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**ILIADIC AND ODYSSEAN HEROICS:  
APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA* AND THE EPIC TRADITION**

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**ILIADIC AND ODYSSEAN HEROICS:  
APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA* AND THE EPIC TRADITION**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

To Jared and Jamie

## Abstract

# ILIADIC AND ODYSSEAN HEROICS: APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA* AND THE EPIC TRADITION

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In this dissertation, I demonstrate how a different heroic model dominates in each of the first three books of Apollonius' *Argonautica*. In Book 1, the star of the expedition is Heracles, whose heroic persona is founded on physical strength, martial prowess, *eris*, and *mēnis*. He thereby embodies the spirit of the *Iliad*'s protagonist, Achilles. Book 2 turns its attention to Polydeuces and the helmsmen. When they employ intellect and *mētis* to safeguard the expedition, they evoke the heroic attributes of Odysseus. The first half of the *Argonautica*, therefore, revolves around the performance of Homeric heroic models as Heracles channels Achilles and the leading characters of Book 2 channel Odysseus. In Book 3, these Homeric models become defunct and are replaced by a new heroic apparatus founded on Hellenistic values of realism and collaboration. Jason is the representative of this modern heroism, possessing skills that are plausible and even prevalent in Apollonius' own world: camaraderie, diplomacy, and romance. When Iliadic *biē* and Odyssean *mētis* fail at Colchis, it is Jason's credible skills that prove effective, signifying the triumph of human Hellenistic heroism over

superhuman Homeric heroics. The first three books of the *Argonautica*, therefore, explore book-by-book through the lens of heroism what the epic genre means for the audiences of both Homer and the Hellenistic world.

But when Jason's realism—that element at the core of his Hellenistic credibility—is disrupted during the magical contest at the end of Book 3, his collaborative and diplomatic values also fracture. Book 4, therefore, goes on to perform the dissolution of Jason's Hellenistic heroic identity and its subsequent renewal at two locations that are reminiscent of Apollonius' home: Drepane (the twin of Alexandria with its own Ptolemaic-inspired royal couple) and Libya (a proto-Alexandria). When the Argonauts experience their first cooperative *aristeia* at Libya by performing *collective* Iliadic and Odyssean values, it is the final confirmation that in a modern, realistic world such as that in which Apollonius and his audience live, superheroes are obsolete.

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## Introduction: Iliadic, Odyssean, and Hellenistic Heroism in Homer and Apollonius

A significant amount of scholarship completed on the *Argonautica* of Apollonius discusses its relationship to Homer. Textual allusions have been meticulously catalogued, epic technique compared, and expressions of heroism dissected and debated.<sup>1</sup> As Hunter so aptly puts it, “the *Argonautica* consistently demands to be read against Homer” ([2003] 3). Yet despite this scholarly investment in detailing Apollonius’ use of Homer, no one has attempted to divide the *Argonautica* into strict Iliadic and Odyssean portions. In *The Renewal of Epic: Responses to Homer in the Argonautica of Apollonius* (the most recent and comprehensive survey of Homeric allusions in Apollonius), Virginia Knight even explicitly states, “It is not possible to separate the *Argonautica* into ‘Odyssean’ and ‘Iliadic’ halves as has been done with the *Aeneid* from at least the time of Servius.”<sup>2</sup> If anything, the poem treated as a whole would be “entirely Odyssean” based on the large number of similarities between the Argonauts’ and Odysseus’ nautical journeys and encounters. But as it stands, she continues, “Apollonius feels free to move from the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey* or to combine the two as models at any point.” The events of one book in Apollonius’ epic do not exclusively privilege one Homeric epic over the other. Thus, on the one hand, Knight’s conclusion that the *Argonautica* cannot be split into Homeric halves is entirely appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> Glei (2011) surveys some of this scholarship, and notes that the conception of heroism in the *Argonautica* was the “main issue” during the second half of the twentieth century.

<sup>2</sup> Knight (1995) 30. In fn. 108, she acknowledges that dividing the *Aeneid* into two such halves is an oversimplification and includes some bibliography discussing the issue.

When the epic is sorted in terms of *heroic activity*, on the other hand, a clear division exists: Books 1 and 2 of the *Argonautica* stage Iliadic and Odyssean models of heroism, respectively. In the first book, the star and savior of the expedition is Heracles, whose heroic persona is founded on physical strength, martial prowess, *eris*, and *mēnis*. He thereby embodies the spirit of the *Iliad*'s protagonist Achilles, the legendary warrior of wrath and might. Book 2 turns its attention to Polydeuces and the helmsmen. When they use their intellect and *mētis* to guide and protect the Argonauts, they evoke the heroic attributes of Odysseus who is renowned for being the man of “much *mētis*” (πολύμητις). The first half of the *Argonautica*, therefore, revolves around the performance and potency of Homeric heroic models as Heracles channels Achilles, and the leading characters of Book 2 channel Odysseus.

The second half of the *Argonautica* breaks from Homer by rejecting Iliadic *biē* and Odyssean *mētis*, and elevating in their stead a new heroic apparatus founded on Hellenistic values. Jason is a remarkably human character for epic, far removed from Iliadic and Odyssean superheroics. As such, when he finally rises as the leading Argonaut in Book 3, he demonstrates values that are plausible and even prevalent in Apollonius' own Hellenistic world: collaboration, diplomacy, and romance. Winning Medea's aid proves Jason's heroic merit and signifies the triumph of human Hellenistic heroism over superhuman Homeric heroics.

But when Jason's realism is disrupted during the magical contest at the end of Book 3—that element at the core of his Hellenistic credibility—his collaborative and diplomatic values also fracture. Book 4, therefore, goes on to perform the dissolution of Jason's Hellenistic heroic identity and its subsequent renewal at Drepane (under the guidance of the Ptolemaic Alcinous) and Libya (a proto-Alexandria). When the Argonauts experience their first cooperative *aristeia* at Libya by performing *collective* Iliadic and Odyssean values, it will be the final confirmation

that in a modern, realistic world such as that in which Apollonius and his audience live, superheroes are obsolete. Book 4 of the *Argonautica*, therefore, epicizes Alexandrian literary realism, along with Hellenistic political values of collaboration and diplomacy, in its elevation of the modern man. The *Argonautica* is an epic about epic that explores through the lens of heroism what the genre means for the audiences of both Homer and the Hellenistic world.

For the remainder of the Introduction, I will expand on what I mean by the terms “Iliadic,” “Odyssean,” and “Hellenistic” by examining the heroic values demonstrated by Achilles in the *Iliad*, Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, and Jason in the *Argonautica*. Each of my four chapters will then treat each heroic model separately: Chapter 1 will demonstrate that Iliadic heroism is at the core of Book 1, Chapter 2 will analyze the Odyssean heroism of Book 2, Chapter 3 will discuss how Hellenistic values supersede and replace Homeric heroics in Book 3, and Chapter 4 will examine the final conflict between Homeric and Hellenistic heroism, and the latter’s final and decisive elevation. Apollonius’ poem, therefore, situates itself within the epic genre by performing—book-by-book—first Homeric then Hellenistic heroic models.<sup>3</sup>

### **“Iliadic” and “Odyssean” Heroism: The Homeric Achilles and Odysseus**

In their respective Homeric poems, Achilles proves his heroic supremacy through *biē* and

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<sup>3</sup> In this way, my dissertation builds most on the work of Clauss (1993) who conceives of Book 1 as a shift from Heracles’ strength-based archaic heroism being the dominant heroic apparatus to Jason’s skill-based modern heroism becoming supreme. I am effectively expanding his method to the entirety of the *Argonautica*. Other scholars who have analyzed the epic in terms of an evolutionary model include Lawall (1966) [heroic models based on strength, skill, valor, and piety are systematically discredited in the poem to elevate Jason’s “anti-heroism”], Clauss (2000) [the epic is “theogonic,” moving from the earliest stages of the universe to its most modern which constitutes greater skill but also, among other things, more deceit], and Hunter (1993b) [the *Argonautica* is a “voyage through time” moving from the old Greek world to a more Hellenistic world].

Odysseus through *mētis*.<sup>4</sup> Achilles' character in the *Iliad* takes after the archetype of the “spearman” or “strongman.” He is a warrior with phenomenal strength and unrivaled military prowess. No one else in the Greek army can lift Achilles' spear (19.387-89) and no one else at Troy can match him sword-for-sword. He is, in the *Iliad*, the “best of the Achaeans” (e.g. ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν, 1.244), demonstrating his superior worth as a hero through feats of *biē*.<sup>5</sup> In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus proves his heroic supremacy through *mētis*. This attribute manifests in many different forms: he is the preeminent hero of strategy, cunning, ambush,<sup>6</sup> and intellect (see Chapter 2). The epithet *polumētis* (“having much *mētis*,” πολύμητις) appears 87 times in the Homeric corpus, and all but one (Hephaestus: *Il.* 21.355) is used to describe Odysseus. His *mētis* is also said to equal that of Zeus (Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος: *Il.* 2.169, 2.636, 2.407, 10.137), and it cannot go unnoticed that he is the favorite of Athena, the very embodiment of *mētis*. Thus, the most fundamental tension that exists between Achilles and Odysseus in terms of heroic worth is the distinction between *biē* and *mētis*, and this conflict between the two heroes even finds expression in both Homer and elsewhere in Greek literature.<sup>7</sup>

Distilling both of these heroes' heroic identity down to a difference of *biē* and *mētis* is, of course, an oversimplification. Achilles is also associated in Homer and in Greek canon with

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<sup>4</sup> For the *biē-mētis* distinction between Achilles and Odysseus, see esp. Nagy (1999) and Edwards (1985).

<sup>5</sup> For how the adjective *aristos* in Homeric epic indicates the superiority of a character's distinctive heroic worth, see Nagy (1999) ch. 2. He demonstrates how Achilles is “the best of the Achaeans” in the *Iliad*, and Odysseus is “the best of the Achaeans” in the *Odyssey*. I discuss this matter at greater length in Chapter 1.

<sup>6</sup> Edwards (1985) 19 calls Odysseus “the hero of the ambush.”

<sup>7</sup> See esp. Edwards (1985) 43-69 and Nagy (1999) 42-58. The scholia for *Od.* 8.75-82 (where Demodocus sings about “the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles”) states that the two heroes were debating over whether Troy would be taken through *mētis* or *biē*. On this, see esp. Nagy (1999) 45-47.

ambush and other Odyssean attributes,<sup>8</sup> and Odysseus is an exceptional fighter in his own right (e.g. *Od.* 4.341-46) and possesses remarkable strength (e.g. *Od.* 8.186-98). Strictly in terms of skill-sets, they are not that dissimilar. In terms of establishing one's core worth as a hero, however, each hero walks his own path to the peak of heroic primacy. As Austin says, "Differentiation is within a *stock of traditional heroic virtues which are the common possession*. All have the qualities necessary for a warrior, but an individual might show some superiority over his peers in one or another particular."<sup>9</sup> The crux of Achilles' heroic realization is *biē*; the quintessential tool in Odysseus' heroic apparatus is *mētis*. It is through these qualities that each secures his heroic dominance.

When I use the terms "Iliadic" and "Odyssean" in this dissertation, therefore, I am referring to the essential heroic virtues that Homer's protagonists exercise in their respective poems to win acclaim. "Iliadic" constitutes the potency of Achilles' *biē*, along with other traits associated with his identification as a "spearman" (such as *eris*, *mēnis*, and impulsivity; see Chapter 1). When I use the term "Odyssean," I refer to Odysseus' *mētis*, the cunning and intellect he employs with unparalleled skill. Furthermore, to make it perfectly clear, I am *not* equating "Iliadic" with the *Iliad*, or saying that "Odyssean" comprises the entirety of the *Odyssey*. Both of these epics include a variety of different characters with different heroic cores. Rather, I use these terms only as a reflection of Achilles and Odysseus' primary modes of heroic expression.

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<sup>8</sup> E.g., *Il.* 1.225-28. See Mori (2008b) 201-208 who discusses at length Achilles' ambush of Troilus. Also see Austin (1975) 109 for how Achilles, like Odysseus, is also a good speaker.

<sup>9</sup> Austin (1975) 109, emphasis mine. Cf. Edwards (1985) esp. 38-39.

## “Hellenistic” Heroism: The Apollonian Jason

Jason is a hero of neither *biē* nor *mētis*. While he does display some martial prowess (e.g. killing Cyzicus, 1.1030-35) and shares with Odysseus several traits (as discussed below), the key to Jason’s heroic elevation is his interpersonal skills. Starkly different from Achilles’ and Odysseus’ self-reliance, Jason depends on others for success.

The exact nature of Jason’s heroic identity has been a hub for scholarly engagement most likely since the poem’s inception, and in the past half century alone, significant work has advanced our understanding of the character and his relationship to Hellenistic social and political values.<sup>10</sup> As late as the middle of the twentieth century, the general consensus of Jason as a character and hero was exceptionally negative, with scholars such as Carspecken (1952) outright refusing Jason heroic status on account of his few heroic virtues and his many faults, weaknesses, and vices.<sup>11</sup> Jason does not act like a Homeric hero so he is not a hero. Beginning in the 1960’s and reaching a peak at the turn of the century, however, scholars actively challenged this assumption, liberating Jason from Homer’s pervasive shadow and thereby resuscitating both

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<sup>10</sup> For helpful surveys of the scholarship that has dealt with Jason’s heroism, see esp. Gleii (2011), Mori (2008b) 83, Hunter (1993b) 11-25, Thiel (1996) 2-6.

<sup>11</sup> Carspecken (1952) esp. 99-125. His opinion of Jason is decisively unfavorable: “chosen leader because his superior declines the honour, subordinate to his comrades, except once, in every trial of strength, skill, or courage, a great warrior only with the help of magical charms, jealous of honour but incapable of asserting it, passive in the face of crisis, timid and confused before trouble, tearful at insult, easily despondent, gracefully treacherous in his dealings with the love-sick Medea but cowering before her later threats and curses, coldly efficient in the time-serving murder of an unsuspecting child, reluctant even in marriage” (101). Carspecken concludes that it is not Jason but the entire group of Argonauts who is the hero of the *Argonautica*. For a summary of the negative interpretations on Jason’s character prior to the 1950’s, see pp. 99-100 and Jackson (1992) 155.

Jason's and the *Argonautica*'s reputation. Jason became an anti-hero,<sup>12</sup> a love hero,<sup>13</sup> and a hero with exceptional proficiency in diplomacy and leadership.<sup>14</sup>

At the core of Jason's heroic persona, therefore, is collaboration. He is gifted at forming and shaping his relationships with women and men, crewmembers and foreigners alike. At Pagasae and Colchis, for example, he reveals a keen interest in nurturing the crew's sense of commonality (cf. ξυνός, 1.336, 337; 3.173), and at the end of Book 1 he proves his dedication to upholding the camaraderie of the men when he forgives Telamon, fostering the crew's loyalty to himself and to one another (1.1337-43). This commitment to group cohesion is celebrated in Book 2 when the Argonauts dedicate a shrine to *Homonoia* (Unity) and make solemn oaths "to aid one another for all time (εἰσαιέν) with unity of mind (ὁμοφροσύνησι νόοιο)" (2.714-19).<sup>15</sup> Jason is also anxious to cultivate good relations with people outside of his crew: over the course of the poem, he frequently embraces the value of diplomacy (cf. συνθεσίας, 1.340), and his experiences with Hypsipyle at Lemnos (3.721-910) and with Medea at Colchis (esp. 3.948-1147) confirm his talent at wooing women. Jason is a social hero.

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<sup>12</sup> Lawall (1966) was the first to propose this interpretation for Jason. While more recent scholars have strayed from using the term "anti-hero" (e.g. Hunter [1987b], Natzel [1992] 182, 193-94), Lawall's early efforts to reassess Jason's worth as a character in heroic epic and analyze the ways in which he *is* successful were immensely influential and shaped Apollonian conceptions of heroism in the *Argonautica* for the next several decades. Cf. Klein (1983) who claims that Jason is both a hero and a villain, and the poem is both epic and anti-epic. He goes on to (unconvincingly) argue that "Callimachus was more Cynic or Stoic and Apollonius was a brazen new Skeptic" (126).

<sup>13</sup> Jason as "love hero" first became popularized by Beye (1969); cf. (1982). Other scholars who followed his lead include Zanker (1979), Rose (1985), Pike (1993), Clauss (1993) esp. 122-23. See Klein (1983) n. 7 for other scholars before Beye who touched on the idea of Jason as a love hero.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Vian (1978), Natzel (1992) 181-96, Clauss (1993), Mori (esp. 2008b). Fränkel (1960) 18 calls Jason "ein Meister der Menschenbehandlung."

<sup>15</sup> All translations in this dissertation for Apollonius and other Greek authors are mine unless stated otherwise.

He is also remarkably realistic. While Achilles and Odysseus are certainly imbued with realism on the level of emotion, relationships, and various experiences they face, on a strictly heroic level they are *superheroes*. Achilles' strength is impossibly incredible. Odysseus' dependence on strategy and cunning is more believable than Achilles' *biē*, but the sheer degree of excellence Odysseus possesses in a variety of fields is not: in the world of the *Odyssey*, he is unmatched in *mētis* (*passim*), strength (e.g. he throws a *heavier* discus further than *any* of the Phaeacian nobles, *Od.* 8.186-98), archery (e.g. the contest with the suitors, *Od.* 21.404-23), and hand-to-hand combat (e.g. he wins a wrestling match against Philomeleides, *Od.* 4.341-46, and slaughters dozens of suitors in Book 22). In contrast, Jason never once does something beyond human ability, excluding the contest at the end of Book 3 where he relies on Medea's magic to accomplish the impossible tasks Aeetes has set. Jason is a credible hero with credible skills.

Jason's human realism and collaborative values have led many scholars to conceive of him as a modern or, even, "Hellenistic" hero.<sup>16</sup> One of the driving impulses of Alexandrian literature was realism. As Clauss puts it, this was an era that was "absorbed with realism," where the audience was "cosmopolitan and sophisticated," disconnected from the extraordinary and inconceivable events and heroes of the mythic past.<sup>17</sup> While Homer was still very popular and still considered the fount of literature,<sup>18</sup> and while incredible mythology was still very much used

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<sup>16</sup> For Jason's human realism, see Fränkel (1960) 1: "andererseits aber sind die Personen, die sich inmitten der übernatürlichen Begebnisse bewegen, von recht natürlicher und glaubwürdiger Art und nicht allzu verschieden von gewöhnlichen Menschen der hellenistischen Epoche—oder auch von Menschen unsrer eigenen Tage." Also esp. Vian (1978) [Jason's emotional realism], Zanker (1979) [romantic realism], Jackson (1992) [Hellenistic realism], Clauss (1993) [realism expressed through credible skills].

<sup>17</sup> Clauss (1993) 205. For more on the features of Hellenistic literature, including Callimachus' opinion of epic, see, e.g., DeForest (1994) ch. 1 and 2, Mori (2008b) 27-41, Acosta-Hughes (2010) 81-91. Harder's commentary on the *Aetia* is especially helpful in understanding exactly what Callimachus' relationship with epic is: (2012) esp. 6-11.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Mori (2008b) 31ff., Nelis (2005) 356-59.

and enjoyed, Alexandrian poets—especially Callimachus—were vocal about wanting to inaugurate a new poetics of erudition, domesticity, and realism. Experimenting with and blending genres, these poets “juxtapos[ed] the ancient with the contemporary, the epic with the pedestrian, and the wondrous with the quotidian” (Mori [2008b] 30). For example, Callimachus’ epyllion *Hecale* immortalizes not the heroic feats of Theseus but the old woman offering to him *xenia* before he departs to capture the Marathonian bull. The frame story is epic, as is Theseus, but the rest of the poem focuses on celebrating domestic life and the virtues of ordinary people. In the *Argonautica*, Apollonius keeps an epic subject at the forefront at all times (i.e. the quest for the golden fleece), but he still infuses realism into the poem *through* Jason.<sup>19</sup> This character acts, therefore, as an anchor from the real Hellenistic world to the unreal epic plane.

Jason’s dedication to preserving *homonoia* and pursuing diplomatic solutions is also a reflection of Apollonius’ Hellenistic world, but this time on the political and religious level. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, local and international mediation increased during this period, and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (during whose reign Apollonius likely wrote the *Argonautica*)<sup>20</sup> was well-known for his involvement in arbitration and diplomacy. Some scholars have even proposed that Jason is a stand-in for this Ptolemaic king.<sup>21</sup> The investment Jason places in preserving the *homonoia* of the crew also finds expression in contemporary affairs. As

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<sup>19</sup> Zanker (1987) divides the Alexandrian poets’ inclusion of realism into three categories [the listed page numbers refer to the sections where he talks about Apollonius’ *Argonautica* in particular]: pictorial realism (67-79), the appeal to science (116-18: geographical landmarks; 122-23: aetiologies; 125-26: medicine), and the inclusion of everyday or low material (203-209, including—especially—Jason and Medea’s love story).

<sup>20</sup> For the date of the *Argonautica*, see Mori (2008b) 7-8, Hunter (2015) 1-2

<sup>21</sup> Mori (2008a) 157. Mori is currently the leading voice in Apollonian scholarship on how the *Argonautica* reflects Hellenistic politics: (2012) [women in the *Argonautica* and Arsinoe II], (2008a) [piety and diplomacy], (2008b) [her book on the topic: *The Politics of Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica*], (2007) [rhetoric].

