὴ τι χαλέπτεο μηδ' ἐρίδαινε
 χρομένη σὺ παιδί, μεταλλήξει γὰρ ὀπίσσω. (*Arg.* 3. 108-110)

Cytheria, perform this task now as you say,
 And do not be angry, or strive angrily with
 your son. He will not vex you hereafter.

This is either, as Hunter argues, a casual, ultimately meaningless reassurance between mothers,³³¹ or else, more subtly, it is a promise to see to Eros's behavior. Aphrodite has already stated that Hera and Athena are the only Olympians who have any influence over Eros (*Arg.* 3. 91-92); combined with the uncharacteristic handclasp and its Homeric precedent with Thetis and Hephaestus, the assurance that Eros's charming of Medea will end Aphrodite's problems with Eros seems a promise that Hera will use that influence for Aphrodite's benefit. The established pattern of immediate recompense holds true in the other supplication between the gods as well. When Aphrodite goes to ask her son to poison Medea with love for Jason, this same pattern appears yet again: she does not try to win Eros's aid by making vague promises of gratitude or future leniency; she instead promises him that famous gold-and-cobalt ball, to be received immediately upon returning (*Arg.* 3. 137-143).

Jason's hand in apology at *Arg.* 1.1330 as precedent. This ignores, I think, the stronger parallel with the argonauts and Phineus, and also the fact that Aphrodite and Hera are not at odds in this passage.

³³¹ R. Hunter 1994 ad 107ff.

There is an ancillary characteristic that intrigues. Although the requisite return favors are offered and agreed upon before aid is ever given in Colchis, in the course of the poem we see only one of those return favors specifically fulfilled, and get only a hint of the execution of one other. The lasting irony is that it is Medea and Aphrodite, said to be the sly ones weaving guile, who are also the only ones to visibly honor the bargains that they make. Medea's fulfillment of her suppliant vow is immediate and absolute: she promises Jason the fleece if he will take her with him on the Argo (*Arg.* 4. 83–92), and as soon as they reach the grove she immediately drugs the guardian serpent to allow Jason to fetch down the shining wool (*Arg.* 4. 156–160). The proof of Aphrodite's fulfillment of her promise is more indirect. She promises Eros his toy—also, it should be noted, golden and shining³³²—if he does her bidding, and while Apollonius never, as a variety of scholars have pointed out, describes that transaction taking place, Claus's interpretation of the bargain she strikes offers the intriguing possibility that we do in fact see it, nonetheless. Assuming, as did Lendle³³³ and Pendergraft,³³⁴ that the five-zoned ball represents either the world or the entire cosmos, Claus argues that putting such a gift into Eros's hands is analogous to putting the world under the charge of this madcap and capricious god.³³⁵ If we accept his interpretation of what granting Eros such a toy entails, then we can take the argument further: the chaos that follows in the wake of Medea being poisoned by his arrow would seem a fair argument for proof that Eros received his

³³² For the ball as an Olympian parallel of the fleece, see T. Klein 1980.

³³³ O. Lendle 1979: 493–5

³³⁴ M. Pendergraft 1991: 95–102. For more interpretations of the ball see T. Klein 1980, R. Hunter 1989: ad 3. 315; P. Kyriakou 1995: 316–7; M. Cambell 1994: ad 135–41; D. Nelis 1992: 167–8; and V. Knight 1995: 295.

³³⁵ J. Claus 1997: 154

promised reward. For once Medea is struck, it is clearly ἔπος that directs the action of the poem—not only at Colchis, but during much of the voyage home, as well.³³⁶

Yet although only Medea and Aphrodite appear to honor their bargains in the course of the poem, this does not necessarily mean that Apollonius is forcing the interpretation that the others go unfulfilled. Apollonius is in fact suggesting quite the contrary: those bargains are indeed honored, merely not in the way either the potential benefactor originally understood or the suppliant necessarily intended. Jason makes three promises to Medea in exchange for her help: he will marry her, should she ever appear on his doorstep on the other side of the Black Sea; even if she stays forever in Colchis, he and his crew will spread her fame throughout Greece when they return; and the Argonauts' families – indeed, all Greeks – will honor her as a goddess, should she ever come to their country. Immediate appearances aside,³³⁷ Jason honors all of these vows. He swore to marry Medea; though the circumstances and reasons for that marriage are hardly what he promised, it is not a promise on which he reneges, when Arete's herald tells him it is the only reason for which Alcinous will keep her from her father (*Arg.* 4. 1125ff).

The fulfillment of his second vow—that he and his Argonauts would spread word of Medea's name and fame throughout Greece upon their return—requires some discussion. At the shrine of Hecate, he tells her

σοὶ δ' ἂν ἐγὼ τεύσαιμι χάριν μετόπισθεν ἀρωγῆς
ἢ θέμις, ὡς ἐπέουκε διάνδιχα ναιετάοντας,
ὄνομα καὶ καλὸν τεύχων κλέος· ὡς δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι
ἦρωες κλήσουσιν ἐς Ἑλλάδα νοστήσαντες. (*Arg.* 3. 990-94)

³³⁶ J. Claus 2000: 29.

³³⁷ Such as the fact that most of the verbs in his speech to her are in the optative, which intimates he is speaking strictly in terms of the hypothetical and has no intention of ever being in a position where he must needs consider any of these to be binding vows.

To you I shall offer thanks hereafter for your help,
as is proper for those living far off, spreading word
of your name and great fame. And the other heroes,
returning to Hellas, will spread word of your name.