Hunter says, *homonoia* was “a widespread Hellenistic ideal, functioning in both public and private spheres” ([1995] 21). We have evidence for the establishment of shrines and cults to *Homonoia*, and it is also a virtue that is explicitly connected with Philadelphus.<sup>22</sup> In a nutshell, Jason’s interest in preserving the crew’s unity and establishing relationships with foreigners would have been very familiar to Apollonius’ audience.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, in this dissertation, I will use the term “Hellenistic” to refer to how Jason’s realism and collaborative values of camaraderie, diplomacy, and romance are reflections of Hellenistic literary and political realities. He is the poem’s Hellenistic representative. It is important to clarify, however, that “Hellenistic” does *not* necessarily mean “un-Homeric” or “un-Athenian,” and so forth. Indeed, all of these aspects of Jason’s character have existed at least to some degree in literature and history from the archaic to the Hellenistic period of Greek and non-Greek cultures. The Hellenistic period and Alexandrian Egypt did not have a monopoly on political virtues, and Callimachus and Theocritus were certainly not the first poets to aim for realism. However, considering that Apollonius *is* writing in the Hellenistic period, and that his Jason does fit in so well with other Alexandrian poets’ literary aims, it is safe to assume that Apollonius’ audience would have seen in Jason a distinctly Hellenistic figure.

The same holds true for Odysseus: “Hellenistic” does not necessarily mean “un-Odyssean.” In fact, Odysseus, too, displays great diplomatic savvy and enjoys sex with multiple women in the *Odyssey*, and repeatedly throughout the *Argonautica*, Jason evokes Homer’s hero (see, e.g., Chapter 3). That said, Odysseus does *not* achieve the pinnacle of his heroic ascendancy

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<sup>22</sup> Hunter (1996), Mori (2008b) esp. 143.

<sup>23</sup> Also see Stephens (2003) 171-237 for the ways that the *Argonautica* reflects both Hellenistic and Egyptian politics and rituals. See esp. 212ff. for how Jason is a “‘Greek’ Horus.” He shares with this very important Egyptian god the attributes of beauty, youth, and eroticism, and both of them are assisted by women who can use magic.

through eroticism or diplomacy like Jason does, and Jason's group-centric values are antithetical to Odysseus' staunch self-sufficiency.<sup>24</sup> Thus, while Jason is far more similar to Odysseus than to Achilles, he still represents a separate heroic model from both of Homer's protagonists: Achilles encapsulates *biē*, Odysseus embodies *mētis*, and Jason exemplifies Hellenistic realism and collaboration. As we move into the *Argonautica*, we will see different characters perform these three different heroic models: Book 1 will demonstrate the efficacy and potency of the Iliadic, Book 2 the Odyssean, and Books 3-4 the Hellenistic.

### **“The Famous Deeds of Men Born Long Ago:” The Invocation of Book 1**

To reflect Apollonius' unusual structure where there is not one unifying hero of the *Argonautica* but one per book, the invocation introduces the poem by means of the group. This is noticeably different from Homer where both Achilles and Odysseus are mentioned in the first line of their epics. “Sing, goddess, of the wrath of Achilles, the son of Peleus” (Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος, 1.1) is the opening line of the *Iliad*, singling out not only Achilles but also his heroic rage as the heart of the poem. The first few words of the *Odyssey* are similarly rich, establishing Odysseus' prominence and his cunning from the start: “Tell me, Muse, about the wily man” (Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, 1.1). And while these two heroes are not the sole centers of attention in every book of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Odysseus famously does not even show up until Book 5, and Achilles stays out of the fight for the vast majority of the poem), their presence pervades the events that occur. Hunter aptly describes, for example, Achilles' function for the *Iliad*: “[His] ‘absence’ hangs over the action with determinative force; it is a

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<sup>24</sup> Many scholars have noted both the similarities of and differences between Odysseus and Jason; see esp. Hunter (1988) 441 who discusses in detail some of the most crucial dissimilarities between how the two heroes treat their crews.

crucial organising and unifying poetic stratagem, as Homer exploits our knowledge and desire that Achilles *must* return.”<sup>25</sup> That is the Homeric tradition in which Apollonius is working, where a single hero serves as the chief unifying and driving force of the poem—regardless of whether or not he is present—and is introduced as such in the invocation.

Apollonius, however, does not have only one dominant hero in the *Argonautica*. Rather, each book has its own heroic apparatus. Thus, the first line of the poem cites as its topic “the famous deeds of men born long ago” (παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν, 1.1), and the remainder of the four-line invocation provides little information other than itinerary (the Argonauts will sail through the Clashing Rocks) and objective (the golden fleece). We have a general outline of what will be occurring, but otherwise we are not locked into a single “crucial organising and unifying poetic stratagem.” In other words, we have a *geographical* roadmap but no *heroic* roadmap providing us our primary hero and his primary heroic attribute(s). There is, instead, a vacuum. And that is the point: by not leading with an explicitly stated heroic schema, Apollonius leaves the stage open for a series of heroes to take the spotlight in this poem.<sup>26</sup>

But the audience does not yet know Apollonius’ grand plan for the *Argonautica*. They only see the vacuum, not the potential. And there are other gaps of information as well. We are

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<sup>25</sup> Hunter (1993b) 12. Feeney (1986a) is correct to warn against the mistaken assumption that epic has to be about a single character. Aristotle himself states that proper epics are about “one action,” not necessarily “one person” (1459a35ff.), and he provides the *Iliad* as an example of an epic that is the “imitation of a single action” (1462b11). Yet it is clear that Achilles and Odysseus provide much of the driving force for their respective poems.

<sup>26</sup> It is no surprise, therefore, that directly after the proemium, in pride of place, we receive the Catalogue of heroes (1.20-233). Jason receives minor attention in lines 8-17, explaining the background behind Pelias assigning the quest, but otherwise, all of our heroes are introduced at the same time. Anyone could become our Achilles or Odysseus. The early placement of the Catalogue has inspired some scholars, most notably Carspecken (1952), to consider the collective group of Argonauts, not Jason, as the hero of the poem. Cf. Mori (2008b) 63: placing the Catalogue this early reveals “this is an epic that privileges the group over the lone individual.”

introduced to Jason, but we learn precious little about what kind of man—and, more significantly, what kind of *hero*—he is. If anything, here in the invocation, Jason is a blank slate upon whom Pelias inscribes his anxiety and commands, the “man with a single sandal” (οἰοπέδιλον, 1.7) about whom the oracle has warned Pelias. There is also no clearly stated motive for the quest beyond Pelias’ oblique death sentence for Jason (1.15-17). It is not until much later that we learn the religious implications for bringing the fleece to Greece (2.1192-99, 3.336-39), and while Apollonius notes that Pelias has not included Hera in his sacrifices (1.14), we have to wait until Book 3 to learn about her patronage of Jason and her desire to punish Pelias (3.61-75). At this early point in the poem, Apollonius keeps his readers in the dark about several vital pieces of information.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, as I will discuss in the next chapter, when the people of Iolcus express perplexity over why Pelias has assigned the quest (1.242-46), Apollonius’ audience is in a similar position of uncertainty: who will be the Achilles or Odysseus of this poem? What kind of hero will he be and how will he stack up against other heroes in the epic tradition? As it turns out, there will be three different heroic models in the *Argonautica*, and the first of these to take the stage will be the Iliadic Heracles.

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<sup>27</sup> See Clare (2002) 9-32 for how the *Argonautica*’s invocation compares to Homer’s, and how Apollonius holds back important information. Also Feeney (1991) esp. 57-59.

## Chapter 1: Heracles and Iliadic Heroism in Book 1

Heracles' role in the *Argonautica* has been a popular topic of discussion. He is a dominant, influential, and protective force in Book 1, and even after he physically exits the poem, he continues to assist and shape the Argonauts' journey from afar. As many scholars have concluded, his primary function in the epic is to work as a foil for Jason, to perform heroism that is indicative of old heroic models in marked contrast to Jason's new heroic identity. Where Heracles works best alone, Jason depends on others. Where the former thrives on violence and competition, the latter nourishes personal relationships and diplomatic ties. The son of Zeus is inhumanly strong while the son of Aeson is distinctly human. Heracles' methods and identity are fundamentally incompatible with Jason's.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I will be building on this conventional reading of Heracles as a foil, but I will demonstrate that he specifically evokes Iliadic heroics in Book 1, not archaic heroism in general.<sup>2</sup> He embodies the strength, martial prowess, *eris*, and *mēnis* that are at the core of Achilles' own heroic persona. Throughout the first book of the *Argonautica*, Heracles' Iliadic heroic values consistently and repeatedly oppose Jason's Hellenistic principles. Before the *Argo*

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<sup>1</sup> Heracles as a foil for Jason and the Argonauts is the most fundamental basis for interpreting this character. See esp. Lawall (1966); Galinsky (1972) 101-16; Beye (1982) esp. 53-57; Natzel (1992) 196-200; Clauss (1993); Hunter (1993b) 20-41; Mori (2005) 209-36; Papadimitriopoulos (2006) 42-52. Many scholars have also equated the character of Heracles in the *Argonautica* to the entrenched tradition of Homeric epic by the time of the Hellenistic Age; see, esp., DeForest (1994) ch. 4 who interprets the Argonauts' preference and admiration for Heracles as a desire to be in a Homeric, not "Callimachean," epic

<sup>2</sup> Several other scholars have considered Heracles as an Achilles-like figure but not as the chief mode of interpretation for the character. See, e.g., Beye (1969) esp. 40 who notes that Heracles "is on one level a counterpart to the heroic values of Achilles" but in other ways is more similar to the mighty Ajax or Diomedes.

even sets sail from Greece, the people of Iolcus assume the quest will have an Iliadic resolution involving force, and the Argonauts themselves conceive of their upcoming expedition as one requiring the kind of strength and violence that Heracles—not Jason—can provide. When Jason attempts to practice his diplomatic ideals at Lemnos, Heracles exerts his influence to stop him, and the remainder of Book 1 demonstrates both the usefulness of and danger inherent in Iliadic strength, conflict, and wrath. At the end of Book 1, Heracles is pushed out of the epic to make room for Jason’s own heroic elevation, and Heracles’ removal from the epic amounts to an authorial statement by Apollonius that his *Argonautica* will not be like Homer’s *Iliad* in terms of *telos* or heroic identity.

It is not all that surprising, either, that Apollonius chose Heracles, of all the other possible Argonauts, to be his Achilles-like figure in the poem. In fact, the Argonautic Heracles is *primed* to channel Achilles’ spirit, both because of the two heroes’ inherent mythic similarities and—more importantly—because Apollonius engineered it so that his Heracles *could* clearly reflect Iliadic values. Long before Apollonius prepared his narrative, these two legendary heroes were doubles of each other. They are both children and opponents of gods, invaders of Troy, wielders of superhuman strength, and masters of warfare. In the *Iliad*, Achilles even uses Heracles’ death and legacy as a blueprint for his own death and legacy (18.117-21). They are two heroes from different eras traveling roughly parallel paths, making Heracles a natural choice to function as the Iliadic representative on the *Argo*.<sup>3</sup> But not all versions of the Heracles character in Greek literature would have worked for Apollonius’ purposes. Indeed, as I discuss in the Appendix which examines the Heracleian *mythos* from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE, Heracles had

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<sup>3</sup> See the Appendix, under the section “Achilles and Heracles,” for more ways the two heroes reflect one another.

become a remarkably complex and “kaleidoscopic” (Liapis [2006] 46) figure by the Hellenistic period. He could be a violent, angry, mighty soldier; a murderer; a glutton for food and sex; a civilizing champion; a student and exemplar of Virtue; an intellectual, philosopher, judge, father, man—or a mix of any of these roles. He is the hero with a thousand faces, an adaptable figure who morphs to satisfy authors’ various needs. In Apollonius’ case, he needed a stripped-down Heracles free from the moralizing, philosophizing, and humanizing baggage developed by authors in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. He did not need Aristophanes’ licentious drunk or Herodorus’ philosopher. He needed Achilles’ Heracles on the *Argo*. And so, the Heracles we see in the *Argonautica* is rather simple and archaic, a hero most similar to and most able to reflect the heroic ideals of the *Iliad*’s protagonist. In Apollonius’ grand program of staging different heroic models, therefore, Heracles is the star of the Iliadic opening scene.

### **Iliadic Expectations at Iolcus and Lemnos**

The first two-thirds of Book 1 establishes the dominance of Iliadic heroism over Hellenistic heroism. As I discussed in the Introduction, the *Argonautica* opens with a lack of explicit intention or explicitly stated protagonist, and within such a vacuum, two competing claims arise: Jason conceives of the quest as one requiring diplomacy and collaboration, while everyone else is under the impression that the expedition will follow an Iliadic course with Heracles at the head. Both assumptions are correct and incorrect. While we learn in Book 3 that Hellenistic values will, indeed, ultimately be the means of triumph, and that resolution is even foreshadowed at Lemnos, Apollonius intends for Book 1 to feature Iliadic heroism. It is part of his agenda to examine different heroic, Homeric models before elevating Jason’s new heroic persona. As a result, Jason’s authority and efforts are undermined to the point that, after Lemnos, the Argonauts fully abandon Jason’s Hellenistic principles and embrace Heracles’ Iliadic aims.

*The People of Iolcus and Homeric Expectations*

The people of Iolcus are the first in the *Argonautica* to attempt to define the nature of Jason's quest, and they anticipate a distinctly Iliadic *telos*. As the heroes are parading through the city on their way to the ship, the people accompany them and express their uncertainty about the expedition (1.242-46):

Ζεῦ ἄνα, τίς Πελῖαιο νόος; πόθι τόσσον ὄμιλον  
ἠρώων γαίης Παναχαιίδος ἔκτοθι βάλλει;  
αὐτῆμάρ κε δόμους ὄλοῶ πυρὶ δηώσειαν  
Αἰήτεω, ὅτε μή σφιν ἐκὼν δέρος ἐγγυαλίξῃ.  
ἀλλ' οὐ φυκτὰ κέλευθα, πόνος δ' ἄπρηκτος ἰοῦσιν.

Lord Zeus, what is Pelias' purpose? Where far from the Panachaeian land is he casting so great a host of heroes?<sup>4</sup> In a single day they would ravage Aeetes' palace with destructive fire, if he does not willingly hand over the fleece to them.<sup>5</sup> But the expedition is not avoidable, even though the undertaking will be difficult (ἄπρηκτος) for those who go.<sup>6</sup>

The sense of this tricky passage appears to be that while the people doubt the ability of the Argonauts to safely travel such a far distance, they have no doubts whatsoever concerning the heroes' martial expertise.<sup>7</sup> In the people's minds, if Aeetes refuses to give the Argonauts the fleece, there will be only one possible outcome: the heroes will raze Colchis with ease and

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<sup>4</sup> Ardizzoni (1967) 131 remarks that this sentence beginning with πόθι does not mean that the Greeks are unaware that Colchis is the destination, but that they are dumbfounded at the great distance between Iolcus and Colchis. They cannot even conceive of the existence of a land so far outside of the Greek world they know.

<sup>5</sup> For the unusual construction of ὅτε μή + subjunctive, see Mooney (1912) 85 and Ardizzoni (1967) 131.

<sup>6</sup> For the translation of ἄπρηκτος, I am following the scholiast's definition of "difficult" (δύσπρακτος, δυσεργής, δυσκατόρθωτος). See the commentaries of Ardizzoni (1967) 131 and Mooney (1912) 85. For other possible translations, see Race (2008) 23 ["beyond accomplishment," i.e. "impossible"], Glei and Natzel-Glei (1996) 15 ["fast aussichtslose"], Hunter (1993a) 8 ["there is no way out from this terrible labour"], Vian (1978) 1027 ["la tâche est impossible à accomplir"].

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Ardizzoni (1967) 131 and Race (2008) 23. Fränkel (1968) 57 thinks this is a sign of ignorance in "die guten Provinzler" in not knowing just how powerful Aeetes is.

incredible haste (note how “in a single day,” ἀὐτῆμαρ, is in line-initial position).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the people specifically envisage the Argonauts using “destructive fire” (ὄλοῦ πυρί), the very kind of devastation the Greeks famously brought against Troy.<sup>9</sup> The first speech of the *Argonautica*, therefore, suggests that Jason’s quest will have an Iliadic arc: Jason is going to the far East to reclaim something which originated in Greece (cf. Helen), and he will raze the place if Aetes does not hand it over (cf. the sack of Troy).

Thus, in a way, the people of Iolcus are mirrors for Apollonius’ own audience.

Apollonius introduces the speech by saying that “each person” (ἕκαστος, 1.240) was vocalizing their concerns “here and there throughout the city” (ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα κατὰ πόλιν, 1.247). This all-inclusive adjective, as opposed to a more restricted “someone” (τις), and the word’s placement in line-end position stress that *every* person is experiencing this confusion over the rationale behind and the nature of the heroes’ journey. These are the mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers of the city—the ordinary people, the ones who are the observers of the venture, not the participants.<sup>10</sup> From a metapoetic viewpoint, the people of Iolcus are very much like Apollonius’ own readers: we, too, are observers, not participants, of this heroic activity, and we, too, are concerned about

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<sup>8</sup> The adverb ἀὐτῆμαρ only shows up three times in the *Iliad*, one of which refers explicitly to how Patroclus, during his rampage, would have sacked Troy “on the very same day” (18.454) if Apollo had not stopped him.

<sup>9</sup> Nagy (2005) 82-83 observes that fire is a pervasive threat at Troy for *both* sides: there is the “fire of the Achaeans that is destined to destroy the Trojans and, conversely, the fire of the Trojans that threatens to destroy the Achaeans.” He goes on to discuss the cosmic nature of this destructive element.

<sup>10</sup> Fränkel (1968) 56-57, and Glei and Natzel-Glei (1996) 153 n. 44 note how Apollonius is here following the Hellenistic literary program of focusing on realistic, everyday scenes. Fränkel: “In den Kommentaren dieser Betrachter kommt eine bürgerlich hausbackene Sicht auf hochgemuten Heroismus zu Wort” (56).

what the “purpose” (νόος, cf. 1.242) of our poet is.<sup>11</sup> While we are introduced to Jason in the introduction to the *Argonautica*, we have learned nothing of his personality, and Apollonius leaves us no clue about how he intends on resolving the quest. In the absence of authorial clarity on the matter, we naturally reach for Homeric precedent and so too do the people of Iolcus. From a strictly chronological standpoint, this is ridiculous. The Trojan War is still a generation away from these characters’ fictional lives. From a metapoetic interpretation, however, it is remarkably fitting. We know about the struggles at Troy; Homer is our past. The people of Iolcus, therefore, are a conduit for the audience’s own knowledge, uncertainties, and expectations.

As a result, this first speech has remarkable programmatic importance. Just as the first speeches of the *Iliad* (Chryses’ request for his daughter) and the *Odyssey* (Zeus’ reference to Agamemnon’s failed *nostos*) set up important plot or thematic details, the people of Iolcus’ speech provides crucial contextual and meta-contextual direction. They attempt to define for themselves what Pelias’ demands consist of, and, as they imagine the Argonauts pursuing force and violence, they foreshadow to the audience what course Book 1 will take. They have, in essence, launched the *Argo* into familiar, Iliadic waters. The vacuum left behind by the invocation is starting to take shape and color.

“Choose the Best Man:” *The Neoi and Heracles*

Jason, however, does not share the civilians’ expectations. In his first speech in the epic, a veritable manifesto on Jason’s heroic ideals, he conceives of the journey as one requiring collaboration and negotiation, not only force. After the heroes have gathered at the ship, Jason stands up, announces that the gear for the expedition is ready to go, and says, “But, my friends,

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Feeney (1991) 58-59 who, while coming to a different conclusion than my own, also notes that the people’s speech is important to the meaning of the *Argonautica* as a whole: “Even this early the problem is raised of what the τέλος of the poem will be” (59).

since common to us all is our return again to Hellas, and common to us all is our voyage to Aetes' land, therefore now without restraint choose the best man as your leader" (ἀλλά, φίλοι, ξυνός γὰρ ἐς Ἑλλάδα νόστος ὀπίσσω, / ξυναι δ' ἄμμι πέλονται ἐς Αἰήταο κέλευθοι, / τούνεκα νῦν τὸν ἄριστον ἀφειδήσαντες ἔλεσθε / ὄρχαμον ὑμείων, 1.334-39).<sup>12</sup> Rather than assume that he is the leader simply by virtue of the fact that Pelias assigned the quest to him, Jason puts the position up for vote.<sup>13</sup> His repeated use of the adjective "common" (ξυνός, the first word of substance in both of their clauses) stresses his investment in the crew's camaraderie, and the hysteron proteron (where Jason mentions the *nostos* first and the actual expedition second) reveals the importance he places on the men's collective well-being. The crew's *nostos*, it is implied, is of greater value to him than the quest itself.<sup>14</sup> It is indeed telling that in his prayer to Apollo prior to leaving Greece, Jason promises to sacrifice to the god upon the successful completion of the quest not a customary hecatomb (e.g. *Iliad* 1.438) but as many bulls as the number of Argonauts who survive the quest (1.415-19). This is a young hero, therefore, who is concerned about honoring his men's opinions and ensuring—to the best of his ability—their

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<sup>12</sup> Translation Race (2008) 31.

<sup>13</sup> He is expressing something of a democratic spirit here. Cf. Fränkel (1968) 66-67, Levin (1971a) 44-46, Natzel (1992) esp. 185 and 192, Clauss (1993) esp. 62, and Pike (1993) 31. For Jason as a "primus inter pares," see, e.g., Fränkel (1960) 13 and Natzel (1992) 186. Vian (1978) 1028-29 argues that Jason, aware that he is less experienced and respected than Heracles is, decided to call for an election in the hopes that Heracles would do the very thing he does. It was, in effect, a ploy to arrange for himself a more stable base of authority. Cf. Mori (2008b) 60-74 who proposes that Jason only calls for the election because Acastus, the son of Pelias and thereby of a higher status than Jason, joins the group. Calling for an election is a sign of Jason's respect for authority. Also pp. 52-60 where Mori discusses how the result of the election is concluded not through democracy but coercion when Heracles effectively forces the men to choose Jason. She compares Heracles' actions to Macedonian and, to a lesser extent, Ptolemaic politics where support from the military was a key part of legitimizing a leader's authority.

<sup>14</sup> Fränkel (1968) 65-66 also notes the hysteron proteron and says that for Jason, the *nostos* is "eine Kardinalbedeutung für das Unternehmen" (66), even more important than the quest itself. Also Clare (2002) 43.

security.

Furthermore, when Jason uses the adjective “best” (τὸν ἄριστον) in his speech, he has chosen a word charged with meaning for Homer. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, *aristos* indicates the superiority of a character’s distinctive heroic worth. This is discussed at great length in Nagy’s *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* where he provides an analysis of the word in Homeric epic.<sup>15</sup> In the *Iliad*, the title “the best of the Achaeans” (ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν) is Achilles’ special prerogative and proves his heroic superiority over the rest of the Greeks, including Agamemnon (1.244, 1.412, 16.271-72).<sup>16</sup> As Nagy says, the *Iliad* “belongs to Achilles” (29). Similarly, Odysseus also wins this special title in the *Odyssey* when he defeats the suitors and reclaims Penelope (16.76, 18.289, 19.528; cf. 20.335). In both epics, therefore, the right of the primary protagonist to claim the name “best of the Achaeans” is so pervasive that it amounts to a theme. Nagy concludes that *aristos* “serves as a formal measure of a given hero’s supremacy in his own epic tradition...[T]he *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* each appropriate this epithet to fit the central figures of Achilles and Odysseus, respectively” ([1990] 13). As a result, Jason is effectively asking the Argonauts to choose not only a leader, but also to decide on the dominant heroic apparatus for the poem.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Nagy (1999) ch. 2, 26-41. Cf. Edwards (1984) who provides further analysis of *aristos* in Homer and determines that its uses can be divided into two categories: titular (“that figure within a group who is ‘best’ both on the field and in the council”) and emphatic (“describes the affinity of *aristos* for the context of the hero’s death” [62]).

<sup>16</sup> There are other Greeks to whom the phrase is applied, but in each situation, as Nagy shows, their superiority is in some way undercut. For example, Agamemnon can only “boast” (εὐχεται) to hold the distinction (1.91, 2.82), Ajax is “best” only when Achilles is absent (2.768-69), and when the phrase is applied to Patroclus (17.689), he has taken upon himself the identity of Achilles.

<sup>17</sup> Clauss (1993) explores the use of this adjective in Book 1 of the *Argonautica*, following Jason’s journey to becoming “the best” after Heracles leaves the expedition. Clauss says, “in focusing on what sets Jason apart from the other men on the expedition, what makes him ‘the

But Jason does not expect just any “best man” to take the reins. He instructs the gathered Argonauts to select a leader and a hero based off of a very specific skillset: “[choose someone] who will take care of the details of managing quarrels and agreements with foreigners” (ὅ κεν τὰ ἕκαστα μέλοιτο, / νείκεα συνθεσίας τε μετὰ ξείνοισι βαλέσθαι, 1.339-40). Jason does not want a warrior king to lead them. He wants someone who can manage both disputes and treaties, combat and contact. In a nutshell, Jason expects the men to abide by his own rubric of what makes someone the “best man” and “best hero” for the job and for this epic: a dedication to group cohesion and commonality, and the capacity to ease conflicts and forge relationships. He is, as discussed in the Introduction, effectively describing himself and his Hellenistic heroic ideals.

But the young men who make up the expedition evidently disagree with Jason’s criteria, expecting—like the people of Iolcus—that the journey is one which will demand force, not cooperation. As soon as Jason stops speaking, the Argonauts respond as if they never even heard his qualifications: “the young men looked earnestly at bold Heracles who was sitting in the middle of the group, and all of them with one voice bid him to give a sign [that he would accept the position]” (πάπτηναν δὲ νέοι θρασὺν Ἡρακλῆα / ἤμενον ἐν μέσσοισι, μηδὲ ἐ πάντες αὐτῆ / σημαίνειν ἐπέτελλον, 1.341-43). The way in which Apollonius enfolds “him / all the men” (ἐ πάντες) inside “with one voice” (μηδὲ...αὐτῆ), putting Heracles and the men next to each other in the center, physically shows on the page how the Argonauts have aligned themselves with the great Greek hero. Jason, incidentally, is not included. This is ironic. While Jason stresses the unity of the group in his speech and is trusting them to choose a good leader, the first show of

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best of the Argonauts,’ Apollonius can be seen as entering into a discourse on the hero that is a traditional feature of epic poetry” (3).

group cohesion is to oust Jason and unanimously choose Heracles who is wholly unsuitable for the job Jason has described. Heracles is not a diplomat nor a team player. He is a man of might and violence, independent and, at times, dangerous. As the Appendix's survey of Heracles in Greek literature attests, he would just as soon sack a city than meet to settle terms. The word *θρασύν* to describe him in this scene is therefore particularly fitting and defining: he is bold and rash, not politic and strategic. As a result, the Argonauts' first choice for Heracles to be leader implies that they anticipate a quest demanding force instead of compromise and collaboration. As Clauss puts it, "it is obvious that they understand the 'best' among the group to be a man of strength."<sup>18</sup> They want the superstar who sacked Troy with six ships, not this one-shoed Jason who is suggesting they talk their way out of predicaments.

Heracles, too, seems to think that violence will be the chief characteristic of the quest and therefore identifies the crew as a military force. After turning down the men's request that he be leader, Heracles says that he will allow only Jason to direct their *ὄμαδος* (1.347, line-end position). The use of this word is striking. In the LSJ, its basic meaning is "*noise, din*, esp. of the confused voices of a number of men" (A). Branching out from there, it can also mean a "*noisy throng or mob of warriors*" (A.II)—the definition being used here—or the "*din of battle*" (A.III). It therefore often denotes martial activity, and of the four other times Apollonius uses the word in the *Argonautica*, one is referring to its root meaning ("noise, din", 3.270) while the other three are explicitly connected with the heat of battle.<sup>19</sup> For Heracles to choose this word to describe the

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<sup>18</sup> Clauss (1993) 63. Cf. DeForest (1994) ch. 4 for how the crew chooses Heracles "[i]n their zeal for a proper epic adventure" (48). This scene also brings to mind the versions of the Argonautic legend where Heracles was the actual leader of the expedition, not Jason; see Clauss (1993) 63 n. 12.

<sup>19</sup> It is used to describe the "din" while attacking the Doliones (1.1051), the sound of the birds of Ares as being similar to the "din of battle" (2.1077), and the threat of Aeetes coming "with the

Argonauts suggests that he views the crew, at its root, as comprising a militia. Not surprisingly, our first glimpse of the men is them “with their implements of war” (σὺν τεύχεσιν, 1.241). Fighting is and will be their fundamental purpose. But that is not Jason’s conception. While Jason acknowledges that there will be quarrels to settle, he also believes that diplomatic resolutions and treaties will be a vital component of the quest. In his eyes, this is a mission of exchange, not aggression. For Heracles, the purpose of the quest is firmly rooted in the latter.

Before the Argonauts even leave, then, there is tension over what type of epic the *Argonautica* will be, what sort of *telos* there will be, and everyone but Jason seems to be under the impression that their story will be an *Iliad* of sorts. Directly after Heracles endorses Jason as leader and the rest of the Argonauts agree, Apollonius describes Jason thusly: “The warlike (ἀρήιος) Jason himself joyfully (γηθόσυνος) rose up” (1.349-50). This is ironic. The adjective “warlike” (ἀρήιος) is not a word that well-defines this handsome man who prefers diplomacy and the forging of relationships to warfare. It also does not well-define the kind of leader Jason just asked for. It is, however, the kind of leader the rest of the Argonauts had assumed would be taking control. Thus, the incongruity between Jason’s expectations and the men’s is made obvious.<sup>20</sup> There may also be an extra dynamic here: Heracles was notoriously at odds with Ares and his sons (e.g. Eur. *Alc.* 499-504). If Apollonius is making a subtle reference to that legendary hostility, giving Jason the title “Ares-like” at this moment further accentuates the incompatibility

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din of armored men” (4.198). (Note: the translation for 4.198 was suggested by Mooney [1912] 313.)

<sup>20</sup> The adjective ἀρήιος shows up six other times in the *Argonautica*, each time in reference to an Iliadic figure or during times of battle: 1.44 (Polyphemus), 1.95 (Butes), 1.1000 (the Argonauts, as they kill the Earthborn men), 2.122 (Jason, during the battle with the Bebrycians), 2.397 (Colchians), 3.1259 (part of a simile comparing a “warlike” horse to Jason during Aetes’ contest). Cf. Thiel (1996) 69-70 who says the word is being used ironically, and makes a connection to the scene on Jason’s cloak where Aphrodite is looking at her reflection in Ares’ shield (1.742-46). “Ares” has been coopted to serve Jason’s new heroic identity.

between the mentalities of Heracles and Jason.

*Jason vs. Heracles: Who is the Leader?*

Thus, while Jason is elected leader under Heracles' aegis, there are hints that the question of who is leading the Argonauts has not been as cleanly resolved as first appears. Several scholars have noted the similarities between the election scene in the *Argonautica* and the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. On the one hand, the Argonauts appear to have escaped the bitter conflict that descended on the Greek forces at Troy when Heracles steps aside to allow Jason to be selected leader. As Hunter puts it, "Homer's opening quarrel becomes the opening harmony of the Argonauts." On the other hand, as Hunter continues to say, "in the very act of imposing a leader, Heracles takes the lead."<sup>21</sup> Jason has the title; Heracles has the authority. While Jason immediately leaps into his new position with ardor, handing out orders (1.351-62) and presiding over religious duties (1.411-24, 435-36), one cannot help but wonder if the question of who actually holds authority will rise again.<sup>22</sup>

The first suggestion that Heracles, not Jason, is still the *aristos* of the expedition in the eyes of the Argonauts is the way in which he is repeatedly seen in and assigned to the middle position of the group, stressing his dominance. There are fifty-four heroes introduced in the

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<sup>21</sup> Hunter (1993b) 19. See also Levin (1971a) 46, Beye (1982) esp. 31, Clauss (1993) esp. 63-66, Clare (2002) 42-53, Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 128-29, Mori (2008b) 52-74.

<sup>22</sup> See esp. Clare (2002) 47: "A reader who is alive to such allusion [i.e. the quarrel in the *Iliad*] is not altogether sure whether the Argonauts are quite as harmonious as they seem, whether a potential quarrel has indeed been avoided, or whether the issue of leadership will become a source of trouble in the future." Also note how there is something of a challenge (albeit a weak one) to Jason's authority even before the crew leaves Pagasae when Idas suggests Jason is scared and feeble. But in this case, Idas is a rather contemptible character, and the Argonauts collectively disapprove of his words and boasts (1.462-94). The real challenge to Jason's authority will come from Heracles at Lemnos.

Catalogue, and Heracles' name is the twenty-eighth, the very middle of the list.<sup>23</sup> The lines describing him also come at the dead center: the heroes are first mentioned at line 20, Heracles is introduced from 122-131 (not including the brief introduction to Hylas), and the Catalogue ends at line 233. There are 102 lines between the start of the Catalogue and the beginning of Heracles' segment, and there are, again, 102 lines between the end of Heracles' introduction and the end of the Catalogue. Such exact accuracy reveals a careful and conscientious choice by Apollonius to put Heracles at the center. Heracles is also physically central. As mentioned above, he is "sitting in the middle of the group" (ἤμενον ἐν μέσσοισι) during Jason's first speech, and later, the crewmembers ensure that their greatest warrior stays in that spot. While everyone's position on the boat is determined by lot, Heracles receives special accommodation: "they [i.e. the Argonauts] reserved the middle [oaring bench] for Heracles and, separate from the other heroes, for Ancaeus who lived in the city of Tegea; [the Argonauts] left the middle oaring bench for these two men alone (οἴοισιν), not in any way by lot" (1.396-400). Apollonius basically says the same thing twice back-to-back, making it very explicit that the crew wanted Heracles and Ancaeus, a rather Heraclean figure himself (see 1.163-71), to take the middle row. And as if the emphatic redundancy of lines 396-400 was not enough, Apollonius reminds us yet again as the *Argo* is leaving the harbor that everyone is in their allocated seats while Ancaeus and Heracles sit in the middle (1.528-32). In short, Heracles is repeatedly and categorically established as the central Argonaut, implying that he—not Jason—may still be the dominant authority figure on the crew roster.

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<sup>23</sup> This has been noted by several scholars: e.g. Carspecken (1952) 48, Vian (1974) 9, Claus (1993) 26-36. See Claus more generally for the many ways in which Apollonius repeatedly sets up an opposition between skill and strength in the Catalogue (e.g. Orpheus vs. Heracles, Talau/Areius/Leodocus vs. Boreas, Argus vs. Acastus).

And, as we learn at Lemnos, that is, indeed, the case. When the Argonauts arrive at Lemnos, the first major stop on their journey, Apollonius ever so subtly casts doubt on Jason's leadership by emphasizing the crew's collective authority and making it grammatically unclear who the Argonauts' commander even is. After landing on the island and before Jason leaves to meet Hypsipyle alone, all of the decisions are made by the entire group: "the best men sent forth Aethalides" as a messenger (1.640-41), "they asked" the Lemnian representative Iphinoe what her intentions were (1.609-11), and, after she delivers her message welcoming the Argonauts' leader into the city, "they swiftly sent" Jason to go (1.719-20). Jason is not acting much like a leader at all; the orders are being given by the crew at large.

Jason's inconspicuous presence is bolstered when Apollonius completely avoids using Jason's name or patronymic in this section, a seemingly conscious and deliberate authorial decision that further undermines Jason's legitimacy. Hypsipyle tells Iphinoe to ask "the man, whoever is commanding the expedition (ὅς τις στόλου ἡγεμονεύει)" (1.703-704) to come to the palace to talk with her, and Iphinoe relays the message to the Argonauts, requesting that "the ship's commander, whoever he is (ὅς τις ὄρωρεν)"<sup>24</sup> (1.717) enter the city. Twice, with different language, close together, we are hearing the question, "Who is the Argonauts' leader?" And instead of clearly identifying Jason as that leader, Apollonius refuses to call him by name for the next nearly 150 lines. Though Jason plays a very active role in this segment, only vague pronouns are used to describe him: the Argonauts send "him" (τόν, 1.719) to go, "he" (ὁ, 1.721) puts on his cloak, Atalanta gave "to him" (οἱ, 1.770) the spear, Iphinoe led "him" (μιν, 1.788) to Hypsipyle, and so forth.<sup>25</sup> While it is certainly not unusual for Apollonius or any author to avoid

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<sup>24</sup> See Mooney (1912) 114 for translating ὄρωρεν as ἐστί.

<sup>25</sup> The word "hero" (ἥρωες, 1.781) is also used for Jason as he proceeds through the city. See Thiel (1996) for how ἥρωες is consistently used in the *Argonautica* for Jason in a dubious and/or

names, the length at which not a single “son of Aeson” (Αἰσονίδης) or “Jason” (Ἰάσων) appears is, at the very least, notable. While we, the readers, *know* that Jason is the antecedent because of context, the last time his name was actually used in the epic was way back when the ship departed Pagasae (1.534).

One interpretation of this ambiguous grammar is that it allows the results of the election scene at Pagasae to remain uncertain. Is Jason the leader? Or is it Heracles, the man consistently at the center who was the men’s first choice and was the one ultimately to get Jason elected? It is surely no coincidence that when we finally do receive Jason’s name in line-initial position at 854 (Αἰσονίδης), Heracles’ name comes directly afterwards in line 855 (Ἡρακλῆος), also in line-initial position.<sup>26</sup> Reading these two lines on the physical page, we cannot help but see the two together, opposing one another. And it is directly after the two men’s names are listed that Heracles publicly and overtly questions Jason’s authority. Thus, at Lemnos, the Argonauts as a whole are the ones performing the responsibilities of leader, and when the Lemnian women ask for the Argonauts’ commander to appear, the grammar of the passage never once identifies Jason as that commander. We know it is Jason, but the grammar leaves the question of “Who is the leader?” ambiguous and ill-defined.

Amidst such uncertainty, it is no wonder that Heracles sweeps in to assert his influence and end the Argonauts’ lengthy delay, effectively stopping Jason from turning Book 1 of the *Argonautica* into an *Odyssey* and thereby allowing an Iliadic mindset to continue thriving.

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negative way, such as when he kills Apsyrtus (4.477 and 750) or, as here, when he displays his heroism through the unconventional means of *eros*.

<sup>26</sup> Here are the lines:

ἔνθ' ὁ μὲν Ὑψιπύλης βασιλῆιον ἐς δόμον ὄρτο  
Αἰσονίδης· δοί δ' ἄλλοι ὄπη καὶ ἔκυρσαν ἕκαστος,  
Ἡρακλῆος ἄνευθεν, ὁ γὰρ παρὰ νηὶ λέλειπτο  
αὐτὸς ἐκὼν παῦροί τε διακρινθέντες ἑταῖροι (1.853-56).

Scholars have long noted how Hypsipyle is a blend of Calypso, Nausicaa, and Circe, the three women because of whom Odysseus, like Jason, was diverted from his chief mission.<sup>27</sup> Nausicaa signified only a brief delay to Odysseus' *nostos*, but Circe was a full year and Calypso was seven years. While Jason and the Argonauts have not been with the Lemnian women for years, they clearly have no intentions of leaving any time soon. Apollonius says, "From one day to the next the voyage was continually postponed, and they would have stayed there and lingered for a long time..." (ἀμβολίη δ' εἰς ἡμαρ ἀεὶ ἐξ ἡματος ἦεν / ναυτιλίας· δηρὸν δ' ἂν ἐλίνυον αὐθι μένοντες, 1.861-62).<sup>28</sup> The words "delay" (ἀμβολίη) and "long" (or "too long," δηρὸν) are first in their respective sentences, emphasizing the excessive time spent at Lemnos. Nestling the unnecessary but emphatic "continually" (ἀεὶ) between "from one day / to the next" (εἰς ἡμαρ and ἐξ ἡματος) further brings attention to the crew's protracted loitering. Apollonius does not specify if the delay is a matter of days or months, but it is clear that precious time is being wasted.

Annoyed by the interruption, Heracles finally speaks up, and, like Odysseus' men, forces Jason to remember the quest and his homeland. On Circe's island, after a full year has passed, the crew finally comes to Odysseus and complains, "Fool! Already now remember your native land, if indeed it is your destiny that you safely arrive at your high-roofed house and to your native earth" (δαιμόνι', ἤδη νῦν μιμνήσκεο πατρίδος αἴης, / εἶ τοι θέσφατόν ἐστι σωθῆναι καὶ ἰκέσθαι / οἶκον ἐς ὑπόροφον καὶ σὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν, *Od.* 10.472). The repetition of "native land" (πατρίδος αἴης) and "native earth" (πατρίδα γαῖαν), both in line-end position, strongly indicate the men's yearning for home (see also 10.485-86). Similarly, in Heracles' speech to the

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<sup>27</sup> For a full list of the similarities with pertinent passages from both Homer and Apollonius, see Clauss (1993) esp. 130-37. The following example I relate of the relationship between Lemnos and Circe is based on Clauss' observations.

<sup>28</sup> Translation Race (2008) 73.

Argonauts, he begins, “Fools! Does a kinsman’s spilled blood keep us from our homeland? Or did we come here from there in need of wives because we scorn our native women?” (δαιμόνιοι, πάτρης ἐμφύλιον αἶμα’ ἀποέργει / ἡμέας; ἦε γάμων ἐπιδευέες ἐνθάδ’ ἔβημεν / κεῖθεν, ὄνοσσάμενοι πολιήτιδας; 1.865-66).<sup>29</sup> He starts the passage with the same critical “fool” (δαιμόνιος), and, like Odysseus’ men, he uses two words to evoke the Greeks’ homeland (πάτρης and πολιήτιδας). One final textual similarity to solidify the connection between these two episodes is how Eurylochus had originally wanted to remain near the ship—παρὰ νηὶ λέλειπτο (*Od.* 10.447)—instead of joining Odysseus’ crew to go see Circe, while Heracles, too, in the same line position, “stayed by the ship” (παρὰ νηὶ λέλειπτο, 1.855; Clauss [1993] 135-36). It is unclear how long the Argonauts would have stayed if Heracles had not intervened, but it is possible that he saved them years of delay by speaking out sooner than Odysseus’ men.