As the story ends at the precise moment of that return, Apollonius never specifically writes of whether Jason holds true to that promise—but the wording of the promise alone is enough to raise the hackles of any reader of this poem. It echoes unmistakably Jason’s reproach to his wife in Euripides’s *Medea*,³³⁸ when he claims that without him no one in Greece would know of her cleverness, she would enjoy no fame, and not a living soul in civilized lands would speak of her:

πάντες δέ σ' ἤισθοντ' οὔσαν Ἑλληνες σοφὴν
καὶ δόξαν ἔσχεσ· εἰ δὲ γῆς ἐπ' ἑσχάτοις
ἄροισιν ὄικεις, οὐκ ἂν ἦν λόγος σέθεν. (*Medea*, 539-541)

All the Greeks consider you a clever woman,
and you have a reputation. If you were living
at the ends of the earth, there would be no knowledge of you.

In alluding to this passage, Apollonius reminds his audience that Jason will indeed honor his second promise as well, though again not precisely in the manner in which Medea hoped. In the *Argonautica* her concern for her name and reputation is a very real one: not only does she bemoan the mockery in which she will be held should she betray her family and align herself with the argonauts, but also contemplates suicide rather than dishonor (3.771-801). As the Euripidean Medea well realizes, that name and reputation have long since been compromised: the σοφὴν of which men speak is not the cleverness which allowed her to save Jason from her father’s trials and charm a dragon into sleep, but the cunning which led her to kill her brother and trick Pelias’s daughters into murder. More, her δόξαν is not that of a courageous and honorable woman, but that of one who betrayed

³³⁸ R. Hunter 1994 rightly notes this, but does not apply it to an interpretation of the passage as a whole.

her homeland and murdered those she should never have harmed. Her name is, as Jason promised, known throughout Greece, but hardly in the manner she had anticipated or imagined. With the murder of her children, the κλέος with which the Apollonian Medea is so concerned will soon become κακόν, stemming not from her nobility or courage but from the terrible vengeance she wreaks upon her husband, and her οὔνομα a byword for infanticide and betrayal.

A similar principle applies to Jason's third promise. Seeking to assuage her fears at the shrine of Hecate (or, at the very least, to make her stop shouting at him and crying), Jason swears that should Medea ever come to Greece, men and women both would respect and honor her and tend to her almost as a goddess. Any reader's initial response to this is, of course, to roll her eyes at the irony, for again Euripides's *Medea* points toward how this story will end: she is not fawned over by grateful relatives of the argonauts; she is abandoned by her husband and deprived of her children by her own hand. Yet it is critical to note Jason's choice of words here. She would be respected by women and men, he swears: γυναῖξι καὶ ἀνδράσιν αἰδοίη (*Arg.* 3. 1123). αἰδοίη originally seems merely an echo of the other variants of αἰδώς already strongly associated with Medea,³³⁹ but it is also the customary term when speaking of the respect in which mortals hold the gods. It is further critical to note that while Euripides's *Medea* indeed sees the destruction of Medea's humanity and the blackening of her name, it simultaneously sees her elevated to the status of the near divine: at the end of the play, she is occupying the part of the stage reserved solely for the gods and enjoins a festival and holy rites on Corinth in expiation for the murder of her sons (*Medea*, 1317-1414). Jason's initial promise may have been glib; the fulfillment of it was not. Supporting this

³³⁹ Particularly in *Arg.* 3. 645-653.

idea is the easily-neglected fact that as familiar as Euripides's version of these events may be, he was not the only one to write an end to this tale: as Johnston persuasively argues, the tragedians inherited the child-murdering Medea from a long mythical tradition, according to one aspect of which Medea was an early goddess of the Corinthians³⁴⁰ associated with Hera Akraia, at whose shrine the Euripidean Medea tells Jason she plans to bury their sons (*Medea*, 1378-79). Though Jason's final promise, like the previous two, is kept in a manner that neither the suppliant nor benefactor originally imagined, the vocabulary Apollonius elects strongly suggests that the promise is nonetheless kept.

As ever, in this case the divine world matches the human, though here the divine is considerably less complex than its mortal counterpart. Hera, too, makes a promise which the poem does not see paid: that Eros will not always be an imp of hell. Yet despite her assurance to Aphrodite on Olympus, the last we ever see of him is his darting shadow as he goes cackling back home with a quiver one arrow lighter than it was on his journey down (*Arg.* 3.285-286). When first we meet him he is grinning (*Arg.* 3.129); when last we see him, he is grinning still. This does not, however, necessarily mean that Hera either fibbed or never intended a promise of aid at all. She was careful in her promise to Aphrodite, for she never specified precisely when she would effect this sea-change in Eros. The ambiguity of 'hereafter' (*ὀπίσσω*: *Arg.* 3. 110) leaves a helpfully significant amount of wiggle room: 'hereafter' could mean when Eros returns from his task or else half a hundred years in the future.

Immediate returns on favors granted is therefore the most pervasive and the most complex of the three additional characteristics of Colchian supplication Apollonius

³⁴⁰ S. Johnston 1997: 46

introduces with Jason's cousins and elaborates upon both in Olympus and Aetes's kingdom. Taken together with its two counterparts, it helps establish the concept of supplication on the far side of the world: scenes of such retain the sense of suspicion, disregard for Zeus Ἰκέσιος, and preoccupation with self-interest familiar from earlier in the poem, but to this they add a demand for detailed information before aid and the expectation of immediate reciprocity. Well aware of this, the suppliant, most successful if blood kin (and close blood kin, at that) offers a specific favor as payment at the time of supplication—a favor which, however, may well turn out differently for the benefactor than expected. Though the ideas of suspicion and self-benefit alone distance these supplications from their Homeric and earlier Apollonian roots, this sense of *quid pro quo* is what truly marks them as unique. They are not necessarily bargains proposed between equals, for the suppliant still frequently begins with a list of his woes, designed to highlight his own misfortune and remind his proposed benefactor of his own good luck in avoiding such disaster. Nonetheless, they see suppliant and benefactor on much more equal footing than their Homeric and earlier argonautic counterparts: by not merely begging for help but instead offering something in return, the suppliant assumes the additional role of a benefactor-to-be. Such a relationship between suppliant and potential benefactor has no Homeric precedent; such a relationship in fact has no precedent in Greek literature. To find its source, then, we must look beyond the literary world. For despite this paucity of clear literary models, there are nonetheless strong and striking precedents for the sort of supplications Apollonius writes of. For while the ideas behind this sort of shifting supplication find few echoes in the purely literary world, when placed in the context of the Hellenistic they positively resound.