Heracles’ speech also directly compares his heroism to Jason’s, and—at least here in Book 1—Heracles appears to come off the better hero in the comparison. When Jason accepted Hypsipyle’s invitation, he implied that the aid she was promising was, indeed, needful (cf. ἄμμι σέθεν χατέουσι, 1.837). The Argonauts have only been sailing for roughly five days, however, and at Pagasae, we heard two separate times about how well-stocked with provisions the ship was (1.234-37, 1.332-33). It is unlikely, therefore, that true, dire need for supplies inspired Jason’s decision. The protracted delay, then, as Heracles suggests, is wholly unnecessary and, more importantly, thoroughly unheroic. He states, “We will never be famous (εὐκλειεῖς) shut in with foreign women in this way for so long; nor will some god willingly give any fleece automatically (αὐτόματον) to us because of our prayers (εὐξάμενοισιν)” (1.869-71). For Heracles, fame comes from active labor, not all that surprising for the hero who is most famed

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

for the Twelve Labors. And it is significant that he specifically mentions the inadequacy of prayers here since Jason was the one who offered the prayer to Apollo back at Pagasae, begging for divine assistance in the accomplishment of the quest (1.411-24). In Heracles' mind (and he is not all that wrong), prayers are all that Jason has actively provided to the quest thus far.<sup>30</sup> With impressively caustic scorn, Heracles closes his speech by stating that the Argonauts should return to the quest and leave Jason behind in Hypsipyle's bed so that he can father a nation of Lemnian boys and win a "great reputation" (μεγάλη βάζις, 1.874). In other words, the Argonauts will continue on their own and become "famous" (εὐκλειεῖς), while Jason's one claim to fame will be the blue ribbon for best breeder at the county fair.<sup>31</sup> Of course, for other Greek authors' versions of Heracles, begetting hordes of children was indeed a "great reputation" (μεγάλη βάζις), but for the more archaic Heracles Apollonius chose to give us in the *Argonautica*, wasting time fathering children in the middle of an active quest is fundamentally unheroic and (as he implies in lines 1.866-67) unpatriotic.<sup>32</sup> After Heracles' speech, the men—sheepish and shamed (1.875-76)—immediately prepare to leave Lemnos. Their swift reaction confirms Heracles' influence and authority over the crew—and over Jason as well who, as Apollonius notes, is the first (παροίτατος, 1.910)<sup>33</sup> to get on the ship.

Lemnos does not immediately appear, therefore, as a very impressive first addition to

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<sup>30</sup> Several scholars have emphasized Jason's religious responsibilities on the expedition. See, e.g., Mori (2008b) esp. 141-42.

<sup>31</sup> Note, also, how Heracles is suggesting (seriously or not) that the crew break up, an act that strongly opposes the Argonauts' strong sense of cohesion and commonality; see Mori (2008b) 73.

<sup>32</sup> See the Appendix for more examples of how Apollonius stripped his Heracles of common attributes like the hero's infamous promiscuity.

<sup>33</sup> For παροίτατος as the superlative of πάροιθε, see Mooney (1912) 125. He also notes that Apollonius is the only author to use the superlative form of this adverb.

Jason's resume as Argonautic commander.<sup>34</sup> When they first arrive on the island, the crew is the one making decisions and handing out orders (even to Jason), and Heracles has to shame the men into getting back on the road. In his eyes, the Argonauts' sexual exploits at Lemnos achieve nothing of value and constitute a real threat to the men's heroic advancement.

Heracles is, however, "absolutely wrong" on several counts.<sup>35</sup> Lemnos is something of a dry run of the events at Colchis where Hera's help and Medea's love for Jason are the key to winning the fleece. While Heracles scoffs at the idea of a god just handing the fleece over to the Argonauts, that is, in effect, *exactly* what ends up happening when Hera works behind the scenes to ensure Jason's success at Colchis. Moreover, it is here at Lemnos that Jason's status as a "love hero" first finds expression. As several scholars have observed, Jason's preparation to join Hypsipyle is modeled on conventional Homeric arming scenes except that the martial is translated into the amatory: in the place of Achilles' shield we have Jason's delicate robe that celebrates love and skill in its images (1.721-67), Jason arms himself with a spear that was given to him by a woman whom he denied participation in the quest because he feared the quarrels that might arise because of sexual jealousy (1.678-73), and as he proceeds through the city he is compared to a star that enchants the eyes of young brides pining for their future husbands (1.774-80; cf. the famous star simile describing Achilles in *Iliad* 22.25-32). As Beye puts it, "The entire passage commencing with the description of the cloak suggests the prelude to an ἀριστεία that is in general reminiscent of Achilles' preparation for battle at the close of *Iliad* 19. The one crucial

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Mori (2008b) 104: "The encounter with the Lemnian women constitutes Jason's first diplomatic assignment."

<sup>35</sup> Clauss (1993) 138. Also see 139-40 for how this scene presents Heracles in a negative light by comparing him to the fainthearted Eurylochus and the despised Thersites: "The image of a Heracles who talks like a hero, but in words that recall Homeric cowards, creates a striking dissonance" (139). Thus, Apollonius casts a subtle, negative pallor over Heracles in this scene.

difference is that Jason's ἀρετή is his sexuality."<sup>36</sup> Jason is, at Lemnos, establishing his potent ability to woo women, and while Heracles may mock Jason for this sexuality, it is the very way in which Jason will win Medea to his side and acquire the means whereby to retrieve the fleece. Thus, contrary to Heracles' contemptuous speech, it is Jason's special talent at winning the favor of women—namely, Hera and Medea—that allows him to win the fleece and earn Heracles' celebrated designation of "famous" (εὐκλειεῖς).<sup>37</sup>

Lemnos is, after all, an excellent line in Jason's resume, an early experiment in testing out the heroic values that will win him *kleos* at Colchis. There is also the truly momentous fact that the very descendants of one of the sexual liaisons at Lemnos will be the ones to eventually settle Libya, the future home of Alexandria (see Chapter 4).<sup>38</sup> The Argonauts' stay at Lemnos, therefore, is anything but a threat to the men's heroic advancement, and the seeds planted here lead to the existence of Apollonius, his audience, and all of Alexandria. But neither Heracles nor even the audience knows all of this yet. For now, Heracles has come off the better and more productive hero of the two. And it is after Heracles' successful challenge of Jason's poor

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<sup>36</sup> Beye (1969) 43. For more discussions about how Lemnos establishes Jason's presence as a "love hero," see esp. Clauss (1993) 106-47 and Zanker (1979). Cf. Mori (2008b) 102-13 who argues that scholars have focused too much on the erotic overtones of the scene and, particularly, the cloak, missing how the cloak and spear Jason is holding are "marks of leadership peculiar to Hellenistic kings" (108). Thus, Hypsipyle's surprising and sudden decision to offer the kingdom to Jason is based more on her acceptance of his "noble bearing and regalia" (110) than his sexual attraction.

<sup>37</sup> See Natzel (1992) esp. 192 and Clauss (1993) esp. 176 for how Heracles' inability to accept women's help is another reason why he is pushed out of the epic; otherwise, the Argonauts never would have turned to Medea for assistance and Hera's divine will would have been thwarted.

<sup>38</sup> Mori (2008b) 40: "individual heroic grandeur is outpaced by communal concerns... Jason's quest is merely the heroic frame for what really matters: the establishment of a Greek community in northern Africa." Also see Thalmann (2011) esp. 47-51 for how the Argonauts *transform* the space they move through (leading to the spread of Greek identity and "appropriation of space," 36) while Heracles does not: "Herakles *moves through* space. He brings about very little change in it and does not alter the relationship between places. What he does is kill monsters" (48).

leadership that the epic begins to take on an increasingly Iliadic tone. In short, Heracles won.

To sum up this section, before the crew even leaves Iolcus, there are three separate suggestions—from the people of Iolcus, the Argonauts, and Heracles—that the quest will have an Iliadic *telos*, entailing violence and force. And when the expedition gets derailed at the Argonauts' first stop on Lemnos, taking on an Odyssean and Hellenistic tinge, Heracles challenges Jason's authority and pushes the plot back on course. The message is becoming clear: Book 1 of the *Argonautica* is part of the Iliadic world, and its star and *aristos* is Heracles, not Jason. It is no surprise, therefore, that Achilles himself has a cameo in the first book of Apollonius' epic: as the Argonauts sail away from Greece, Cheiron and his wife show baby Achilles to his father Peleus and wave goodbye to the heroes (1.553-58).<sup>39</sup>

### **Iliadic Heroism: Strength and Martial Excellence**

By line 910, Heracles is firmly established as the *aristos* of Book 1, and the civilians of Iolcus and the Argonauts themselves have placed their Iliadic hopes in his lap. In this section, I will examine how exactly Heracles evokes Achilles' heroic identity. Indeed, time and again, Heracles displays great feats of strength and martial excellence in service to the expedition. He, like Achilles, is superhumanly powerful and a true threat to all enemies on the battlefield. Also like Achilles, Heracles poses a threat to the crew because of the volatility and innate aggression of Iliadic values. In the Argonauts' ill-fated encounter with the Doliones, Apollonius begins to foreshadow that Heracles' heroism is perhaps not so beneficial for the crew after all.

#### *Strength at Iolcus and Pagasae: Biē Hērāklēos*

Before the expedition leaves Pagasae at line 519, Apollonius repeatedly associates

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<sup>39</sup> See esp. Ransom (2014) for a discussion of Achilles' presence at the launching of the expedition.

Heracles with strength, unambiguously indicating that his heroic worth and his worth for the expedition emanate from *biē*. The Catalogue entry for the hero begins, rather emphatically, “And nor do we hear that the might of stout-hearted Heracles disregarded the son of Aeson’s summons” (οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ βίην κρατερόφρονος Ἡρακλῆος / πευθόμεθ’ Αἰσονίδαο λιλαιομένου ἀθερίζαι, 1.122-23). The Greek phrase οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ is insistent, as though the thought of the legendary Heracles joining the crew is so spectacular some might doubt it.<sup>40</sup> Two words denoting “strength” (βίην κρατερόφρονος) are placed right next to each other, and Apollonius further emphasizes Heracles’ might by introducing the hero with the periphrastic formula “the might of Heracles” (βίη Ἡρακλῆος). As discussed in the Appendix, this is a common phrase used for Heracles which links the hero and his heroic merit directly to the quality of *biē*; it is a means of approaching the man *through* his bodily strength.<sup>41</sup> While Apollonius does not use the formula again in the *Argonautica* (no surprise considering the poet’s reluctance to repeat epithets), he does use a similar periphrastic construction to describe Heracles right before the *Argo* sets sail: “the great strength of Heracles (μέγα σθένος Ἡρακλῆος) sat in the middle [of the ship]” (1.531-32). Twice before we even leave Greece, therefore, Apollonius encourages us to see Heracles as an embodiment of might and strength.

Further establishing Heracles as a Strongman archetype, Apollonius gives us two images of the hero physically demonstrating his great *biē* before the Argonauts set out. The first is in the Catalogue when we see him carrying on his back the fearsome Erymanthian boar from Arcadia to Argos (1.125-31). As the bird flies, the distance from Mount Erymanthos to Argos is at least

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<sup>40</sup> See Denniston (1978) s.v. οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ for its potentially emphatic quality.

<sup>41</sup> Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1998) 113 says it remarkably well: “Ce n’est pas une simple formule poétique; c’est bien la force vitale qui se trouve ainsi héroïsée, et le corps du héros qui en est lui-même une arme.”

fifty miles, and considering that this famed boar likely weighed in the hundreds of pounds, not to mention that it was still “living” (ζῶον 1.126) and thus certainly harder and more perilous to hold, this is an impressive and potentially impossible feat for any normal human. The second image is of Heracles slaughtering the sacrificial bulls in preparation for the journey. He and Ancaeus oversee this task, and Apollonius indicates the strength of each by nestling the adjective “über-mighty” (ὑπέρβιος) between their names: Ἀγκαῖος ὑπέρβιος Ἡρακλῆης τε (1.426). While grammatically the adjective belongs to Ancaeus, the placement links the quality of excessive strength to both. Yet again, Heracles is being explicitly associated with *biē*.

Thus, when Apollonius introduces us to Heracles in the first five hundred lines or so of Book 1, he repeatedly reminds us of the hero’s exceptional strength. In the case of the sacrifice, he also prefigures that it is through this strength—and *violence*—that Heracles will be of use to the Argonauts, much like Achilles was of use to the Greeks. These scenes of Heracles at the beginning of the epic are an early indication to the audience that Apollonius is giving us Heracles the Strongman and Warrior, not Heracles the Comedic Buffoon or Heracles the Philosophical Exemplar. Apollonius has brought the Iliadic Heracles onboard.

#### *Martial Prowess: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly*

After the Argonauts leave Lemnos, they fast find themselves thrust into two tests (cf. ἄεθλος, 1.1012) of their Iliadic prowess, giving Heracles a chance to demonstrate his heroic merit as a martial warrior. In the first of these events, Jason and the other crewmembers leave “the younger men” (ὄπλοτέρουσιν, 1.992) behind with Heracles on the ship where they are attacked by the Earthborn men. These six-armed monsters are “violent and wild” (ὑβρισταὶ τε καὶ ἄγριοι, 1.942) and they have “über-mighty hands” (χεῖρες ὑπέρβιοι, 1.944)—a true challenge for any soldier. What follows is an exemplary scene of Heracles’ excellence in battle: he reacts

promptly (ἀθῆ, 1.992) and with deadly accuracy, shooting them down “one after another” (ἐπασσυτέρους, 1.994) with his arrows until the rest of the crew returns to help kill the Earthborn men (1.998-1002). At no point in this episode does Apollonius note that the “younger men” (ὀπλότεροι) also assist Heracles. Rather, Heracles holds off the Earthborn men by himself until Jason and the others come. The implication is that if Heracles had not been with these younger, presumably less experienced men, they may have died in the encounter, unable to defend themselves against such a formidable enemy. The *Argo* may have also been crushed by the Earthborn men’s assault or, at the very least, the harbor would have been blocked (1.989-91). Indeed, when Odysseus faced the Laestrygonians, a foe rather similar to the Earthborn men as Clauss notes ([1993] 159-60), the giant-like men manage to destroy eleven of Odysseus’ twelve ships, utterly decimating his crew. One can only imagine the depths of despair the sensitive Jason would have descended into if he had lost a chunk of his crew—and the youngest ones to boot—and the ship on top of that as Odysseus did. And yet here in the *Argonautica*, under the watchful eye of Heracles, not a single soul is harmed. It is, as Clare says, Heracles’ “finest hour as an Argonaut” ([1992] 90). Heracles’ martial prowess is crucial, preserving the lives of the crew and the welfare of the quest.

In the second battle scene, the Argonauts—especially the crew’s Heraclean figures—have a second chance to prove their Iliadic merit when they easily defeat the Doliones. Apollonius portrays the ill-fated encounter in the manner of an *androktasia* (ἀνδροκτασία), a common element in the *Iliad*.<sup>42</sup> There is a list of who kills whom, but the fight is very one-sided. Thirteen Doliones die while not a single Argonaut is even said to be wounded, and the Greeks quickly rout the hapless warriors who scamper back behind the city walls “like doves flee *en*

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<sup>42</sup> See Beye (1969) 42-43 who calls it a perversion of an ἀνδροκτασία.

*masse* before swift-winged hawks” (1.1049-50).<sup>43</sup> The Argonauts easily triumph. Even Jason successfully kills one of the men, though Apollonius seems to undercut the achievement by suggesting that Jason sneaked an attack in right as Cyzicus was in the process of turning to face him (τετραμμένον ἰθὺς ἐοῖο, 1.1032). More impressive are the victories of the Heraclean figures on the expedition. Only three Argonauts display their superior prowess by killing two Doliones: Heracles (big surprise), Peleus (notably the father of Achilles), and Meleager (a “mini-Heracles;” cf. 1.196-98). These three warriors alone killed six of the thirteen men. Thus, Apollonius gives us two skirmishes back-to-back where the Argonauts—especially Heracles—display their martial skill in service to the expedition.

But this second skirmish was a mistake. The Argonauts and Doliones are not enemies and only mistake each other as such because of the darkness of night. When morning brings comprehension, both groups descend into abject misery with days of lamenting, and Cleite, the new wife of the all-too-young Cyzicus, commits suicide (1.1053-77). As a result, the first major hand-to-hand combat of the *Argonautica* is decidedly negative. The people of Iolcus and the Argonauts themselves had expected and wanted war, but when it finally arrives, it is nothing like the battles of Troy. Beye says, “In Homer killing on the battlefield is shown to be self-affirmation, power, and triumph; but here the importance of the victims makes it very simply a brutal nullification of life.”<sup>44</sup> This is the first explicit hint of many that Iliadic heroics are not right for this quest.

This message is made even more profoundly when we compare the disaster with the

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<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 4 for how this simile and its image of hawks and doves return in both Books 3 and 4 as a statement on the opposition between Iliadic and Hellenistic heroics.

<sup>44</sup> Beye (1982) 99; cf. (1969) 42-43. Also Lawall (1966) 151-53: “The episode at Cyzicus teaches Jason to hate war” (153).

Doliones to the events at Lemnos where warfare was *averted* because of diplomacy and communication. In the Lemnian episode, the Argonauts are sailing all day (αὐτῆμαρ) when, at night or twilight (ἐπὶ κνέφας; cf. ἡματοσ ἀνομένοιο, 1.651), the wind dies down and the crew stops at the island (1.605-608). The women assume they are being attacked by Thracians and arm for battle, but their panic is assuaged and disaster averted when the Argonauts send a diplomatic envoy, Aethalides, to talk with the islanders (1.633-52). The subsequent merging of the two groups is a veritable celebration of life since the promised new generation of Lemnian girls *and* boys will keep the society from dying out.

The events at Cyzicus are preceded by very similar details, but the Doliones' and Argonauts' reactive and aggressive response to encountering each other is entirely different. When a favorable wind starts blowing, the Argonauts leave the island Cyzicus and sail “for the whole day” (πανήμερος; cf. αὐτῆμαρ, 1.605). At night (νοκτός), the good wind is replaced by contrary winds that blow the Argonauts off course back to Cyzicus, and the Doliones arm themselves for battle because they believe the Pelasgians are attacking them (1.1012-25). The similarities between this scene and Lemnos are numerous: in both situations, the Argonauts are sailing for a full day under good sailing conditions when night brings an ill-wind that forces them to stop at an inhabited island, and the native islanders mistakenly assume they are being attacked and prepare for battle. But unlike Lemnos where communication forestalls further misunderstanding, the Doliones and Argonauts jump into the fray. Unable to recognize one another, the Argonauts fight the Doliones (who, in a twist of dramatic irony, are here called εὔξεινος, 1.1018, before the slaughter ensues; cf. εὐξείνωσ, 1.963), and—as mentioned above—thirteen of the “hospitable” hosts end up dead. Apollonius notes before hostilities break out that this calamity happened because “not any one [of the Argonauts] wisely/carefully (ἐπιφραδέως)

noticed that the island was the same,” and the Doliones assumed for no apparent reason that the landing party was hostile (1.1021-25). Neither side paused long enough to verify what was actually happening. They did not think. They simply reacted. Granted, it does appear that the events at Cyzicus occur when night has completely fallen while at Lemnos it is ambiguous whether it is dusk or dark (see the references above), but the end result is still the same: at Lemnos, the situation was disarmed through negotiation and communication (Hellenistic values), while at Cyzicus, the situation escalated when the soldiers struck first and thought later (a rather more Iliadic reaction).<sup>45</sup> A scene from Book 1 of the *Iliad* is appropriate to cite here: after Agamemnon announces he is going to take Briseis, Achilles is on the verge of attacking his commanding officer but stops when Athena swoops in, yanks him back by the hair, and talks him down (1.188-222). Iliadic heroics are inherently volatile when not moderated.

Thus far in the epic, therefore, we have witnessed demonstrations of Iliadic strength and martial prowess, and Heracles has been the main representative of both these heroic values. The disaster at Cyzicus, however, is the first blatant sign that while Iliadic heroics are immensely helpful and even necessary to protect the crew (as seen with the Earthborn men), the heroic traits exemplified in Achilles and Heracles can also be reactive and dangerous.

### **Eris and Mēnis: The Beginning of the *Iliad* and the End of the Iliadic**

It is fitting, then, that the next time Heracles takes center stage, he begins to pose a threat to both the ship and her crew. The last two hundred lines of Book 1 give us the darkest aspects of Iliadic heroism: *eris* and *mēnis*. They are the emotions that trigger so much anguish and death on the fields of Troy, and when Heracles brings these Iliadic attributes to the *Argonautica* as the

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<sup>45</sup> See Rose (1985) 31-32 who also notes the similarities between the Lemnians (who go from hostility to friendship) and the Doliones (who go from friendship to hostility).

epic's Iliadic representative, he is immediately pushed out of the epic. Apollonius' meaning is clear: Iliadic heroics have no permanent place in Jason's mission.