Hellenistic Suspicion

The four strongest echoes of the Hellenistic world we find in the *Argonautica*'s supplication scenes are, not coincidentally, the four strongest elements of the supplications that occur during the Argonauts' voyage from Greece to Colchis: the suspicion with which a benefactor may view a suppliant, the ties of kinship that bind a benefactor and suppliant together, and the healthy concern with self-interest that governs an expectation of active reciprocity. Suspicion, perhaps more than any other quality, defined the world the early Hellenistic kings inherited upon Alexander's death and shaped the dealings those kings first had with one another. Likewise, amid Hellenistic cities under those kings' command, the ties of blood-kin determined who could be called upon for aid with the reasonable expectation of success—primarily because kinship ties created a relationship that was reciprocal and of benefit to both parties. Of these four qualities, suspicion has the most obvious source in the Hellenistic world: as Heckel notes, it is potentially the most important characteristic of the diadochoi's kingdoms.³⁴¹ The generals came by such a quality honestly, for it both permeated the ranks of the military hierarchy in which they served and dictated the framework of the empire they inherited from Alexander. Perhaps not unreasonably, Alexander was vigilant in his division of power among his subordinates. The way in which he structured the chain of command in both his army and government prevented one man from acquiring too much political or military power. Philotas, for example, had not one but two heirs to his position as cavalry commander; after his execution Alexander split his cavalry command between Hephaestion and Cleitus the Black. While the choice doubtlessly could have been inspired by a desire to ease tension by showing equal favor to soldiers who had, like

³⁴¹ W. Heckel 2002: 81

Hephaestion, adopted the practices of Persia and who had, like Cleitus, stayed stubbornly true to their Macedonian roots,³⁴² Arrian nonetheless notes that the double appointment ensured that Philotas's previously formidable power did not again belong to a single man.³⁴³ Nor, after Cleitus's murder, did one man alone succeed even to his position: the cavalry was split still further, into several hipparchies under officers of equal standing, of whom Hephaestion was only one. A similar division of power governed Alexander's choices for the administrative positions of his empire. Egypt, for example, one of the richest of his conquered lands, was given into the control not of a single governor but four: two Macedonians and two Egyptians were responsible for its administration. Nor were governors of lesser territories, either Macedonian or native, left to their own devices: to the native rulers who retained their satrapies in Persia, Alexander assigned Macedonian garrisons, generals, and secondary rulers, all of whom were doubtlessly intended to check the power of the confirmed satrap; to Macedonians who were given satrapies in Persia, Alexander assigned the same.³⁴⁴

His choice for such satraps, and for the governors he left in place in Greece, was also founded on a principle of distrust: political allies rarely, if ever, occupied adjacent geographic space. Thousands of miles removed, Alexander trusted in competing political goals to keep any one of his subordinates from amassing significant power. Although Memnon, the strategos of Thrace, actively rebelled against Antipatros in 331, to the extent that the Macedonian regent was forced to strike formal terms with him before heading south to deal with another such rebellion, Memnon was not deprived of his post

³⁴² R. Smist 1973: 12–13

³⁴³ Arrian 3. 27. 4

³⁴⁴ On Persians: Curt. 5. 2. 16–17; 6. 4. 25; 7. 5. 1.; 8. 1. 1; Arr. 3. 22. 1; 3. 25. 1; 3. 28. 4; on Macedonians: Arrian 1. 17. 7.

by Alexander: if anything, his subsequent elevation to hipparch of the Thessalian cavalry suggests that the king was instead pleased with him.³⁴⁵ Likewise, in India Alexander not only confirmed Porus in his holdings after defeating him in battle, but extended his lands so that he might act as a check on his powerful rival and cousin. Such competition among neighboring regents, commanders, satraps, and viceroys helped prevent one man from exercising enough power to conceivably threaten Alexander's own, for in their continual suspicion of their neighbors they kept one another in check.

Such competition, and the distrust upon which it was predicated, also helped fracture Alexander's empire into the various Hellenistic kingdoms, for the system of checks and balances left no single individual with the power to assume sole command of the Mediterranean and Near East upon Alexander's death.³⁴⁶ Perhaps more importantly still, it did not leave generals who were accustomed to trust one another anywhere other than on a battlefield under the standard of the Macedonian king. In their treatment of the wars among the diadochoi, Diodorus and Arrian both emphasize the continual suspicion with which Alexander's former generals regarded one another,³⁴⁷ and the political institutions the diadochoi themselves adopted lend considerable weight to that characterization. In the first settlement at Babylon, for example, we find a series of checks and balances familiar from Alexander's administration. Seleucus and Ptolemy are given lands rich in resources or wealth but which are far from the power struggle in Macedon; Perdikkas's preferred candidates for Alexander's throne are accepted, but Perdikkas is not named their guardian; that responsibility instead falls to Krateros, whose own power is held in check by the command Perdikkas retains over Alexander's army.

³⁴⁵ Berve 1926: 254 n1.