*Eris: The Quarrel of the Iliad*

Apollonius introduces *eris* to the Argonauts accompanied by hubris and profound danger, giving the word a particularly negative connotation. The men are leaving the island of the Doliones when "strife, rivalry" (ἔρις, 1.1153) spurs them on to have a contest. *Eris* in and of itself is not bad, as Hesiod famously explains in the *Works and Days* (11-34). Back on Cyzicus, in fact, the Argonauts had joined with the Doliones in funeral games (1.1060-61), the kind of inner- and inter-state competition that can build unity. But in this situation, Apollonius is quite explicit about the poor decision the Argonauts are making. "Trusting in the calmness" (1.1156) of the sea, and presumably forgetting just how mercurial the waters can be, they decide to row as hard and quick as they can. The winner will be the last person to give up (1.1154). This is stupid: if everyone stops rowing, what happens to the boat? How will they have the strength to react if a threat emerges? And, indeed, a threat does emerge. A huge storm arises, and the Argonauts, predictably "weakened by their toil" (1.1161), are unable to keep rowing. As Clauss ([1993] 181) aptly remarks, Poseidon himself may have caused the storm because the Argonauts, according to Apollonius, were rowing the ship faster than Poseidon's own horses could gallop (1.1156-58). They were overreaching their mortal limits, challenging the gods themselves whether deliberately or not. Regardless, by embracing *eris*, they have welcomed great danger into their lives.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Mori (2008b) 56 argues that the *eris* in this scene is the kind of "good" *eris* described by Hesiod, not the "bad." It is true that there is no negative connotation to the word in this scene *per se*, but, as I discuss, Apollonius makes it very clear that the Argonauts' engagement in *eris* here is unwise and dangerous.

Unsurprisingly, the only one of the Argonauts who does not tire is Heracles. But in the very process of saving the crew, he threatens their safety. Apollonius says, “But Heracles dragged his distressed colleagues along at top speed by the strength of his hands, and he shook the fitted planks of the ship” (αὐτὰρ ὁ τούσγε / πασσυδίη μογέοντας ἐφέλκετο κάρτει χειρῶν / Ἡρακλῆς, ἔτίνασσε δ’ ἀρηρότα δούρατα νηός, 1.1161-63). Holding off his name until the beginning of 1163 is effective, suggesting the magnitude of Heracles’ deed. It holds a sense of astonishment and awe over what is happening, and could perhaps be better translated as, “He dragged them along with the strength of his hands—Heracles did!” This is a remarkable thing he is doing. But it is also ambiguous. On the one hand, Heracles is saving them, especially considering that if he does not keep the ship moving, they might be pushed back to the unlucky Doliones for a second time. On the other hand, Heracles is so strong—*too* strong—that he is shaking (ἔτίνασσε) the well- and god-built *Argo*. In his very act of rescuing the ship, he is threatening its integrity.

And this is not the first nor last time that Heracles has been a dangerous presence for the ship. Back in Iolcus when he first boarded the *Argo*, the keel of the ship “was submerged” (ὕπεκλύσθη, 1.533). While this may very well be a reference to the tradition where the ship herself kicked Heracles off the expedition because he was too heavy to carry,<sup>47</sup> the image also suggests that he does not really fit on the ship, that his presence has a detrimental effect on the ship’s ability to carry out her most fundamental job of staying afloat. Later in the epic, at the land of the Mysians, Heracles “shakes” (τινάξας, 1.1196; cf. ἔτίνασσε, 1.1163) loose a tree from the earth, uprooting it with only a club and his bare hands “trusting in his manliness” (ἠνορέη

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<sup>47</sup> Apollodorus 1.9.19 (reporting Pherecydes’ version of the Argonautic legend); see Claus (1993) 93 n. 11 and Gantz (1993) 348.

πίσυνος 1.1198; cf. γαληναίη πίσυνοι, 1.1156). And in this act of arboreal assault, Heracles is compared to a blast of wind that rips a ship's mast away (1.1201-1204).<sup>48</sup> This image is the climax of progressively more destructive images: first he caused the ship to sink a little, then he threatened the ship's very integrity in the rowing scene, and now he is imagined ripping its mast off. His enormous strength has become dangerous and hostile. He is simply too much for the *Argo*.

And this threat goes beyond Heracles' excessive and thus potentially hazardous strength. It also juxtaposes the incompatibility of his Iliadic ideals with Jason's desire for unity. The Argonauts get into this problem in the first place because *eris* incites them to row against one another, making them too fatigued and ill-prepared to deal with the storm. Their competitive spirit nearly destroys them and would have done so if Heracles had not saved them, indisputably winning their rowing match.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, *eris* does not align well with Jason's objectives for the crew. He seeks concord and unity, the "common" good (cf. ζυνός 1.335, 336). Considering that he refuses to let Atalanta join the expedition because he fears the "quarrels, rivalries" (ἔριδας, 1.773) that might break out amongst the men with a woman onboard,<sup>50</sup> this is a man who wants

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<sup>48</sup> Natzel (1992) 199: "er erscheint nicht mehr als Mensch, sondern als Riese (bezeichnenderweise heißt er 1,1242 πελώριος)."

<sup>49</sup> Hunter (1993b) 37: "[*eris*] is not consonant with central themes of the epic that the heroes should compete with each other, and when they do so it leads to disaster. Heracles, however, lived a life devoted to *eris*, to struggle and competition."

<sup>50</sup> 1.773 is the only other example of ἔρις in Book 1. Also note how, as recorded by Apollodorus (1.8.2-3), Atalanta inspires great *eris* during the Calydonian boar hunt: Oineus (Meleager's father) calls "all the best men from Greece" (τοὺς ἀρίστους ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος πάντας) to participate in the hunt, promising that the one who kills the beast will win the hide, and many of the men who answer the summons are Argonauts (e.g. Idas, Lynceus, Castor, Polydeuces, and Jason himself). Atalanta is also part of the expedition, and when she—a woman—is given the hide by the love-struck Meleager for striking the boar first, conflict erupts. Meleager kills the sons of Thestios, and, in turn, Althaia brings about her son Meleager's death. We see here, then, an example where Atalanta's involvement on a heroic campaign inspires love and, subsequently, great *eris*. Jason, therefore, is not so off the mark by refusing her request to join.

to avoid *eris* from the outset. And for good reason. In the *Iliad*, the word *eris* is used 45 times and never with wholly positive association. More than half of the uses describe the “strife” of war, and a fifth of the total is used to specifically describe the devastating quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles.<sup>51</sup> In particular, after Patroclus’ death, Achilles personally laments how his quarrel with Agamemnon has led to so much pain and suffering for his people (19.58, 19.64), and he expresses his wish for the vice’s universal demise (ὡς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν ἔκ τ’ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλοιτο, 18.107). His quarrel with Agamemnon—and the attendant *mēnis*—are to blame for much of the ruin and agony of the *Iliad*. Thus, even though Jason’s quest comes before the Trojan War, it is almost as though he is aware of the potential threat of *eris* in epic when he stresses harmony before the crew even disembarks. Such a proactive response is much like the warning Peleus gave to Achilles before he ever left for war: “keep away from evil-dealing strife” (ληγέμεναι δ’ ἔριδος κακομηχάνου, *Il.* 9.257). If Achilles had heeded his father’s words, the *Iliad* may have been a very different story.

In short, the word *eris*—with its Iliadic antecedents—does not sit well in the *Argonautica*. That kind of behavior is unsuited to the Argonauts’ values of collaboration and unity. As soon as the men fall into the vice’s grasp, they face imminent destruction and only their Achilles-like hero can save them. Only Heracles, their Iliadic representative, can win the trophy of an Iliadic contest. But even in the act of saving the men, he threatens their safety, and Apollonius signals that his Iliadic heroics are no longer compatible with the epic when Heracles breaks his oar. He is rowing all by himself, keeping the ship going at a Poseidon-defying pace (1.1167), when the oar snaps in the middle (1.1168). It is almost as if Apollonius is saying that the *Argonautica* has had enough of Heracles and his particular vein of heroic code. As Lawall

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<sup>51</sup> 1.8, 1.177, 1.210, 1.319, 2.376, 9.257, 18.107, 19.58, 19.64.

says, the oar breaking is symbolic that “[h]eroic will and strength are defeated.”<sup>52</sup> The people of Iolcus may have thought that this would be an *Iliad*, and the young men of the expedition may have believed that the bold, mighty Heracles was the one to lead them, but Apollonius is indicating both here and with the distorted Iliadic skirmish against the Doliones that he is not writing an *Iliad*. It is time, rather, for the Iliadic to end.

*Mēnis*: “Sing, Muse, the Wrath of Heracles”

To bring to a close the role of Heracles in Book 1, Apollonius draws on yet one more negative attribute of Iliadic values: “anger” or *mēnis*.<sup>53</sup> In the quotation cited above where Achilles wishes *eris* would be erased from the earth, he adds one other emotion to the mix: “would that strife and anger depart from both gods and men” (ὡς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν ἔκ τ’ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλοιτο / καὶ χόλος, 18.107-8). The hero goes on to explain how wrath grows in the hearts of men like smoke and that that was the way in which Agamemnon made Achilles angry, concluding with the desire that everyone should “tame” (δαμάσαντες) such emotions within them (18.108-13). Referring to this passage, Hunter says, “In wishing for the disappearance of ἔρις and χόλος, Achilles wishes away not merely the terrible narrative in which he finds himself trapped, but the whole world of martial epic constructed out of ‘strife and anger’” (Fantuzzi and Hunter [2004] 107). These are the two passions which bring us the tale of the *Iliad*. And, importantly, these are the two passions which bring us an end to Iliadic heroics in the

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<sup>52</sup> Lawall (1966) 125. Cf. Beye (1969) 45, Galinsky (1972) 109, Heerink (2015) 36-37. Also Mori (2008b) 74: “This episode shows how Heracles’ competitive love of action exceeds the constraints of the Argonauts’ communal enterprise: the broken oar on this reading is emblematic of his outsized, even inappropriate strength.”

<sup>53</sup> Two scholars in particular have written excellent studies of *mēnis* in the last part of Book 1: Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 104-17, and Mori (2005) 209-36 and (2008b) esp. 82-90. See the former, esp., for the epic tradition of Heroic Anger, and the latter for the Aristotelian and Alexandrian opinion of anger and its opposite, *homonoia*.

*Argonautica*. Indeed, at the end of Book 1, there is a showdown between Iliadic *mēnis* and *eris*, and Jason’s *homonoia*, and the victory of the latter signals the conclusion of Iliadic heroism in the epic.

The presence of *mēnis* at the end of Book 1 begins, appropriately, with the Iliadic Heracles, and his introduction of this ominous emotion to the *Argonautica* comes hand in hand with his exit from the text, a clear sign that Iliadic wrath is not welcome in Jason’s world. When Heracles learns about Hylas’ disappearance, his reaction is remarkably physical: “sweat gushed down over his temples in abundance, and the black blood in in his liver/heart/gut boiled” (κατὰ κροντάφων ἄλις ἰδρὼς / κήκειεν, ἐν δὲ κελαινὸν ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις ζέεν αἷμα, 1.1261-62). This is similar, as Mori notes, to the symptoms Aristotle gives for the physical manifestation of anger,<sup>54</sup> and Apollonius even explicitly says next—in line-initial position—that Heracles “is angry” (χώμενος, 1.1263). He throws down the pine tree he had just uprooted and runs every which way his feet carry him, pausing here and there to “shout” (βοάσκειν, 1.1272). He is likened to a bull stung by a gadfly “who disregards both herdsmen and herd” (οὐδὲ νομηῶν / οὐδ’ ἀγέλης ὄθεται, 1.1266-67), at times charging mindlessly, at other times standing still and bellowing (1.1267-69). The image of Heracles in this passage is particularly wild and beastly. He has completely succumbed to his untamed passions—not thinking, just running, just reacting. Like the frenzied bull who forgets the herd, both Heracles and Achilles in their wrath separate themselves from the group—Heracles by accident, Achilles on purpose. And for both heroes, the loss of their beloveds (Hylas and Patroclus) initiates—at least in part—the overbearing emotion

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<sup>54</sup> *De An.* 403a26-b2. See Mori (2005) 216 and (2008b) 84-85.

of *mēnis*.<sup>55</sup> DeForest aptly calls Heracles a “caricature of Achilles” at the end of Book 1.<sup>56</sup> As a result, the ultimate reason Heracles leaves the *Argonautica* is because *mēnis* takes him out of it. He introduces the emotion, like Achilles does for the *Iliad*, but Apollonius effectively cannot let an *Iliad* begin in the middle of his *Argonautica*. Thus, Heracles is removed.<sup>57</sup>

Even once Heracles is gone, however, the *Iliad* continues to loom ever closer as wrath spreads to the crew, threatening to bring with it the same destructive *eris* that plagues Achilles’ world. When the men learn that they left Heracles and Polyphemus behind, “a mighty quarrel and unspeakable brawling fell upon them because they had left and abandoned the best man of their companions” (ἐν δὲ σφιν κρατερὸν νεῖκος πέσεν, ἐν δὲ κολῳὸς / ἄσπετος, εἰ τὸν ἄριστον ἀποπρολιπόντες ἔβησαν / σφωιτέρων ἐτάρων, 1.1284-86). Even now, the crew still believes that Heracles is “the best man,” not Jason, and Telamon—seized by “anger” (χόλος, 1.1289)—accuses Jason of having purposefully abandoned Heracles so that the mighty hero would not eclipse his glory (1.1290-95).<sup>58</sup> The crew is fracturing. The two vices that bring ruin to the

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<sup>55</sup> Several scholars have observed similarities (and differences) between Patroclus and Hylas; see, e.g., Papadimitropoulos (2006) 46, DeForest (1994) 65, Hunter (1993b) 39, and Beye (1969) 46. Achilles’ *mēnis* is also aroused, of course, by Agamemnon, but the death of Patroclus throws him into the sort of frenzied rage we see here with Heracles.

<sup>56</sup> DeForest (1994) 65. Also see Heerink (2015) 36: “the Hylas episode seems to be a miniature epic on ‘strife,’ and more specifically a miniature *Iliad*.”

<sup>57</sup> Beye (1969) 47 claims that “the most important function of Herakles” is to contrast his paederastic, male-dominated love that “has no place in love epic” with Jason’s heterosexual love. While Beye’s total focus on love is overemphasized, his observation that Heracles is pushed out of the epic because of his un-Jasonian engagement with love is astute; cf. Zanker (1979) 55-56. Also see Cusset (2001) 234-37 who argues that Apollonius had Callimachus’ *Hecale* in mind when composing the end of Book 1. There are textual (e.g. ἀνέμοιο κατάξ 1.1203 ~ 18.15 Hollis) and thematic similarities, namely, both Heracles and Theseus are representatives of traditional epic characters who are diverted from their heroic quests and are supplanted by other, different “heroic” models (i.e. *Hecale* and Jason).

<sup>58</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 114-16 demonstrate that there are both textual and thematic similarities between Telamon and Achilles (who are both associated with the emotion of *cholos*), and, on the flip side, Jason and Odysseus (who are not).

*Iliad*—*mēnis* and *eris*—are creeping into the hearts of the Argonauts, tearing them apart. Mori says, “The overall parallel with the major conflict of the *Iliad* is clear: Telamon is seized by an Achilles-like wrath (*cholos*) and accuses Jason of a petty, Agamemnon-like jealousy” (Mori [2005] 228). Thus, while Heracles is gone, the crew—Telamon chief among them—is continuing on an Iliadic path, thereby threatening the integrity of the expedition.<sup>59</sup>

But this is the *Argonautica*, where the *Iliad* can never reign supreme. As such, Glaucus arrives as a *deus ex machina* to save the day, indicating that Heracles and his Iliadic values are incompatible with Jason’s quest. Just as Telamon and the Boreads are hotly contending on whether to turn back and find Heracles, Glaucus suddenly appears from the waters to announce that it was against Zeus’ will for Heracles to have ever been on the ship. The hero has a different fate: to complete the Labors and become a god (1.1315-25). It is unclear what would have happened if Glaucus had not arrived. The Argonauts may have resolved the problem themselves or may have returned to get Heracles back. It is also possible that the crew may have continued even further down the road of Iliadic *mēnis* and *eris*, disbanding and thereby ending the *Argonautica* altogether. Regardless, what is clear is that Glaucus represents a divine manifestation that Heracles does not belong on this quest.

While an actual reason is provided—namely, that Heracles needs to continue his own mission—this can be read as an authorial statement on the text as well. It is just as much against the will of Apollonius as it is of Zeus that Heracles be on this expedition beyond Book 1. He has been allowed to assist and guide and fight as the representative of Iliadic heroism for the first book of the poem, but not any further. He is, by divine and authorial order, being removed from

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<sup>59</sup> See Clauss (1993) 198 who notes that the crew’s *neikos* here is “an extremely dangerous situation, since unified action is even more important now that the Argonauts cannot count on the assistance of Heracles.”

the roster of the *Argo*, along with his Iliadic character that has been shown to be incompatible with and hazardous for the Argonauts since the ill-fated battle with the Doliones. The boat cannot hold both Heracles with all his old, traditional heroics and Jason with his new-fangled heroic conduct, so the former is expelled, leaving the latter to continue to grow and develop.<sup>60</sup>

*Jason vs. Heracles: Homonoia vs. Iliadic Volatility*

There is one last showdown between *mēnis* and the *homonoia* of the *Argonautica* before Book 1 ends: Jason must overcome the emotion of wrath in himself for the collapse of the Iliadic to be complete. Having heard Glaucus' prophetic statements, Telamon immediately embraces Jason and begs for pardon, requesting that Jason not "be angry" (χολώσεται, 1.1332) at him for what he had said. There is, then, still the potential for an Iliadic resolution; Jason himself can become an Achilles. He has every right to feel angry for the way in which Telamon unjustly attacked him. But even so, Jason instead accepts the apology and says, "Surely now, I will not let bitter wrath grow" (οὐ θήν τοι ἀδευκέα μῆνιν ἀέξω, 1.1339). The word *mēnis* is, of course, famously the first word of the *Iliad*. As Mori says, "With this word Apollonius takes direct aim at the wrath of Achilles."<sup>61</sup> Unlike the angry hero of the *Iliad* whose wrath brought profound conflict and pain upon the Greeks, Jason rejects the emotion outright.

And the reason he gives for his easy forgiveness is *homonoia*. After intimating that Telamon's behavior was, indeed, inappropriate and uncalled for (1.1337-39), Jason expresses his

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<sup>60</sup> See Heerink (2015) 22-52 and (2012) for a larger discussion of the metapoetic undertones at the end of Book 1. Heracles stands for Homeric and (more specifically) cyclic epic, while Jason and Hylas represent "Callimachean" poetics and/or Apollonius himself. The removal of Heracles from the text is a statement by Apollonius that he is following a Callimachean agenda.

<sup>61</sup> Mori (2005) 231 and (2008b) 88. Cf. Hunter (1988) 444-45: "In this scene, therefore, the relationship between Apollonian characters is displayed through a reworking of Iliadic motifs which stresses the Argonautic virtues of loyalty and solidarity rather than the highly personal Iliadic emotions."

respect that Telamon's anger was roused "on behalf of a comrade" (ἐτάρου περὶ φωτός, 1.1342), not "because of flocks of sheep or possessions" (οὐ περὶ πώεσι μῆλων / οὐδὲ περὶ κτεάτεσσι, 1.1340-41). He then concludes with the hope that Telamon would extend the same loyalty to himself if ever the situation demanded it (1.1339-43).<sup>62</sup> Jason explicitly shuns the emotion of *mēnis* in favor of encouraging the camaraderie and trust of his men. He is proving to them that he really does believe, as he said in his first speech to the group, that their journey is "common" (ξυνόος, 1.336, 337) for them all. This will be an expedition not of *mēnis* and *eris* but *homonoia*, and during their travels in Book 2, the Argonauts even set up a shrine to this virtue *Homonoia*, swearing an oath to support one another "with unity of mind" (ὁμοφροσύνησι νόοιο, 2.716). In the end, then, Jason is beginning to show us what kind of person he is. He will not be an Odysseus whose disregard for his crew has been a topic of discussion for centuries. Nor will he be an Achilles who nurses his bitter wrath at the expense of his comrades. Jason builds relationships. To quote Mori once again, "Other members of this group will step forward to make their individual contributions to the recovery of the Fleece, but it is Jason who bears the responsibility for all the disputes and settlements of the Argonauts" ([2008] 90). That is his purpose on this quest; "peacemaker" (90) is his heroic identity.

In contrast, Apollonius repeatedly reminds his audience at the end of Book 1 that Heracles is the kind of hero who destroys, not builds. He uproots the tree (1.1187-1206). We learn that he will later exact "hated vengeance" (στυγερὴ τίσις, 1.1302) upon Zetes and Calais, killing them because they had opposed turning the ship around to find Heracles (1.1302-1309). When he is unable to find Hylas, Heracles threatens the hospitable Mysians with immediate

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<sup>62</sup> See Clauss (1993) 209 for how Jason's speech to Telamon is a "masterful stroke of diplomacy" (209), ensuring that Telamon becomes ever more loyal to Jason.

destruction if they do not determine the boy's fate. They promise to look for Hylas and, as "compensation" or as "pledges" (ῥύσια, 1.1351 and 1.1357), they hand over to Heracles the "best sons of their *dēmos*" (ἀρίστους / υἱέας ἐκ δήμοιο, 1.1351-52) whom Heracles takes to Trachis.<sup>63</sup> What is not mentioned here is the agony families must have felt losing their sons and brothers, and the certain disruption to the city's future as their "best" are taken far away, all because Heracles deemed it appropriate to destroy others' lives on account of his own personal grief.<sup>64</sup> And, finally, we hear at the end of Book 1 that Heracles "ruthlessly" (νηλεῶς) killed Hylas' father, Theiodamas, for refusing to give him a plough-ox (1.1211-20), the kind of quarrel Jason implicitly condemns when he excuses Telamon's anger because it was prompted by friendship, not by greed for livestock.<sup>65</sup> All of these events, told in the space of only 150 lines, directly contradict Jason's forgiving attitude and constructive relationships. Here at the end of Book 1, the opposition between Jason and Heracles is at its most stark, revealing the two characters' utter incompatibility.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, after Lemnos, we enter a decidedly Iliadic world of warfare, wrath, and contention. On the one hand, Heracles' strength and martial prowess are saving graces, protecting the crew from hostile combatants and violent storms. On the other hand, we witness in full color the varying ominous shades of Iliadic volatility. When Heracles brings *eris* and *mēnis* to the crew, he

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<sup>63</sup> Note, also, the similarities between this story and Heracles' eventual death: Heracles' love for someone (Hylas, Iole) leads to the destruction of a city (Mysia, Oechalia), and people are forcefully settled in Trachis (Iole and others enslaved from Oechalia, the Mysian boys).

<sup>64</sup> N.b. how Apollonius stresses the Mysians' kindness to the Argonauts and what good hosts they are (1.1179-81). In return, Heracles decimates their society.

<sup>65</sup> See the Appendix for more details about Heracles' murder of Theiodamas and how Apollonius' version is far more negative than Callimachus'. Also see Clauss (1993) 195 and 197 for how Heracles is associated with Theiodamas at the end of Book 1 as a kind of "penance": Heracles must experience the same kind of pain and anguish that he wrought upon the hapless farmer.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Clauss (1993) esp. 204.

is forthwith exiled from the text by divine and authorial command, and Jason is finally able to prove the merit of his own heroic worth by demonstrating the healing effect of camaraderie and loyalty. *Mēnis* and *eris*—and, in turn, the *Iliad* itself—will not take over the ship, and there will not be an Iliadic resolution to this quest. Instead, Apollonius will be taking this epic into new waters.

### **Conclusion: The End of Heracles and Iliadic Heroics**

In truth, Heracles never belonged on the *Argo* next to Jason in the first place, and Apollonius has been telling us such from the beginning.<sup>67</sup> When we first see Heracles in the Catalogue, he is in the middle of accomplishing his labors and, even more specifically, in the middle of completing his task to capture the Erymanthian boar. In the most common version of this labor, Heracles brings the live beast back to Eurystheus who, in fear, hides in a vase.<sup>68</sup> Here in the *Argonautica*, the vase scene is left out. In fact, Heracles barely even accomplishes the task: when he hears about the Argonauts amassing, he drops the beast off at the edge of the Mycenaean agora (πρώτησι ἀγορῆσιν, 1.128)<sup>69</sup> and then leaves “against the will of Eurystheus” (παρὲκ νόον Εὐρυσθηος, 1.130; cf. παρὲκ μεγάλοιο Διὸς βουλήν, 1.1315). The image here is rather absurd.<sup>70</sup> What must have the people of Argos thought when Heracles walked into the agora, dumped the bound boar which presumably was still struggling and bellowing, and then

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<sup>67</sup> For discussions about how Heracles does not fit on this expedition, see, e.g., Heerink (2015) 22-52, Papadimitropoulos (2006) 43-44, Vian (1974) 42-43.

<sup>68</sup> See Brommer (1986) 19-20 and Gantz (1993) 389-90 for the literary and artistic representations of this event.

<sup>69</sup> See Ardizzoni (1967) 118 for the difficulty of this phrase. I am following the translation of Race (2008) 15.

<sup>70</sup> Pike (1980) 42 also notes the comic undertones of Heracles abandoning his labor: “Both the hero’s playing truant behind the back of his taskmaster and his abandoning of the trussed and doubtless angry monster in a public place are neatly comic.” For more on Heracles’ comic presence in the *Argonautica*, see all of Pike (1980) and Natzel (1992) 198-200.

promptly disappeared? What did they do with the thing? And, more importantly, was leaving it in the agora instead of personally handing it over to Eurystheus even sufficient to consider the labor complete? The most cited aspect of this labor in the literary and visual tradition is Heracles' physical return to Eurystheus and the king's reaction to seeing the boar. To cut that scene out strongly suggests, therefore, that the labor was indeed unfinished. And it is not as though Heracles had to leave so abruptly. The expedition must have taken quite some time to arrange: heroes had to gather from all corners of Greece, Jason took a trip to visit the oracle at Delos, and the *Argo* itself had to be built. Surely Heracles would have had time to walk the measly block or two to officially surrender the boar to Eurystheus. As Papadimitriopoulos says, "The fact that he leaves the boar at that place instead of bringing it into Eurystheus' palace, as is his custom after the fulfillment of each task, enhances this disjunction to the chain of his labours" ([2006] 43 n. 7). Heracles is supposed to be off alone, pursuing the labors, not getting distracted by Jason's expedition.

Apollonius further stresses Heracles' unsuitability for the quest by portraying Hera in Books 1 and 2 as a distant and even adversative goddess because of the hero's presence. When the Earthborn men attack Heracles and the young Argonauts, Apollonius says, "For certainly the goddess Hera, Zeus' wife, raised those grim monsters also as a labor for Heracles" (δὴ γὰρ πού κάκεινα θεὰ τρέφεν αἰνὰ πέλωρα / Ἥρη, Ζηνὸς ἄκοιτις, ἀέθλιον Ἡρακλῆι, 1.996-97).<sup>71</sup> We do not have a record anywhere else that this was ever considered one of the Labors. Apollonius is therefore either displaying his vast familiarity with obscure myths or—more tempting—making the story up. Regardless, he is deliberately choosing to present a version where Hera, who has a

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<sup>71</sup> This same verb (τρέφω) is used in Hesiod *Theogony* (and elsewhere in Greek literature) to describe Hera "raising" monsters for Heracles to fight as part of his Twelve Labors (line 314, the Lernaean Hydra; 328, Nemean Lion).

personal investment in the success of the expedition, is purposefully endangering the crew and the ship because of Heracles' presence. Her animosity for him trumps her love for Jason. In fact, Hera only starts to help the expedition after Heracles is gone: she never once helps the Argonauts in Book 1, she helps them only one time in Book 2 (where Heracles' memory is brought up by the crew repeatedly, almost as if he is still with them), and, finally, she helps them to excess in Book 3 (where Heracles is only mentioned once and in no great detail).<sup>72</sup> It begs the question of whether Hera would have helped Jason if her nemesis, Heracles, had stuck around. Thus, it is against the mortal will of Eurystheus (παρὲκ νόον Εὐρυσθηος, 1.130) and the divine wills of both Zeus (παρὲκ μέγαλοιο Διὸς βουλήν, 1.1315) and Hera, the very patron of the expedition, that Heracles be a member of this expedition.

It is no wonder, then, that Heracles had to go. He has his own labors he needs to complete, and his very presence is a threat to the crew, both because of his volatile Iliadic heroics and because of Hera's animosity. He is too heavy for the ship, too epic-heroic for Apollonius' poetic purposes, and too dangerous. In Theocritus' *Idyll* 13, discussed in the Appendix, the Argonauts leave Heracles behind, thinking him a deserter after he left to search for Hylas, but then the hero intrepidly walks on foot the rest of the way to Colchis to rejoin them (73-75). The emphasis at the end of Theocritus' poem is upon Heracles proving his heroic drive and finishing the quest. The emphasis at the end of Book 1 of the *Argonautica* is very different: Heracles is desperately wanted by the crew of the Argonauts, but the gods and the very author of the poem insist upon his removal. There will be no thousand-mile journey to Colchis for Heracles in the *Argonautica*. While the Argonauts will cross paths with Heracles in Libya, he

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<sup>72</sup> See Dräger (2001) 117 who similarly notes how Hera is absent when Heracles is present. Also see Clare (2002) 90 for Hera's support of the Argonauts and hostility towards Heracles.

will never be a member of the crew again, and he will not participate in the quest's completion. On the level of plot, if Heracles were to remain, he would overwhelm Jason's more delicate, subtler approaches to solving problems, subduing Aeetes with ease and thereby removing the need for Medea. On the level of metapoetics, if Heracles remained, Apollonius would not be able to mold Jason into his new, successful, Hellenistic hero. Heracles served the crew aptly and crucially for Book 1 by saving them from martial and naval threats alike, but he now must leave.

To conclude, Heracles is our Iliadic representative, and Book 1 of the *Argonautica* circles around the demonstration of and threat posed by his Iliadic heroics. The people of Iolcus and the Argonauts themselves believe they are embarking on an Iliadic journey, and when their expedition begins to stray from such expectations at Lemnos, Heracles exerts his authority and pushes the ship and her crew back on an Iliadic trajectory. Battles are subsequently fought and won, and Heracles uses his immense strength to save the Argonauts from a terrible storm. But even as Iliadic heroism saves the day time and again, its more negative and volatile aspects also spread into the poem like a poison as *eris* and *mēnis* grip the Argonauts and threaten the integrity of the ship, her crew, and the quest. As the curtain closes on Book 1, so, too, do Heracles and his Iliadic mindset fade from view as Jason's dedication to concord and cohesion triumph. Now, scene 2—Book 2—is opening where the next stage of the epic will find its place: the Odyssean.

## Chapter 2: Polydeuces, the Helmsmen, and the Odyssean Heracles in Book 2

Of the four books in the *Argonautica*, Book 2 has attracted the least amount of scholarly attention. Fertile topics have centered on the geography, aetiology, and ethnography of the section,<sup>1</sup> and on its religious moments, such as Phineus' prophecy,<sup>2</sup> the Argonauts' piety, and the appearances of Athena and Apollo.<sup>3</sup> Polydeuces' fight has also garnered notice, partly because of its similarities to the boxing matches of Homer (esp. *Il.* 23.664-69) and Vergil (*Aen.* 5.375-77 and *Georg.* 3.209-41),<sup>4</sup> and there has been some discussion about how the crew is constantly reminded of their former companion Heracles as they pass through an area that he had extensively traveled in the past.<sup>5</sup> But even with this spread of topics, Book 2 pales in comparison to the amount and range of scholarship discussed for Books 1, 3, and 4.

One reason for this, as scholars observe, is that the second book appears to have little in the way of a unifying, driving force. The other three books have a "story" to them: Book 1 gives

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<sup>1</sup> Esp. Thalmann (2011) who looks at "space" in the *Argonautica*. He frequently mentions scenes in Book 2 (mostly on account of the extent of space traveled and places seen in this section), and also discusses the etiologies of the book. See also Paskiewicz (1988) for a description of the aitia in Book 2.

<sup>2</sup> Several scholars have noted that Phineus is something of a Circe figure; see esp. Knight (1995) 169-76 and Clare (2002) 73ff. Note also the Odyssean language used in the Phineus episode: e.g. μήτιν ἐπίρροθον (2.225), πυκινῶ νόῳ (2.325), μήτι παντοίη (2.383), and δολόεσσαν (2.423). This episode, therefore, has an Odyssean tint fitting for the Odyssean Book 2.

<sup>3</sup> Feeney (1991) 57-98 discusses the gods and divine spokesmen in the *Argonautica*. Also Lawall (1966) 162: "The [second] book is a vast homily on the nature of the relationship between the gods and men."

<sup>4</sup> Poliakoff (1985), Hunter (1989b), Knight (1995) 62-73, Leigh (2010). Also, see Fränkel (1952) for a discussion on the style of narration in this scene.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Köhnken (2003) esp. 21-22, Levin (1971b), and Feeney (1986b) 51-66. Also see Philbrick (2011) which, although a master's thesis, provides many insightful comments about Heracles' presence in Book 2.

us the rise and fall of Heracles, Book 3 the seduction of Medea and the accomplishment of the trials, and Book 4 the difficult *nostos* and Zeus' wrath. In contrast, Book 2 feels more like Apollonius is checking off an itinerary, punctuating the monotony of journeying with moments of danger (e.g., Amycus), despair (e.g., Tiphys' death), or awe (e.g., Apollo's epiphany).<sup>6</sup> As Beye puts it, "The second book of the *Argonautica* is the one least accessible to the casual modern reader. There is little action, the hero seems at first glance inconsequential to what action there is" and it "lacks a unifying hero figure."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, what little we see of Jason is usually mired in heavy doom and gloom, and no single Argonaut holds a sustained role in the book. There is certainly no one like Book 1's Heracles, the *aristos* and champion of the Argonauts, whose centrality was a recurrent and compelling theme. As a result, Book 2 as a whole has not joined in any significant way the scholarly conversation on heroism in the *Argonautica*, at least not to the same degree as Books 1, 3, and 4. Isolated scenes are certainly discussed, but not as much work has been completed in determining how Book 2 *as an entire entity* fits into the question of heroism in the epic.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while Beye comments specifically on the difficulties Book 2 poses for the "casual modern reader," it appears that the majority of scholars, too, have been affected by the absence of a well-defined, unifying character or theme.

If, however, the most influential crew members from Book 2 are considered together as

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<sup>6</sup> There are certainly unifying threads in Book 2: e.g. religiosity (see Lawall above in n. 2), Heracles (see esp. Philbrick in n. 4), and, more generally speaking, the difficulties of traveling over the sea. But none of these have the same force as the unifying themes and characters of Books 1, 3, and 4.

<sup>7</sup> Beye (1982) 100 and 101. See these pp. and ch. 4 more generally for some of the difficulties with Book 2.

<sup>8</sup> The one scholar of note who has attempted to dissect the heroic nature of Book 2's various characters with any degree of thoroughness is Lawall (1966) 131-36, and he only does so as part of his larger discussion on the four heroic types of the *Argonautica*. He never once makes the observation that his so-called "men of skill" are predominantly located in Book 2.

one whole, a unifying hero does emerge: the Odyssean man. There are five events that threaten the safety of the crew or the progress of the quest in the second book: Amycus and the Bebrycians (2.1-144), a nearly fatal wave (2.169-77), the legendary Clashing Rocks (2.549-647), the Argonauts' paralyzing depression after Tiphys' death (2.851-98), and the birds of Ares (2.1030-89). In each of these situations, the savior and *aristos* of the Argonauts is a man who is associated with the quality of *mētis*: the boxer Polydeuces, the helmsmen Tiphys and Ancaeus, and—oddly enough, both in terms of his physical absence and his association with strength-based heroics in the first book—Heracles. This “Odyssean Heracles” (as I am calling him) is a fundamentally separate character from the “Iliadic Heracles” of Book 1. In the first book where might and violence comprised the heroic apparatus *du jour*, we saw the mighty and violent version of the hero. In the second book where *mētis* rules supreme, Apollonius gives us a strategic and wily Heracles. These two versions of the hero form two sides of a single coin, a suspended contradiction that is not so unusual bearing in mind the hero's considerable malleability in the Greek literary tradition (see the Appendix). Thus, Book 2 is a vital part of Apollonius' engagement in the question of heroism in epic literature. Where Book 1 depicted Iliadic heroics, we are now witnessing the merit and efficacy of Odyssean heroism.

But why does Apollonius give us four Odyssean representatives in Book 2 when he only needed one Iliadic representative for Book 1? *Mētis* is a complex quality with many different aspects. It can stand for cunning, strategy, and intellect, but it can also be used for skilled professions, such as that of a carpenter and helmsman. As I will discuss in this chapter, Odysseus in the *Odyssey* exercises his *mētis* in all these different ways. So, if Apollonius had wanted a fully formed Odyssean hero in Book 2, he would need to give us a hero who is associated with all these different traits. But since it would be difficult—not to mention far too obvious—to fuse

all those qualities into a single Argonautic hero within the span of a single book, Apollonius instead decided to give us a series of Odyssean representatives, each of whom demonstrates a different part of Odysseus' heroic identity: the helmsmen possess his skill and intellect, Polydeuces fights with a blend of *biē* and *mētis* that Odysseus himself frequently displays, and the Odyssean Heracles embodies the part of Odysseus that uses ambush, strategy, and cunning to avoid frontal assaults against powerful foes. In short, the leading figures of Book 2 are an aggregate, collectively steering the *Argo* onto an Odyssean path and celebrating the elevation of *mētis* over *biē*. This is, therefore, the piece of the puzzle scholars have overlooked, that the “unifying hero figure” of Book 2 is the Odyssean hero as performed by a series of Argonauts who each demonstrate a different aspect of Odysseus' complex heroic persona.

And in order to assist his audience in viewing these four Odyssean representatives as a joint force opposed to the Iliadic heroics of Book 1, Apollonius has each of Book 2's heroes effectively replay Heracles' triumphs from the first book but this time with Odyssean flair. The delay at Lemnos becomes a delay in Bithynia, the Earthborn men become the chthonic Amycus, and the storm through which Heracles rowed the boat alone becomes several cascading waves the helmsmen have to navigate. The Odyssean representatives are facing very similar obstacles—the very obstacles through which Heracles proved his heroic merit in Book 1—but this time they demonstrate the merit of *mētis* instead of might, translating the Iliadic Heracles' efforts into an Odyssean apparatus.<sup>9</sup> This renovation culminates in the overhaul of Heracles himself as he, too, dons an Odyssean mask. Thus, our four heroes are a foil for the Iliadic

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<sup>9</sup> See Philbrick (2011) who notes how many of the difficulties faced by the Argonauts in Book 2 would easily have been managed by Heracles: both Amycus and the threatening waves, for example, “present an obstacle almost perfectly suited to Heracles' skill set” (32) as previously established in Book 1.

Heracles of Book 1. Together, they confirm that *biē* is no longer the guiding force of the *Argo*. *Mētis* is.

### **Polydeuces: Man of Might, Man of Skill**

Polydeuces is a crucial character in the *Argonautica*. He is the bridge from the Iliadic heroics of Book 1 to the Odyssean values of Book 2. While he takes upon himself Heracles' role of *aristos* and savior of the expedition, and while he even reflects Heracleian attributes in several ways and fights a foe very similar to the Earthborn men of Book 1, Polydeuces is, fundamentally, not a new Heracles. His blend of *biē* and *mētis* in the boxing match with Amycus is worthy of Odysseus himself as he proves that brains, not brawn, is how to demonstrate one's heroic merit in the Odyssean world of Book 2. In the end, Polydeuces' success is a victory not only over the Bebrycian king but also over the Iliadic heroics of Book 1, indicating that a new phase of the epic has commenced.

#### *The "Best Man:" From Heracles to Polydeuces*

Heracles' expulsion from the text at the end of Book 1 creates a crisis for both the plot and the epic. In terms of the former, there is the question of who will fill Heracles' shoes as the Argonauts' champion and unofficial leader. And in terms of the latter, with Heracles gone, there is no longer a character who holds the distinction of *aristos*, that adjective which conveys such considerable import in epic by "serv[ing] as a formal measure of a given hero's supremacy in his own epic tradition."<sup>10</sup> Without an *aristos*, the epic is incomplete.

To fill this gap, Polydeuces steps up to inherit Heracles' title of *aristos* ("the best") at the beginning of the second book, signaling the emergence of a new dominant heroic model in the

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<sup>10</sup> Nagy (1990) 13. See Chapter 1 for a discussion on the significance of the word ἄριστος in Homer.

text. When the Argonauts arrive at Bithynia, the inhospitable King Amycus makes an outrageous demand: “select the best man from your group and send him up right here to contend with me in boxing” (μοι τὸν ἄριστον ἀποκριδὸν οἶον ὀμίλου / πυγμαχίῃ στήσασθε καταυτόθι δηρινθῆναι, 2.15-16). His ultimatum echoes Jason’s request at the beginning of Book 1 where he, too, had asked—albeit with far less hostility—that the Argonauts select for their leader “the best man” (τὸν ἄριστον, 1.338, in the same metrical position as 2.15). This time, however, the crew cannot turn to Heracles for assistance. And so, a new “best man” rises to accept Amycus’ challenge and fill the hole left behind by Heracles: Polydeuces, another son of Zeus. It would follow, then, that if Apollonius abides by the same progression as Book 1—where Heracles was elected “the best man” then became the guiding force of the book—the same thing will occur here: Polydeuces will become the “foremost man” (πρόμος, 2.21) of Book 2, and his brand of heroism will be the most influential and dominant in the events to come.