³⁴⁶ A. Bosworth 2002: 5

³⁴⁷ For specific examples of this 'language of distrust' see W. Heckel 2002: 87-89

Likewise, we find a similar scenario in the later alliance between Antipater and Antigonus Monophthalmus, after the second settlement at Triparadeisos gives Antipater control over Philip Arrhidaios and Alexander IV. The kings are left with Antigonus in Asia, but Antipater does not leave them there without precaution: to the three satrapies immediately surrounding Antigonus's he appoints personal allies to serve as watchdogs, and of the seven bodyguards provided for the two kings only one of them is an adherent of Antigonus.³⁴⁸ More importantly still, Antipater appoints his son Cassander as Antigonus's chiliarch. Diodorus notes that he did so explicitly to keep an eye on Antigonus and ensure that the younger man's ambitions stayed in check; Diodorus goes further to relate that Cassander later advised his father to treat Antigonus carefully and with suspicion.³⁴⁹ Though Antipater died shortly thereafter, Cassander later followed his own advice: though he had long been at odds with Ptolemy and Seleucus, he joined with them to write an end to Antigonus's power, when it had grown too great not to threaten the holdings of the diadochoi in the west. With Antigonus dead, the alliance did not last.

Heckel perhaps goes to far in assertion that such distrust among the diadochoi is what led to the disintegration of Alexander's empire:³⁵⁰ before Alexander died, it was clear that even he would have been unable to hold so sprawling a kingdom together.³⁵¹ Nonetheless, the politics of suspicion and distrust among the diadochoi certainly determined the tenor of the diadochoi's dealings with one another. It is that tenor which finds a considerable echo in the ways in which Apollonius's characters interact with one another in the *Argonautica*, for as we have seen suspicion and distrust play a prominent

³⁴⁸ But for a differing view of Antipater and Antigonus, see R. Billows 1990: 68–74

³⁴⁹ Dio. 18. 39. 7

³⁵⁰ W. Heckel 2002: 83

³⁵¹ A. Bosworth 2002: 1–2

role in the major character interactions in the poem. Unlike that of the relationships among the diadochoi, the suspicion inherent to such interactions is not rooted in a desire to check the ambitions of others; they are, however, rooted in the belief that neither strangers nor friends can ever be entirely trusted. It is certainly not a conclusion with which the diadochoi, whose alliances could change as often as the seasons, would have disagreed.

Blood Kin, Reciprocity, and Self-Interest

While the idea of reciprocity certainly has many parallels among the diadochoi and their heirs—the shifting alliances of the early Hellenistic kings were hardly based on generous favors, freely given—the odd importance Apollonius places on kinship finds a stronger resonance among Hellenistic cities. For diplomatic exchanges between Hellenistic cities, particularly those in which one city appealed to another for assistance and aid, frequently cited kinship ties that bound the cities to one another. Such ties functioned on a variety of levels. Cities could claim kinship through colony ties: one city could be the founding city of another, or two cities could have the same mother city in common. Cities could claim kinship through heroes they both considered ancestral: one could claim mythical kinship with another based on shared descent from Heracles. When all else failed, cities could claim kinship based solely on shared Greekness.³⁵² This sort of kinship diplomacy is not unique to Hellenistic diplomacy—we have evidence from both Herodotus and Thucydides that cities claimed kinship with Athens in times of need,

³⁵² For these kinship types, see particularly S. Hornblower 1996: 62–3; A. Erskine 2002: 97

both on account of shared Greekness and status as a daughtercity³⁵³—but our evidence from the Hellenistic period is considerably more immense.³⁵⁴

The scholarship on kinship diplomacy has only recently begun to evolve, thanks in a large part to the publication of an inscription from the Lycian city of Xanthus.³⁵⁵ That inscription, late though it may be (206/05), serves as a useful exemplum of this kind of kinship diplomacy.³⁵⁶ Seeking to finance its reconstruction after the effects of an earthquake and war, the Doric city Cytinion, which claimed to be the metropolis of all Dorian cities, sent embassies to seek aid both from those cities it considered kin and from any kings who were, like the Cytinions themselves, descended from Heracles, Ptolemy, and Antiochus. A lengthy genealogical argument formed a substantial part of the diplomats' appeal: they averred that the cities whom they asked for aid were kin through gods and heroes, for both they and the native Cytinions could trace their descent as Dorians back to Leto. Moreover, they note at Xanthus, a long-dead Doric kinsman once helped the *Xanthians* in time of need, later marrying into a Xanthian family; too, the embassy offered additional (and unrecorded) examples of the friendly relations that had

³⁵³ Herodotus 5. 97; Thucydides 1. 95. 1

³⁵⁴ Whether this increase in evidence is due to an increase in practice or else simply the significantly greater epigraphic material we have from the Hellenistic period is impossible to tell, though I think it could be easily argued that the significant widening of the Hellenistic world would have led to an increased emphasis on kingship among the Greeks. This is particularly appealing since the majority of kinship claims focus on, as A. Erskine 2002: 110 puts it, 'peoples whose Greekness might be open to question, such as Lycians, Molossians, or Romans.' The less familiarity there was between two cities, the more likely one of them was to make kinship claims; this agrees well with the significantly wider world stage cities had to perform upon in the Hellenistic age.

³⁵⁵ The study of Hellenistic kinship diplomacy is hardly new. Though initially dismissed as little more than an artificial construct, with no real bearing on the petition being offered by one city and considered by another, it was somewhat reformed by D. Musti 1963: 225–39, and brought under significant consideration by the publication of the Xanthos inscription in 1988. Important contributions include particularly O. Curty 1995 (though see S. Hornblower 1996: 61–80); Jones 1999; and Lücke 2000.

³⁵⁶ Similar concerns are found in earlier inscriptions; the unusual length of specificity of the Xanthian decree makes it easier to discuss in context. See L.G. Mitchell 1997: 50–65, for earlier examples, including a Rhodian decree likely dating to the late fourth century.

joined both cities in kinship since antiquity. This one appeal encapsulates the three essential aspects of kinship diplomacy: persuasion, reciprocity, and self-interest.³⁵⁷

Appeals to kinship from one city to another occur most often, and not unpredictably, when a city is asking for something.³⁵⁸ Seeking resources from Xanthus, the Cytinians stress the fact that through their shared mythical history they are kin. Likewise, specifically as kinsmen, the Rhodians once lent to Argos one hundred talents to repair their walls and strengthen their cavalry, and in 208 the responses to a Magnesians appeal that their neighbors recognize a recently established festival emphasize claims of kinship.³⁵⁹ The extensive genealogical web the Dorians weave in the decree from Xanthus strongly suggests that such familial arguments are not simply ornament but rather a fundamental aspect of the diplomatic plea. On a superficial level, the reason behind it seems simple enough: emphasizing family ties and their attendant obligations pressures a city to accede to the other's request.³⁶⁰ Yet Erskine sensibly notes that the establishment of familial ties are too mythical or tenuous to create such moral pressure. He argues instead that they serve two critical roles in the negotiations between cities: they create a space in which it is possible for one city to legitimately make an appeal of another—one is able to ask things of 'family' that one cannot respectably ask of strangers or even merely friends—and in focusing on the cities' shared past they define their relationship for the future.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ Bousquet 1988: 30–32.

³⁵⁸ S. Elwyn 1993: 261–86

³⁵⁹ O. Kern 1900: 16–87. From the responses we can assume that the initial request emphasized the same; see A. Erskine 2000: 98–9 and K. J. Rigsby 1996: 176–279

³⁶⁰ A. Erskine 2002: 103. For the effect the allusion to familial obligations would have had on the recipient cities, he cites K. Dover 1974: 273–8 and P. Millet 1991: 127–39

³⁶¹ A. Erskine 2002: 104–6

The future relationship such kinship diplomacy defines incorporates a large measure of reciprocity and self-interest. For once established, the kin relationship between cities is not forgotten. Having acceded to the Dorians request, the Xanthians decide that their decree must be erected in the sanctuary of Leto (whom they share as an ancestor with the Dorians) so that the kinship the two cities share will not be forgotten;³⁶² likewise, the decree of Argos states that after the Argives sent their initial embassy to the Rhodians, the Rhodians later returned the favor to affirm their goodwill toward the Argives—and critically, that good will extended into the past, was relevant to the present, and was promised for the future.³⁶³ Such a promise is not merely diplomatic courtesy; it is the affirmation of a tangible relationship that has already benefited one side and will likely, in the future, benefit the other. It would after all be nearly impossible for one city to refuse another's request if the former had already granted a favor based on kinship ties; in granting help or resource to a suppliant city, a city assures for itself a future ally and source of aid. We see this clearly in the Xanthus description: the Dorians make mention that the Xanthians have already received aid from a Dorian specifically because the Xanthians were a Doric colony; as the decree goes on to mention that the embassy later gave additional examples of former goodwill between the cities predicated on kinship, the apparent expectation of reciprocity is difficult to ignore.

In the relationships among the diadochoi themselves and between Hellenistic cities, then, it is not difficult to see parallels to the supplication scenes in the *Argonautica* that take place between Greece and Colchis. And that these parallels do not exist on the western side of Italy, where in the Hellenistic world Alexander never reached, nor on the

³⁶² Bousquet 1988: ll. 65–8

³⁶³ For brief discussion of this see L.G. Mitchell 1997: 52–3.

island of Drepane, whose hospitality scene has already set it apart from the rest of the poem, is not coincidental. Like the hospitality scenes did in chapter 1, the supplication scenes mark off specific boundaries of Jason's world. We see this even more clearly at the next supplication scene of the poem: Circe's isle of Aeaea.

Aeaea

The final two supplication scenes of the poem mark a shift in the principles that govern the ritual of supplication in Apollonius. Up until this point, all such scenes included elements of arrogance, suspicion, self-interest, reciprocity, and a disregard for Zeus, and all save the first supplication at Lemnos showcased a focus on some sort of kinship claim. The only difference among these scenes was one of degree: the supplications that involved the Colchians or else fell within the geographic framework of Colchis in the narrative structure of the poem were a more powerful or specific expression of principles that governed all of Jason's world. The suspicion with which Hypsipile viewed the Argonauts was different from the suspicion with which Eros viewed his mother, yet suspicion it still was; the self-interest which governed Medea's acceptance of her sister's plea was different from that which governed the Boreads' acceptance of Phineus's, but it was still self-interest, all the same. Yet when the Argonauts travel to the western side of Italy to supplicate Medea's aunt for help in expiating Apsyrtus's murder, matters suddenly begin to change. The wordless supplication of Circe by Medea and Jason neither follows nor elaborates on any of supplication patterns previously established in the poem. Instead, it reverts almost entirely to the Homeric model, from which Apollonius spent the three previous books consciously distancing himself.

Having been warned by the Argo (courtesy of Hera and the lingering power of Athena's skills as a shipwright) that they must seek expiation for their murder of Aspyrtos before Zeus will allow them to return safely home, Jason and Medea arrive at Aeaëa to beg help from Circe, Aeetes's sister and Medea's aunt. The first difference from the previous supplications of the poem is immediate and significant: the utter absence of suspicion between Circe and her suppliants. She does not suspect them of ulterior motives, does not demand that they tell her precisely what they have done, does not insist upon a true telling of Aspyrtus's murder as the price of her aid: she already knows everything she must about her niece and the man she brings with her. For much like her brother, Circe, too, is the recipient of a prophecy concerning the Argonauts. From a prophecy of Helios, Aeetes believed he knew why Jason had come as a suppliant to his hall; from a nightmare of blood on her walls and its cleansing, Aeetes's sister in fact does. She has no need to demand the truth, for she grasps it before she ever greets her guests.