In fact, Apollonius may have even changed the traditional chronology of the Argonautic legend in order to emphasize this crucial moment where the *aristos* title is transferred from Heracles in Book 1 to Polydeuces in Book 2. In Theocritus’ version of the story, the Argonauts’ quarrel with Amycus occurs after the Argo passes through the Clashing Rocks (*Idyll* 22.27-29), while in Apollonius, the event takes place when the crew is still in the Propontis. Our pre-Hellenistic sources for the Argonautic myth are scanty and it is therefore unknown which version(s) they provide, but Cuypers notes that it seems more likely that Theocritus, not Apollonius, is following tradition. In other sources, the Bebrycians are most often located on the Euxine Coast (where Theocritus places them), and it is possible to read into Apollonius’ version that Amycus is not at home but is out checking on his livestock (e.g. 2.1), explaining why he is on the south side of the Bebrycian peninsula instead of the north. Quoting Cuypers, “If Amycus

would have been at home, it is implied, the Argonauts would have encountered him on the coast of the Euxine. It all looks very much like a conscious deviation from a prevalent tradition.”<sup>11</sup> Even if there were a pre-Hellenistic version which also located the Bebrycian episode in the Propontis, the end result is the same: Apollonius chose a version of the story that ensures the Bebrycian episode transpire before the Argonauts meet Phineus and pass through the Clashing Rocks.

But why? One result of this revision is to resolve the crisis of losing Heracles as quickly as possible, not allowing the uncertainty and discomfort of having no *aristos* in the epic simmer and grow. In Books 1 and 2, the phrase “the best man” (τὸν ἄριστον) only shows up three times, two of which I have already noted (Heracles: 1.338, Polydeuces: 2.15). The third appears at the end of Book 1 when the Argonauts realize they have left behind “the best man of their comrades” (τὸν ἄριστον...σφοιτέρων ἐτάρων, 1.1285-86). The crew is cognizant of the fact that their *aristos* is gone; they can feel his absence and they fear it. The epic *needs* a replacement. And fast. Accordingly, Apollonius delays Phineus’ lengthy chat and the Clashing Rocks episode, inserting the Bebrycian encounter first so that he can appoint a new *aristos* within twenty-five lines of Book 2 opening. Having Amycus summon “the best man” of the Argonauts so shortly after the crew mourns the loss of their previous “best man,” therefore, cannot have been flippant word association on Apollonius’ part. Our poet is deliberately drawing attention to the changing of the guard from Heracles to Polydeuces, informing us that something important and transformative is happening. Without knowing anything else beyond the fact that Polydeuces is our new “best man,” we understand that it will be through him and his heroic identity that we

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<sup>11</sup> Cuypers (1997) 31. See pp. 13-31 for an extended discussion about the differences and similarities between Apollonius and Theocritus’ versions of this story, including an analysis of the evidence for priority. She discusses pre-Hellenistic versions of the myth at pp. 10-13.

will find the “crucial organizing and unifying poetic stratagem” of Book 2.<sup>12</sup>

By placing the heroes back to back so closely, Apollonius also encourages us to compare the two men. We find that Polydeuces reflects Heracles in many ways which makes the transition from one “best man” to the next smoother and more natural. For example, the two heroes share the same divine paternity (e.g. 1.1188, 2.43), and, by killing Amycus, Polydeuces unwittingly takes over Heracles’ place as the Mariandynians’ protector against Bebrycian aggression, a detail made explicit by Lycus later in Book 2 (2.774-810).<sup>13</sup> Even the act of executing Amycus may be an Apollonian innovation to bring the two brothers closer together. No other extant pre-Hellenistic source—literary or artistic—has Polydeuces kill Amycus. According to the scholia, Epicharmus and Peisander say that Amycus was only tied up by Polydeuces, and this is the version that the visual record unanimously supports (Beckel [1981] 738-42). Theocritus appears to also adhere to this tradition: in *Idyll* 22, Polydeuces lets Amycus live provided he swears never to harm another stranger (131-34). At the very least, it appears that the most popular account does not include the king’s death. There are, however, a handful of stories where various other heroes kill mythological figures who, like Amycus, force strangers to contend with them in boxing or wrestling. Heracles eradicates two such antagonists: Antaeus and Eryx.<sup>14</sup> It may be possible, therefore, that Apollonius is again disregarding canon when he has his Polydeuces kill Amycus in order to better emulate Heracles’ biography.

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<sup>12</sup> Hunter (1993b) 12, as already quoted in the Introduction.

<sup>13</sup> Rose (1985) 33-34 discusses some of the similarities between Polydeuces and Heracles. See Cuypers (1997) 5 for how the Argonauts “have, in a sense, ‘repeated’ a Heracleian exploit” when Polydeuces kills Amycus.

<sup>14</sup> Antaeus: e.g. Apollod. 2.5.11 (Gantz [1993] 416-18); Eryx: e.g. Apollod. 2.5.10, *Lyc. Alex.* 866-70 (with commentary by Hornblower [2015]). See Leigh (2010) for an extended discussion of these myths and others where heroes (Polydeuces, Heracles, and Theseus) put a stop to those who habitually kill strangers. Also Cuypers (1997) 17.

Such mirroring can also be seen in how Polydeuces' boxing match with Amycus parallels Heracles' encounter with the Earthborn men in Book 1 and with other chthonic creatures in the mythic tradition. At the start of the boxing match in Book 2, Amycus is compared to a chthonic being, the "monster child" (πέλωρ τέκος, 2.39) of Typhoeus or Earth. This same root is used to describe the Earthborn men that Heracles killed: "horrible monsters" (αἰνὰ πέλωρα, 1.996). Thus, in both situations, the "best men" of the Argonauts (Polydeuces and Heracles) step up to fight chthonic monsters (Amycus and the Earthborn) to save their companions. The connection between these two heroes is strengthened even further by Hunter's observation that Heracles himself fought with Typhoeus (Eur. *HF* 1271-72) and Giants (Pind. *Nem.* 1.67). Hunter concludes that "Polydeuces therefore here replays the struggles of the hero whom the Argonauts have just lost."<sup>15</sup> Polydeuces is channeling his stepbrother's spirit as he takes over the role of *aristos* and champion for Argonauts and Mariandynians alike, allowing us to better envision Polydeuces as Heracles' replacement.

In a way, the epic is being refreshed and replayed with a new Zeus-born protagonist at the head. Polydeuces is the new *aristos*, and it is he this time, not Heracles, who will save the crew from a chthonic, monstrous threat. But that is where the similarities end. Polydeuces is, as we will see, a fundamentally different character with a different heroic core. Thus, by making Polydeuces both a close reflection and *refraction* of Heracles, Apollonius has created a character that aptly serves as a pivot point between the Iliadic Book 1 and the new Odyssean Book 2.

### *Polydeuces: An Odyssean Hero*

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<sup>15</sup> Hunter (1993b) 28-29. Notably, however, Heracles fought with Typhoeus; Polydeuces is fighting Typhoeus' "child" (τέκος, 2.39). Apollonius deliberately leaves a generation gap between the two, suggesting, perhaps, that Polydeuces will be a more evolved heroic figure. Cf. Lawall (1966) 131-32 who discusses an "evolutionary view of history" where men of strength (like Heracles) came before men of skill (like Polydeuces).

We quickly learn exactly how Polydeuces represents Odyssean heroics when he steps up to fight Amycus and demonstrates a keen sense of *mētis* like Odysseus instead of solely depending on Heracleian *biē*.<sup>16</sup> Similar to Heracles and even Odysseus, Polydeuces is admittedly strong. His “prowess and strength flourish like a wild beast’s” (ἀλκὴ / καὶ μένος ἥύτε θηρὸς ἀέξετο, 2.44-45), he can stand up to the formidable Amycus without giving ground (2.78), and his final blow is so powerful that he shatters the king’s skull (2.95-96). Yet while Polydeuces’ strength is indeed impressive, the focus of this passage is on his strategy and caution. Before the boxing starts, Polydeuces “tests” (πειράζων, 2.46) his arms, swinging them around, while Amycus does not (οὐ πειρήσατο, 2.48). Polydeuces also reveals an equanimity far more akin to Odysseus than Achilles or Heracles when he chooses to focus on the task at hand instead of responding to Amycus’ pre-battle taunts (2.57-62). After the match has commenced, the king repeatedly charges Polydeuces who evades him “through strategy/skill” (διὰ μῆτιν, 2.75), and Polydeuces holds back from the fight until after he has assessed his opponent’s strengths and weaknesses (2.76-77). Finally, the lead-up to Amycus’ death is described in minute detail in order to demonstrate Polydeuces’ exact precision and careful calculation: [lines 90-94] after Amycus rises up on his toes to deliver a particularly fatal strike, Polydeuces ducks to the side and receives the blow on the shoulder, presumably putting Amycus off balance after he had exerted so much force unsuccessfully; [lines 94-96] taking advantage of Amycus’ slip, Polydeuces puts into play the final stage of his assault by stepping close, shifting his knee behind his opponent’s

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<sup>16</sup> See, esp., Lawall (1966) 132-34 who describes Polydeuces as a “man of skill” and analyzes this scene accordingly. For the Homeric passages this scene is modeled on, see Knight (1995) 62-73, Cuypers (1997) 8-10. The two Homeric boxing scenes which Apollonius most draws from is (1) Epeius v. Euryalus, *Iliad* 23.653-99, and (2) Odysseus v. Irus, *Odyssey* 18.1-107. I will discuss the second of these in detail later in the chapter. See Dunkle (1987) 1-17 for how the funeral games of Book 23 in the *Iliad* can be viewed as one big conflict between *biē* and *mētis*, very similar to the Bebrycian episode in the *Argonautica*.

knee, and delivering the killing blow. Such deliberate attention paid by Apollonius to each move emphasizes Polydeuces' smart boxing as he displays a sense of refinement and tact wholly unlike Amycus' rampaging, "rough" (ἀπηνέα, 2.76) style of fighting.<sup>17</sup> Polydeuces depends upon the strength of his wits to win, while Amycus depends upon the strength of his body. This is a clash between Odyssean and Iliadic values.

Even the death blow—the act indicating the strength of our hero—points to Polydeuces' *mētis*. The weakest part of the skull is the pterion which is a region slightly above and to the side of the ear where four separate bones (the frontal, parietal, temporal, and sphenoid) merge. If struck, the bones could fracture and cause the middle meningeal—a big artery running beneath the pterion—to rupture, causing an extradural haematoma and potentially leading to death. This area of the skull poses such a risk on account of its thinness and the artery underneath that it is even referred to by medical professionals as "God's little joke." It is also an area of concern particularly in athletic injuries, including boxing,<sup>18</sup> and even Hippocrates is aware of the dangers posed by being struck in this region.<sup>19</sup> Thus, if Polydeuces were looking for a quick and effective way to disable or even kill Amycus, this would be a logical location to strike. And it may, indeed, be the very place where Polydeuces aims. Apollonius describes him slipping to the side

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<sup>17</sup> See Cuypers (1997) 7 for how the two boxers' clothing—Polydeuces' delicate Lemnian robe and Amycus' black cloak—also draws a distinction between Polydeuces' skill and Amycus' strength. Also Rose (1984) 122: "By reference to his Lemnian mistress, the fine cloak associates Polydeuces with the niceties of hospitality which Amykos scorns."

<sup>18</sup> Special thanks to Tiffany Montgomery for her medical expertise. See Scaber et al. (2014) 10, Weston (2011), and Moore and Dalley (1999) 838-89. Granted, an extradural haematoma does not lead to an immediate death; Moore and Dalley note that it could take as long as a few hours (839). But in epic, where everything is exaggerated, the suddenness of the death is not surprising.

<sup>19</sup> Hipp. "On Wounds in the Head," 2 says that it is the weakest part of the skull, second only to the bregma, and that people are more likely to die (and more quickly) when struck here than anywhere behind the ears or "vertex" (κορυφή; for this translation, see Hanson [1999]). See also esp. section 12 for the weakness of cranial sutures more generally.

of Amycus and striking the king “above” (ὑπέρ) the ear—roughly where the pterion is located—and breaking the bones inside (2.95-96). The use of the plural “bones” (ὄστέα) could be referring to the four skull bones that combine at the pterion. As a result, it appears that Polydeuces was not simply throwing a haphazard—however strong—punch. It was a calculated swing aiming for this particularly weak and hazardous area of the skull. He harnessed his strength and used it as a surgical tool, not a battering ram.<sup>20</sup> In short, the message of this entire passage which repeatedly mentions Polydeuces’ caution and strategy is clear: he won the fight primarily through skill, not strength. He is a hero with Odyssean, not Iliadic, merit.

Apollonius further establishes Polydeuces as an Odyssean figure by expressly likening his smart battle tactics to several of Odysseus’ own skirmishes with mighty foes. The clash between Amycus and Polydeuces, for example, is partly modeled on Odysseus’ encounter with the Cyclops in Book 9 of the *Odyssey*.<sup>21</sup> The similarities between Polyphemus and Amycus are numerous. They are sons of Poseidon who disregard Greek notions of *xenia*, threatening strangers with death. The Cyclopes and the Bebrycians are “overbearing, arrogant” (ὑπερφίαλος: 2.129 ~ 9.106), and Amycus and Polyphemus are “monsters” (πέλωρ/πελώριος/πέλωρος: 2.39 ~ 9.187, 9.190, 9.257, 9.428). Both are shepherds who are tending to their animals at the start of the story (2.1 ~ 9.217), and after they are defeated, their flocks are seized (2.142-44 ~ 9.464-66) and some of the sheep are sacrificed (2.156-68 ~ 9.551-64). The Cyclopes are “lawless” (9.106, 9.112, 9.189), and while Amycus certainly clings to his “laws” (θεσμός: 2.5, 2.23, 2.148, 2.150;

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<sup>20</sup> Significantly, Polydeuces’ blend of might and *mētis* is given physical representation in the text when the two Argonauts to help him prepare for the match are Castor (associated with skill in the Catalogue, 1.146-50) and Bias’ son Talaus (associated with *biē*, 1.118-21).

<sup>21</sup> The similarities between these two scenes have been observed by several scholars. I am especially indebted to Knight (1995) 131-33 as the primary source for many of my observations. Also see pp. 128-131 for how Heracles, too, is a Cyclops-like figure.

θέσμιος: 2.12; θέμις: 2.17), expecting the Argonauts to adhere to his rule (2.17-18), the extent of his legal system is to compel strangers passing through the land to fight to the death. It is very clear that Amycus is a Cyclopean figure. In terms of similarities between Polydeuces and Odysseus, they are both likened to ship-builders when they are attacking these monsters: the former punches Amycus and is compared to a carpenter pounding pegs into “ship timber” (νήια δοῦρα) with a hammer (2.79-82), while the latter twists the sharpened stake in the Cyclops’s eye and is compared to a man boring a hole into “ship timber” (δόρυ νήιον) with a drill (9.384-86). In both similes, Polydeuces and Odysseus are likened to craftsmen building a ship and using tools to create holes in wood.<sup>22</sup> It cannot be mistaken: Apollonius clearly wants us to think of Odysseus as we read about Polydeuces disposing of yet another monstrous, hubristic, and hostile son of Poseidon.

Polydeuces’ contest with Amycus also evokes several episodes in Homer where Odysseus wrestles or spars with combatants. When Odysseus wrestles with the mighty, massive Telamonian Ajax during the funeral games of *Iliad* 23, his tactics demonstrate—like Polydeuces—a smart balance between strength (e.g. κρατερή ἴς, 23.720) and brains (e.g. πολύμητις... κέρδεα εἰδώς, 23.709; πολυμήχαν', 23.723; δόλου δ' οὐ λήθετ', 23.725). We also learn in the *Odyssey* that Odysseus has faced his own Amycus: on the Greeks’ way to Troy—as Menelaus tells us with, regrettably, sparse details—Odysseus defeated the hostile king of Lesbos, Philomeleïdes, who was accustomed to challenging strangers to lethal wrestling matches (4.341-

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<sup>22</sup> Concerning the simile in the Cyclops scene, Rood (2007) 113 notes how “the coupling of monster and technology juxtaposes physical strength, *biê*, and cunning intelligence, *mêtis*, respectively.” See pp. 114-15 more generally for how Odysseus narrates his encounter with the Cyclops as an encounter between *biê* and *mêtis*, with his superior *mêtis* coming out as victor.

46 = 17.132-37).<sup>23</sup> Thus, for both the Greeks' and the Argonauts' voyages east, the way is blocked by a stranger-killing threat (Amycus and Philomeleïdes) which is removed by heroes (Polydeuces and Odysseus) who are well-known for using both strength and *mētis* in their fighting styles.

A final—and decisive—parallel pushing us to consider Polydeuces alongside Odysseus is recognizing how Polydeuces' boxing match is modeled, at least in part, on Odysseus' tussle with Irus (*Od.* 18.1-107). As Knight observes, “In both scenes, the fight follows an insolent speech of provocation by someone who will not tolerate strangers on ‘his’ property”: Amycus challenges all those who enter his territory (2.5-18), and Irus attempts to get rid of the disguised Odysseus for fear that he will encroach on his begging rights at the palace (18.10-19).<sup>24</sup> Like Polydeuces, Odysseus possesses great strength, but the emphasis in Book 18 is on his prudence and strategy: he makes the suitors promise beforehand that they will not take any cheap shots against him while he is fighting Irus (18.52-57), and once the boxing has started, Odysseus pauses to contemplate whether he should kill Irus or knock him out, determining on the latter so as to avoid too close scrutiny and thereby maintain his disguise for longer (18.90-94). Polydeuces reveals this same kind of restraint and intellect when he tests his arms prior to fighting and holds back until he has learned Amycus' strengths and weaknesses. The final blows in both scenes are also remarkably alike. In Apollonius, Amycus hits Polydeuces on the shoulder (2.90-94), and Polydeuces follows that up with a swift blow to Amycus' head: “he swiftly struck [Amycus] above the ear, and the bones inside broke” (κόψε μεταίγδην ὑπὲρ οὔατος, ὅστέα δ' εἴσω / ῥῆξεν,

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<sup>23</sup> Cuypers (1997) 17 briefly mentions Odysseus' engagement with Philomeleïdes as a parallel to Polydeuces' fight with Amycus.

<sup>24</sup> Knight (1995) 66. See pp. 66-73 for more similarities between these two passages, including a discussion on how the Bebrycians also parallel the suitors.

2.95-96). In the *Odyssey*, Irus also hits Odysseus on the shoulder (18.95-96), and Odysseus responds by hitting him in a way very similar to Polydeuces' killing blow: "he struck [Irus'] neck below the ear and crushed the bones inside" (ὁ δ' ἀρχέν' ἔλασσεν ὑπ' οὔατος, ὅστέα δ' εἴσω / ἔθλασεν, 18.96-97). Note especially how the phrase "bones inside" (ὅστέα δ' εἴσω) is at line-end position in both passages, and how Polydeuces hits his opponent above the ear while Odysseus strikes below, purposefully missing the pterion and thereby keeping Irus alive as planned.<sup>25</sup> The evidence is plentiful: Apollonius wants us to view Polydeuces as a second Odysseus of sorts.

*Polydeuces vs. Heracles: The Defeat of the Iliadic*

Polydeuces is not, therefore, an Iliadic warrior. Where Heracles destroyed the Earthborn men with might, Polydeuces takes out his chthonic foe with *mētis*. This distinction between the two heroes' tactics takes physical form in a pair of similes, one of which compares Heracles to woodcutters and the other which likens Polydeuces to carpenters, professions which exercise opposing qualities of *biē* and skill, respectively:

ὥς δ' ὅτε δούρατα μακρὰ νέον πελέκεσσι τυπέντα  
 ὑλοτόμοι στοιχηδὸν ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι βάλωσιν,  
 ὄφρα νοτισθέντα κρατεροῦς ἀνεχοίατο γόμφοις. (1.1003-1005)

...just like when woodcutters throw large logs that have been recently felled with axes in a row by the edge of the sea, so that, having been soaked, they might withstand the strong bolts.

ὥς δ' ὅτε νῆια δοῦρα θοοῖς ἀντίξοα γόμοις  
 ἀνέρες ὑληουργοὶ ἐπιβλήδην ἐλάοντες  
 θείνωσι σφύρησιν, ἐπ' ἄλλω δ' ἄλλος ἄηται  
 δοῦπος ἄδην· (2.79-82)

...just like when carpenters, fitting together<sup>26</sup> ship timber which is averse to the sharp bolts, strike the wood with their hammers, and blow after blow unceasingly resounds.

<sup>25</sup> Cuypers (1997) 21 makes the distinction that Odysseus did not want to kill Irus and therefore hit him below the ear, while Polydeuces wanted to kill Amycus and thus aimed above the ear, but she does not explain why, exactly, those locations would matter.

<sup>26</sup> For this translation of ἐπιβλήδην ἐλάοντες, see Cuypers (1997) 115, 118.