The lack of humility on the part of a suppliant is also missing in this scene. When Jason and Medea follow Circe into her home, both deliberately assume the physical position of suppliants: ignoring the chairs she offers, Medea sinks empty-handed to the floor beside the hearth, and Jason has his hands wrapped around a hilt whose blade point is resting on her floor. Both of them refuse to meet her eyes, but instead keep their own resolutely on the ground (*Arg.* 4. 691–98). Like Circe's lack of suspicion toward her suppliant, their posture is a sharp break with the previous supplication scenes of the poem. It mirrors the fact that this is the first supplication of the *Argonautica* in which the suppliants are clearly entirely at the mercy of their potential benefactor. Though Medea

physically supplicated Jason and her nephews at the Colchian harbor, she nonetheless still held a position of significant power: as she told them, their only hope for survival was to flee before Aeetes finished his preparations to destroy them, and their only hope for success was to take her with them, for alone they could not fetch down the golden fleece. (*Arg.* 4. 79-91) She has no such power to exercise here. In a poem whose supplications have so far been distinguished by careful, clever words that may beg, promise, and threaten at once, at Circe's house both Medea and Jason are silent: they have nothing to offer in return for her help, and so they must throw themselves entirely upon her mercy. This attitude is Homeric, not Apollonian. Their position at the hearth unavoidably recalls that of Odysseus at the house of Alcinous in at *Odyssey* 7, and though the circumstances of the need of the Ithacan king and fugitives from Colchis are different, the reason for their supplication is the same: Jason and Medea have been told that they cannot return to Greece without Circe's help (*Arg.* 4. 584-591), Odysseus that only Arete can provide him with the ships and crew he needs to finish his voyage home (*Od.* 6. 310-315) Coming after the long variations on Homeric models, this sudden reversion to them is arresting.

Equally startling is Circe's sole reason for accepting them as suppliants, for it adheres to none of the principles already established in the poem. She does not accept Medea and Jason because Medea, her niece, supplicates her as blood kin. Even before the supplication scene ever takes place, Apollonius makes it clear that blood bonds between suppliants and benefactors will have no place on Aeaea; when the Argonauts first arrive at Circe's house, it is Jason, not Medea, who initiates their actions. Medea does not initially have any intention of even entering her aunt's home: Jason is forced to

drag her through the halls once Circe invites them to follow her inside (*Arg.* 4. 688-690). Nor does Circe accept them because she stands to gain some particular benefit from offering her help: Medea and Jason are at this juncture so entirely helpless and dependent upon her good will that they cannot even speak to offer her any kind of fair exchange. Circe stands nothing to gain from helping them; if anything, self-interest would in fact dictate that she refuse them. Aeetes, as Alcinous will later note, has a long arm and a long memory, and with his pursuit of Medea he has already proven that a shared bloodline excuses no one from his vengeance. Circe's motivation is rooted instead in something that has been absent for the poem thus far: respect for the will of Zeus Ἰκεσίος (τῷ καὶ ὀπιζομένη Ζηνὸς θέμιν Ἰκεσίοιο: *Arg.* 4. 700).

Although a disregard for the will of Zeus has characterized every supplication in the *Argonautica* so far, here, suddenly, fear of crossing it is the dominant force behind the potential benefactor's compliance. Decidedly non-Apollonian, Circe's motivation stands in particularly stark contrast to the scene with Phineus, where even when faced with empirical evidence of what Zeus's anger, unleashed, can visit upon mortals, the Boreads were reluctant to honor the old prophet's claims to help in his name. Her attitude recalls, instead, scenes of supplication from Homer, where Zeus plays a prominent role in assuring that a suppliant's pleas are accepted.³⁶⁴

Also rife with clear Homeric echoes is her warning to Medea after the two speak at length about what has occurred on Colchis. Disgusted with Medea's actions and certain she has taken up with Jason merely to needle Aeetes, Circe warns her niece that trying to supplicate her again—presumably, this time for aid against Aeetes's rage—will be of no use (μηδέ με γουνάσσειαι ἐφέστιος: *Arg.* 4. 747). When Medea and Jason are

³⁶⁴ For example: *Il.* 24. 570; *Od.* 13. 213.

crouched as suppliants at her hearth, Circe's fear of Zeus compels her to act on their behalf; yet once she does so, she considers her duty to the gods complete, and she has no compunctions about ordering her suppliants out of her house and off of her island. Her refusal to allow a supplication she knows is imminent recalls particularly an unsuccessful supplication in the *Odyssey*: Odysseus's of Aeolus, when he attempts to beg him for another bag of storm winds to blow him safely home. Having aided him once, Aeolus fulfilled his duty; there is no call for him to do so again. Circe operates under an identical principle.

With all of this considered, in terms of supplication Aeaea marks a significant change in the course of the poem. At Lemnos, Apollonius introduced his initial variations on the Homeric model of supplication; at Thynia, he elaborated upon them and added the importance of blood kin; at the Isle of Ares, he introduced the heightened forms of those principles which would dominate the supplications at Colchis and on Olympus. Here at Aeaea, however, he shifts almost completely back to the original Homeric model: the importance of blood kin and the notion of active reciprocity are suddenly absent, fear of the reprisal of Zeus Ἰκεσίος has come to the fore, and as Circe is fully justified in her assumptions about her unexpected guests the concept of suspicion is markedly absent. Considered in the context of the geography of cultural anthropology in the poem, this reversion to Homeric principles is not at all surprising. If Aeaea is, as seems clear from the geographic pattern established with the hospitality scenes, meant to exist outside the Hellenistic realm, then the governing presence of Homeric principles rather than the markedly Hellenistic echoes that resonate in the earlier supplication scenes is entirely appropriate.

Drepane

The final supplications of the poem take place on the isle of Drepane, the kingdom of Alcinous and his queen Arete. Much like the welcome Alcinous and Arete offer Jason and his men, here again we have something new. The supplications are not entirely Homeric, nor are they particularly Hellenistic; they are instead something new.

The first supplication is Medea's of Arete, which follows almost exactly the standard model for Homeric supplication: clasping the queen's knees, Medea delivers herself of a brief catalog of her woes, begs the queen's assistance, and wishes her nebulous blessings in return (*Arg.* 4. 1014-1027).³⁶⁵ Despite the surface similarities, however, the differences from its Homeric precedents are two. Zeus has first of all again disappeared from the exchange between suppliant and benefactor: Medea beseeches Arete not in the name of the gods, but instead on the basis of their shared mortality, which unites them in the capacity for being careless in their actions (*Arg.* 4. 1015-1017).³⁶⁶ Though Plantinga argues that the honey of Medea's words masks a vicious sting—in expressing her hopes that Arete will enjoy the glory of an eternally unconquered city (κῦδος ἀπορθήτοιο πόλης: *Arg.* 4. 1027) she writes, Medea is subtly reminding her of what hangs in the balance for Drepane³⁶⁷—but such an argument runs contrary to Medea's purpose in this scene. Returning her to Aeetes would win Arete and Alcinous Aeetes's thanks, if not necessarily his friendship; keeping her from Aeetes would theoretically ensure that their city fell to the massive Colchian navy waiting in the Drepane waters. Circumstances being what they are, it seems unlikely that the

³⁶⁵ For Homeric models, see *Od.* 6. 180-2; 7. 148-150; for discussion thereof, see V. Knight 1995: 250-1.

³⁶⁶ The irony of this scene appears to escape Arete: like her father, Medea is not mortal.

³⁶⁷ M. Plantinga 1994: 140. There is of course much appeal in accepting this interpretation, particularly since the hidden nature of the threat complements Medea's own personality, but see above.

destruction of Drepane is a possibility of which Medea would want to remind Arete. It will not spur the queen to help Medea; it will encourage her to deny the Colchian woman what she has asked. That Medea is instead, much in the manner of Homeric suppliants, calling down standard good wishes and blessings on her potential benefactor seems a more accurate reading of the scene. A more interesting reading of it still is as a reworking of the scene in the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus bids Arete and Alcinous farewell, and calls down blessings upon them for their care of him on Scheria. As Shipley notes, 'to assume the existence of what you want to bring about is good rhetoric': by offering a suppliant's standard thanks for services rendered before ever having been accepted as a suppliant, Medea is potentially alluding to her acceptance as a foregone conclusion and hoping that her potential benefactor will consider it the same. That Shipley makes this comment in reference to a trick Hellenistic cities employed with kings should probably not go unnoticed.³⁶⁸

The second variation on the Homeric model is slight but potentially significant: Medea does not merely supplicate Arete once in hopes that she will speak on her behalf to the king and then withdraw; she supplicates her many times (*Arg.* 4. 1012-1013). The timing of this is unclear: either Medea is at Arete's feet, making repeated pleas for her safety, or else she returns to Arete's feet several times during her sleepless night, each time begging her to have mercy on her plight. This could merely be symptomatic of Medea's panicked state, or else, particularly with the neglect of the name of Zeus, derived from a suppliant's uncertainty of her status. Much like the earlier suppliants of the *Argonautica*, she may believe that she cannot rely on the authority of Zeus Suppliant to further her claim with her benefactor.

³⁶⁸ G. Shipley 2000: 78.

The further variations on the Homeric supplication model in this scene initially seem somewhat odd, for they have no precedent in the earlier supplication scenes of the poem. As was true on Aeaea, on Drepane suspicion does not color the relationship between the suppliant and potential benefactor. Though we do not hear Arete speak until she is later alone with her husband, there is no reason to assume that she is suspicious of Medea or the truth of the story she told.³⁶⁹ Nonetheless, help is not immediately offered to the suppliants, for Alcinous must take time to consider his best course of action. A suppliant who is neither immediately accepted nor immediately refused is a phenomenon unknown either in Homer or earlier in the *Argonautica*.

Likewise unfamiliar is what Alcinous takes under advisement while considering his decision: justice. Self-interest certainly plays a role in his deliberations—he tells Arete he does not wish to anger Aeetes, since Aeetes is the most dangerous of the kings—but self-interest is not what eventually decides him upon his course of action. Nor is the prospect of immediate reciprocity. Jason and Medea can offer him nothing in exchange for his help; if anything, all they offer him is trouble, for Alcinous knows how dangerous Aeetes is to cross. Having weighed both sides of the argument, he comes to a conclusion with which he believes no man can find fault: if Medea is a virgin, she will be given back to her father; if she is not, she will remain with her husband. His interest in finding a middle way is unique in the *Argonautica*, and it has no precedent in Homer: in neither are potential benefactors usually skilled diplomats, as well.

Yet these odd variations on Homeric and Apollonian supplication find a clear echo in the Hellenistic world, for in the manner with which Alcinous and Arete deal with the suppliant Medea resonate strongly with the manner in which Ptolemy Soter ruled

³⁶⁹ This is of course somewhat ironic, considering that Medea has not told the absolute truth.

early Hellenistic Egypt.

The similarities Arete shares with a Hellenistic—and particularly Ptolemaic—queen have already been touched upon by Hunter: the obvious allusion to the Homeric Arete, deeply honored by her husband and her people, which easily maps onto the admiration in which the early Ptolemies frequently held their wives; the way in which she persuades her husband to consider matters from her point of view, which parallels the way Ptolemaic queens frequently functioned in their courts; and the way in which she takes an active role in securing the outcome she wishes for, which recalls the subtle but significant political power the Ptolemaic queens came to wield.³⁷⁰ Yet the essential similarity Alcinous shares with Ptolemy here has not received such attention. As Hunter notes, Alcinous's interest in 'straight judgments' renders him an ideal Hesiodic king; as Hunter also notes, Alcinous's palace and fleet could belong as easily to Ptolemy as they do to Alcinous.³⁷¹ Yet the link between those two similarities, that of Alcinous simultaneously representing a good king and through his trappings potentially functioning the avatar of Ptolemy, goes unaddressed. And the link is an essential one. For much like Alcinous, Ptolemy was, or at least portrayed himself as, who a man ever mindful of his enemy's strength and therefore dedicated to negotiation and diplomacy before war.³⁷² Combined with the strong Ptolemaic associations Alcinous carries in his later dealings with the Colchians who arrive on his shore in pursuit of Medea, the supplication scene on Drepane points toward his identity as an avatar of Ptolemy Soter, and as a model for the Ptolemaic kings.

³⁷⁰ A. Mori 2001.

³⁷¹ This is not untrue, but the focus on Aeetes's fleet and palace in Bk. 3 and the beginning of Bk. 4 would seem to diminish Alcinous's holdings by comparison, which is certainly not Apollonius's intent. The ships do not become particularly relevant until Alcinous manages to neatly take all of Aeetes's as his.

³⁷² Particularly in regard to his relationship with Antigonus Monophthalmus. See R. Billows 1996.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The ties that bind Apollonius, Callimachus, and Theocritus have long been of interest to scholars of Hellenistic poetry: issues of priority, of shared sources, of resonances and allusions have dominated much of the scholarship on those three authors for the past century. Considering the strength of those poetic ties, the discourse on kingship evident in Callimachus's and Theocritus's court poetry suggests that they were not alone in tackling the issues of Hellenistic kingship in their work. It suggests instead that Apollonius, too, engaged in such discourse, and that in his poetry there lies allusions to, and commentary on, the Hellenistic world.

This suggestion is borne out in a closer analysis of Apollonius's work. He is not, as much of older Apollonian scholarship may aver, endeavoring to write a Homeric epic with an eye to Hellenistic aesthetics, but rather using familiar Homeric motifs to draw attention to the sharp difference between Odysseus's world and Jason's. Hospitality scenes in Homer are type-scenes that by their very nature repeat in predictable patterns; hospitality scenes in Apollonius, on the other hand, are not type-scenes at all. There is no standard pattern they follow, no standard mold they fit; the actions of hosts and guests across the Mediterranean are similar to one another only in that they are frequently not Homeric. Their distance from their Homeric models, and from one another, reveals the geographic mirror Jason's world holds up to the Hellenistic: within the boundaries of the lands that Alexander conquered and that his generals now rule, Homeric norms do not apply; outside of those boundaries, the old norms hold true.

The six men who rule those lands as kings fit neatly into such a pattern, for each either acts as an avatar of a specific Hellenistic king, as do Aeetes and Alcinous, or else functions as an allegory for different ways in which a Hellenistic kingship can fail. Apollonius's treatment of the figure of the *basileus* is rife with the pro-Ptolemaic view that infuses the poetry of Callimachus and Theocritus—Alcinous, the only successful king of the poem, finds strong echoes in Ptolemy Soter and Philadelphus—but he goes a step further in his commentary on Hellenistic kingship than do his contemporaries. Apollonius not only offers praise to the Ptolemies, his patron family, but he specifically condemns Ptolemaic rivals for kingship—particularly Aeetes Monophthalmus, who in a poem rife with monsters, marvels, and arrogant kings, is perhaps the most vicious of the enemies Jason encounters on his travels. Too, Apollonius's praise for the Ptolemies is not limited to their generosity, to their military might, to their piety or to their wealth: though all such qualities do indeed garner praise, the ability to deal effectively with cities, as embodied by Jason and his men, is what secures for Alcinous a stronger kingdom than he ruled before the Argonauts arrived on his shore.

The principles that govern supplication in the *Argonautica* likewise mesh well with those that govern the Hellenistic world. The suspicion with which the *diadochoi* dealt with one another in the years after Alexander's death is mirrored in the suspicion which dominates the interactions between suppliants and potential benefactors across Jason's world; likewise, the focus on kinship claims and reciprocity that came to characterize interstate dealings in the Hellenistic world is echoed in the focus on the same when suppliants approach their potential benefactors for aid. For scenes of supplication in Apollonius, like those of hospitality, do not conform to the type-scene paradigm

familiar from their Homeric precedents. Their unpredictability echoes the unsettled and suspicious qualities of Apollonius's own world.

While this dissertation has, I hope, adequately addressed some of the very non-Homeric, and decidedly Hellenistic, qualities of the *Argonautica*, it is only the beginning of a much larger project, whose potential for uncovering the full extent of Apollonius's engagement in discourse on Hellenistic kingship and politics is very real. Much remains to be done with the type-scenes Apollonius borrows from Homer and then turns into something new: the reasons for the distance of supplication and hospitality scenes in the *Argonautica* from their Homeric models is not limited only to echoes of the Hellenistic world. And in particular, much remains to be done with the figures of the kings themselves. Alcinous as an avatar of Ptolemy and Aeetes as an one of Antigonus, combined with Lycus's history as a king, present interesting possibilities for an interpretation of the character of Heracles. The strongest of the Argonauts, he nonetheless vanishes before their adventure ever truly begins. Yet wherever the Argonauts go, Heracles has been there before: bringing kingdoms in the east under control of the native kings, for example, or speeding off across the horizon on the north African shore. Considering him as an Alexander figure offers a wide scope of interpretation for Apollonius's treatment of his character—particularly his actions in Libya, where he acts as a force of destruction that can be mitigated only by Orpheus's song. Not only might this state of affairs reveal Apollonian commentary on the roots of Hellenistic kingship, but on the role of poetic performance in creating the Hellenistic kingdoms themselves.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Hunter once rightly asked not only why Apollonius had written epic in the Ptolemaic court, but why he had written *this* epic, in particular. The answer lies, perhaps, in the wide variety of interpretations the frame of the tale allows, and how easily its characteristics can be adapted across the ages. Whether it is indeed on old Greek legend, as it would seem from the *Odyssey*, or else an old Near Eastern folktale, as suggested by M.L. West,³⁷⁶ the flexibility of the characters and the adventures they engage in lend themselves to a variety of interpretations—in this case, as allegory for the different methods of kingship that rose across the Mediterranean and Near East in the wake of Alexander’s rise.

³⁷⁶M. L. West 2005: 39–64

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