In the first simile, the Argonauts lay out the Earthborn men's bodies on the beach and are compared to loggers. In the second, Polydeuces punches Amycus and is compared to carpenters. While the simile in Book 1 comes after the battle and refers not to Heracles' style of fighting *per se* but to the way in which the Argonauts treat the bodies of the dead monsters, the similarities in vocabulary and context between the two passages are sizeable. In 1.1003-5, woodcutters have recently struck down trees (δούρατα, 1.1003) with axes and are preparing the wood for the bolts (γόμφοις, 1.1005). In 2.79-82, carpenters, already supplied with prepped wood (δοῦρα, 2.79), are striking the bolts (γόμφοις, 2.79) with hammers. Clearly, there is a chronological aspect to these similes, namely, that the woodcutters must cut and prep the trees before the carpenters can work. Such close correlation suggests a continuous narrative of sorts, strongly indicating that we should consider the two passages together and take note of the contrast being set up in the type of work being described.<sup>27</sup> The job of a woodcutter requires plentiful strength: they cut down “great” (μακρά, 1.1003) trees and throw the heavy logs into water. While woodcutters are also associated with *mētis* in Greek literature,<sup>28</sup> Apollonius' simile is specifically illustrating the part of their job—i.e. throwing the logs—that requires exceptional muscle. On the flip side, carpenters, while also needing bodily force to hammer bolts and perform other such tasks, are primarily associated with *mētis* and professional skill (Detienne and Vernant [1978] esp. 235-36). Thus, these two similes with their *biē-mētis* opposition bring into focus the differences between the first book's mighty Iliadic Heracles and the second book's skillful Odyssean

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Rood (2008) who analyzes similes of shipbuilding in the *Iliad*: “Shipbuilding provides the most frequent and, as it turns out, the most coherent set of technological images... Unlike the other craft similes, the imagery of shipbuilding forms a narrative of sorts” (22). She goes on to discuss how shipbuilding is similar to the action of composing poetry and thus offers a metaliterary commentary as well.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. *Iliad* 23.315; see Detienne and Vernant (1978) esp. 235

Polydeuces. It is remarkably fitting, then, that in one of our final scenes of Heracles in Book 1, he is forcefully uprooting a tree but never has a chance to fashion the oar. He is, in essence, only a burly logger, not also a skillful carpenter like Polydeuces.

Apollonius even associates Amycus and the Bebrycians with Heracles, thereby illustrating the transition from the Iliadic to the Odyssean and suggesting that the Odyssean is now superior. Like Heracles (1.427, 1.532, 1.1196, 1.1206), the Bebrycians use clubs (2.99). Amycus is a “monster” (πέλωρ, 2.39; see above with the Cyclops), and Heracles, too, is described with such language: “the monstrous/huge Heracles” (Ηρακλῆα πελώριον, 1.1242), “the skin of the monstrous/huge lion” (δέρμα πελωρίου λέοντος, 4.1438, to describe Heracles’ lionskin), “monster” (πέλωρ, 4.1440).<sup>29</sup> Right before Amycus is killed, he is compared to a “slayer of oxen” (βουτύπος, 2.91), and thus far in the *Argonautica*, only Heracles and Ancaeus have been literal slayers of oxen (1.427-28).<sup>30</sup> Both Amycus and Heracles are also compared to natural, ship-destroying forces: the former is a rough wave threatening to engulf a ship (2.70-73), while the latter is a swift blast of wind ripping a ship’s mast off (1.1201-4). In short, as Levin notes, Polydeuces is fighting against specifically “Heracleian brute force.”<sup>31</sup> And he conquers it. He kills the Heracleian Amycus. Admittedly, as one of the crewmen mourns later, Heracles has a level of muscle that is even higher than Amycus’ and thus would have been able to stop the boxing match before it even began because of his awesome presence (2.145-53). But even taking

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<sup>29</sup> The only other humans associated with this root in the *Argonautica* include the Bebrycian Itymoneus (2.105) and Aeetes (4.224, to describe his spear)—both of whom, notably, are Heracleian figures. See Thiel (1996) 15 for how the epithet πελώριος, among others, evokes Iliadic heroes.

<sup>30</sup> Cuypers (1997) 8 also recognizes the relationship between 2.91 and 1.425-31.

<sup>31</sup> Levin (1971b) 26. Also see Cuypers (1997) esp. 4-8 for how Polydeuces’ fight against the Amycus demonstrates a contrast between Heracleian and “Jasonian” values, and DeForest (1994) 72-73 who examines how this scene elevates Polydeuces over Heracles.

that into account, it cannot be overlooked that Book 2 begins with the death of a character similar to Heracles. In a way, it symbolizes the death of the Iliadic at the hands of the now emerging Odyssean.

Polydeuces, therefore, is a vital and pivotal character in the *Argonautica*. He is the hinge between the Iliadic Book 1 and the Odyssean Book 2. On the one hand, he is our “new Heracles,” stepping into his brother’s shoes as the *aristos* and champion of the campaign, and handling the epic’s second chthonic threat. On the other hand, Polydeuces defeats the distinctly Heracleian and Cyclopean Amycus, signaling the young hero’s departure from Iliadic heroics and his emergence as a different kind of hero, an *Odyssean* hero, who values *mētis* and prudence over blunt *biē*. He has, to borrow a metaphor, switched the rail line: where once the train was headed along Heracles’ Iliadic tracks, it is now veering toward the Odyssean. With the change from Book 1 to Book 2 has come a change of focus and direction.

### **The Helmsmen: Tiphys and Ancaeus**

It may be surprising, then, that Polydeuces never again appears in Book 2, outside of the Mariandynians’ celebration of his defeat of Amycus. For all Apollonius’ haste in appointing a new “best man” after Heracles’ departure, Polydeuces flourishes only as long as it takes to remove Amycus as an obstacle. After that, he again fades into the background, re-joining the crew as a simple rower and ostensibly leaving the post of *aristos* vacant once more.<sup>32</sup> It is no wonder Beye and others believe that Book 2 “lacks a unifying hero figure” ([1982] 101). As soon as we are given the prospect of a new protagonist hero, he is gone.

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<sup>32</sup> Polydeuces does, along with five other men including his twin brother, volunteer to fight Aetes in Book 3 (515-20), and he does have a prominent role in Book 4 (592 ff.) as he and Castor protect the *Argo* in their role as patrons of sailors, but in both of these situations, he is voiceless and treated as only one half of a set of twins. He does not receive individual attention.

But the Odyssean model does not vanish. Rather, it expresses itself in a new host, a new face: the helmsmen, Tiphys and Ancaeus. While Polydeuces is the face of Odyssean heroics that utilizes strategy in combat, mixing *mētis* with *biē*, the helmsmen represent the facet of Odysseus' persona that nurtures intellect and skill. As they reenact obstacles Heracles triumphed over in Book 1 (namely, the delay at Lemnos and the storm at sea), the helmsmen confirm that the presence of an *aristos* and guiding force on the expedition is not gone after Polydeuces. It has simply transformed.

*The “Best Man:” From Polydeuces to Tiphys*

During the Bebrycian episode, Apollonius even foreshadows through simile that the role of *aristos* will be passed from Polydeuces to the helmsman Tiphys, making the transition from our first to our second Odyssean representative easier to visualize and accept. At the start of the boxing match, Amycus is compared to a wave and Polydeuces is likened to a helmsman:

ἄ τε κῦμα θαλάσσης  
 τρηχὺ θοῆν ἐπὶ νῆα κορύσσεται, ἢ δ' ὑπὸ τυτθὸν  
 ἰδρείη πυκινόιο κυβερνητήρος ἀλύσκει  
 ἰεμένου φορέεσθαι ἔσω τοίχοιο κλύδωνος· (2.70-73)

...just like a savage swell of the sea rears its head over a swift ship which barely escapes being capsized by a wave attempting to get over the side, thanks to the skill of a shrewd helmsman.

Polydeuces is a boxer and a rower, not a helmsman, yet his use of strategy is comparable to the expertise of a proficient pilot.<sup>33</sup> Not a hundred lines later, we see the substance of this simile take physical form in the physical world. Directly after the Argonauts again take to the sea after overpowering the Bebrycians, a wave as tall as “a steep mountain” (ἠλιβάτω οὐρεῖ, 2.169) threatens the ship with certain doom. But, as in the simile, a “good helmsman” (ἔσθλοιο

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<sup>33</sup> The Dioscuri are, of course, also known as benefactors of sailors. For an allusion to their domain in Apollonius, see e.g. 2.806-808.

κυβερνητήρος, 2.174 ~ πυκνοῖο κυβερνητήρος, 2.72, in the same metrical position) saves them as Tiphys uses his “skills” (δαημοσύνησι, 2.175 ~ ἰδρείη, 2.72) to successfully navigate through the hazard (2.169-76). In essence, Polydeuces defeats a gigantic metaphorical wave as a metaphorical helmsman in service to the expedition, while Tiphys actualizes that encounter by safely navigating through a real-life wave. The message is clear: we are expected to conceive of Tiphys as a continuation of Polydeuces.

In fact, Apollonius was so eager to ensure that his audience would consider the two together that, at the risk of redundancy, he deliberately includes this wave scene in addition to the events at the Clashing Rocks. Apollonius famously does not employ much repetition. Yet in Book 2, Tiphys encounters two massive waves that threaten to capsize the ship: here in the scene we are discussing (2.169-76) and later during the Clashing Rocks episode when he navigates through a wave as high as “a sheer mountain-peak” (ἀποτμήγι σκοπιῆ, 2.581; cf. ἠλιβάτω οὐρεῖ, 2.169).<sup>34</sup> This redundancy is a very un-Apollonian thing to do. Heracles, after all, only sacrifices one bull, fights one Earthborn horde, only once intrepidly rows the ship alone, and flies into only one blinding rage. Adhering to that pattern, Tiphys should only best one massive wave, and between the two encounters, it is the second that is necessary: the Clashing Rocks is *part* of the plot, while the first wave is wholly extraneous to the expedition. But if Apollonius had cut the first wave, the close affiliation between Polydeuces and Tiphys would have lost much of its potency. The Argonauts’ lengthy exchange with Phineus would have come between Polydeuces’

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<sup>34</sup> See Vian (1974) 129 for more (con)textual similarities between the wave in the simile (2.70-73), the first actual wave (2.169-76), and the wave in the Crashing Rocks episode (2.579-92). Byre (1991) 223 calls the wave at 2.169-76 “a kind of dress rehearsal *in nuce* of the Symplegades episode.” He also discusses how the narrator’s aside at 2.171-74 encourages the audience to sympathize with the Argonauts’ plight and thereby makes the situation more realistic and terrifying.

*aristeia* and Tiphys' introduction, and the sheer proximity between helmsman-and-wave simile and the actualization of that simile would have disappeared. And so, Apollonius embraces redundancy when he normally studiously avoids it in order to solidify Tiphys' position as Polydeuces' replacement.

The significance of Polydeuces' and Tiphys' shared rise to the celebrated post of *aristoi* at the beginning of Book 2 is even more compelling due to their relative absence in Book 1, making plain Apollonius' demarcation between the Iliadic heroism of the first book and the Odyssean heroism of the second. Polydeuces only appears twice in the first book, and only ever in conjunction with his brother: they are listed together in the Catalogue (1.146-50), and in the Argonauts' ill-fated encounter with the Doliones, Apollonius says that "the two Tyndaridae killed Megalossaces and Phlogius" (Τυνδαρίδαι δ' ἄμφω Μεγαλοσσάκεα Φλογίον τε, 1.1045), making it unclear which of the twins killed which enemy. It is not until Book 2 that Polydeuces takes front and center stage, independent of his brother. Similarly, Tiphys is mentioned on eight separate occasions in Book 1—a relatively high number of references—but in none of these scenes are his actions of lasting importance nor do we ever witness Tiphys' skill displayed in any sort of impressive feat.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the only person to have displayed heroic behavior on the sea prior to Book 2 is Heracles when he single-handedly rowed the ship through the storm (1.1161-63), a moment of danger where Tiphys, the person actually *in charge* of the ship, was never once mentioned. There is a sense, therefore, that Apollonius has consciously held both Polydeuces and Tiphys in reserve until Book 2. He has refrained from giving them the opportunity to expose their heroic merit until now, at which point he gives them a chance to demonstrate their prowess

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<sup>35</sup> Tiphys' involvement in Book 1 includes the following lines: 105-10, 381-86, 400-401, 522-23, 560-62, 956, 1274-75, 1296.

in back-to-back scenes. It is fast becoming clear: Book 1 is for Iliadic heroics, and Book 2 is for Odyssean heroics, as first demonstrated by Polydeuces then Tiphys.

*Odyssean Helmsmen: Apollonius and Other Authors*

This brings us, finally, to an important question: how is Tiphys Odyssean? The position of helmsman does not immediately scream “Odysseus” with his tricks and cunning. That said, Apollonius and other Greek authors frequently describe a helmsman’s job as one requiring *mētis* and intellect, both crucial aspects of Odysseus’ heroic worth. In 1.105-108 (the Catalogue entry for Tiphys), 1.559-62 (the description of Tiphys leading the Argo out of the harbor), and 2.169-76 (the first wave Tiphys navigates through), the helmsman’s occupation, as Lawall observes, is described by words denoting the mind: “know beforehand” (προδαῖναι, 1.106), “to calculate” or “judge from signs and tokens” (τεκμήρασθαι, 1.108), “shrewdness, cunning” (φραδμοσύνη, 1.560), “strategy, skill, cunning” (μήτι, 1.560), “skillfully” (τεχνηέντως, 1.561), “shrewd, cunning” (πυκνοῖο, 2.72), and “wise of mind” (δαῖφρονος, 1.560)—the last, of course, being one of the epithets for Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.<sup>36</sup> Being a helmsman is not an exercise in muscle, but in the sort of mental acuity Odysseus famously exemplifies.

And Apollonius is certainly not the only nor the first Greek author to say so. The notion that a helmsman uses prudence, ingenuity, and intelligence is prevalent enough in Greek literature to be an aphorism. For example, in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, Nestor counsels his son Antilochus before the chariot race to employ *mētis* to best the other competitors who have faster

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<sup>36</sup> Lawall (1966) 132. The part of his article where he describes the “men of skill” in the *Argonautica* (including the helmsmen: 131-32 and 134-36) has been a very important resource for this section of my chapter. See also Clauss (1993) 91-93 for the ring structure in 1.519-608 which equates the description of Heracles getting on the boat (1.531-33) with the passage describing Tiphys’ *mētis* (1.559-62). This is one of many examples Clauss notes where Apollonius makes a contrast between strength and skill at the beginning of the *Argonautica*.

and stronger horses, remarking that “a helmsman steers his swift ship, being buffeted by winds on the wine-dark sea, through *mētis*” (μήτι δ' αἴτε κυβερνήτης ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ / νῆα θοῆν ἰθύνει ἐρεχθομένην ἀνέμοισι, 23.316-17).<sup>37</sup> Thus, while Tiphys may not devise great ploys or practice guile, Apollonius classifies his skill as one denoting mental acumen and *mētis*, and this classification finds endorsement in the Classical tradition. As Holmberg says, “The τέχνη of the pilot is the tangible application of μητις” ([1998] 137). Helmsmen are rather Odyssean after all.

Even Odysseus and Athena—the mortal and immortal arch-representatives of *mētis*—are associated with ships and navigation, cementing the correlation between helmsmen and Odyssean values. As Detienne and Vernant have compellingly shown, Athena is repeatedly and intimately connected in our historical, literary, and cultic sources with the building, navigating, and protecting of ships.<sup>38</sup> The *Argonautica* is a prime example of her domain here: she designed the Argo and personally helped build it (e.g. 1.18-19, 1.111-14, 1.721-24, 2.611-18),<sup>39</sup> Athena herself sent Tiphys to join the expedition (1.109-10), and she helps him safely pilot the ship through the Clashing Rocks (2.536-618, discussed below).<sup>40</sup> All her activities involving ships, from carpentry to the assistance she provides helmsmen, are a subset of her *mētis*.

Detienne and Vernant discuss how Odysseus, too, builds and pilots ships with a skill and intelligence worthy of his patron goddess. In Book 5 of the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus is finally allowed to leave Calypso’s island, he sets about constructing a raft. He chops down trees, cuts

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<sup>37</sup> See Dunkle (1987) 2-3 for how this simile in the *Iliad* is part of the conflict between skill and strength that predominates in Book 23.

<sup>38</sup> “The ‘Sea Crow’”, pp. 215-58 of Detienne and Vernant (1978) is especially helpful in this regard.

<sup>39</sup> It is no surprise, then, that the Argonauts dedicate the disposed anchor to Athena (1.958-60). See, also, *Iliad* 15.410-12 for a simile explicitly connecting a shipbuilder’s skill to the inspiration of Athena.

<sup>40</sup> Detienne and Vernant (1978) discuss Athena’s involvement in the Clashing Rocks scene on pp. 219-21.

and sandpapers them, bores holes, hammers in pegs, and so forth, all tasks completed—as Homer indicates—with great skill (e.g. “skillfully,” ἐπισταμένως, 5.245; “knowledgeable in carpentry,” ἐὸν εἰδῶς τεκτοσυνάων, 5.250; “he skillfully executed,” τεχνήσατο, 5.259). When he sets sail in his raft, his skill—this time as a helmsman navigating by the stars’ positions—is again specified with the adverb “skillfully” (τεχνηέντως, 5.270).<sup>41</sup> Thus, both Athena and Odysseus demonstrate their skill and *mētis* as they build and pilot ships (or help pilot, in Athena’s case). It may be no coincidence, then, that the two similes Apollonius chose to describe Polydeuces’ Odyssean tactics against Amycus include these very two activities: building a ship (2.79-82, specifically, hammering pegs like Odysseus) and navigating one (2.70-73).

Regardless, what is eminently clear is that Apollonius’ decision to use helmsmen as Odyssean representatives is not unusual in the least. Helmsmen in Greek canon are frequently viewed as men of intellect and forethought, and even Odysseus and Athena exercise their *mētis* on the sea. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that the decision to include helmsmen as Odyssean representatives in Book 2 was *necessary*: if Apollonius is to present to us Odyssean *mētis* in all its different permutations, we have to see the helmsmen in action. It is the only way to fully represent Odysseus’ heroic abilities.

#### *Tiphys and Ancaeus: Saviors and Leaders*

Now that I have established the importance of helmsmen as agents of *mētis*, we can turn to the *Argonautica* to examine Tiphys’ and Ancaeus’ involvement in Book 2, beginning with the Symplegades. In this scene, Apollonius stresses that the Argonauts only successfully pass

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<sup>41</sup> Detienne and Vernant (1978) 236-37. Read there and the entirety of the chapter for more discussion on the similarities between *technē*, *mētis*, and helmsmen. Also see Holmberg (1997) 10-12 and Rood (2007) esp. 115 for the relationship between navigating/shipbuilding and civilization/*mētis* in the *Odyssey*.

through the Clashing Rocks because of Tiphys' skill as a helmsman, magnifying the efficacy of Odyssean intellect and prudence. This obstacle is foreshadowed in the invocation to the poem (1.2-3), marking it as an especially crucial moment, and for good reason: this barrier marks the limit of human achievement.<sup>42</sup> Phineus tells the Argonauts that no one has ever successfully gotten through (2.319), and Apollonius repeatedly mentions the crew's terror as they attempt to accomplish the colossal task (2.552, 2.561, 2.575, 2.577, 2.607). Death is a very real possibility in their minds; for them, they are facing "a destruction against which nothing can be done" (ἀμήχανος ὄλεθρος, 2.578).

And yet, something can be done. Tiphys gets them through the hurdle, utilizing his resourcefulness and expertise. When they first reach the Rocks, he orders the men to conserve their strength (2.556-59), revealing the same kind of foresight and self-control as Polydeuces did when he hung back to study his enemy. Later, after the dove passes through the entrance successfully, the men rejoice (2.572) and Tiphys is again the one to issue orders: "and Tiphys himself shouted [at the men] to row with strength" (ἔβραχε δ' αὐτός / Τῖφους ἐρεσσέμεναι κρατερῶς, 2.573-74). The enjambment here might be significant. By ending 573 with an emphatic intensive pronoun ("himself," αὐτός) then hitting Tiphys' name right at the start of the next line, there seems to be a forceful element in what Apollonius is saying ("he *himself* shouted, *Tiphys* did!"). If so, it would suggest that Tiphys is vigorously keeping the men's celebrating in check or, at the least, it suggests his haste to get the ship moving the second the rocks start

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<sup>42</sup> Knight (1995) 41-42 also notes how the invocation's mention of the Clashing Rocks gives the event special importance and further observes that it is the "only incident on the voyage to be mentioned in the proem (1.2-3)." See also Vian (1974) 123 who gives two other indicators of its importance: (1) the episode occurs halfway between the nineteen days the Argonauts are at sea, and (2) it happens in the very middle of Book 2. For the Clashing Rocks as a "gateway" into the more barbaric, fantastic world beyond, see Clare (2002) 76.

opening again. Either way, Tiphys is clearly the commander here, judiciously leading his men. Next, when a massive wave threatens to destroy the ship and the men all duck in fear, Tiphys deftly avoids the danger because he had “anticipated” (ἔφθη, 2.584) the wave’s coming and had eased up on the rudder accordingly. He is not merely reactive; he can intuit threats before they come and determine the best way to overcome them. In short, without Tiphys’ skill, foresight, and prudence—demonstrated first with the massive wave on the coast of Bithynia (2.169-76) and now here again at the Clashing Rocks—the crew would have perished.<sup>43</sup>

Admittedly, Tiphys is not the only one to get the Argo through the Clashing Rocks. He is assisted by none other than the goddess of *mētis* herself, Athena. After Tiphys has done all he can to skillfully navigate through the first part of the obstacle, the ship gets caught in a current, and not even the full force of all fifty-some rowers can get the ship free (2.588-97). Strength is proven wholly ineffectual. To save them, Athena flies in to provide divine assistance, pushing the ship through (2.588-603). While the Argonauts do not appear to be cognizant of her involvement, Tiphys attributes their success afterwards to her excellent craftsmanship of the Argo (2.611-14). In both ways, therefore, as carpenter and proxy helmsman, she has proven beneficial to the crew in their time of great need. Significantly, in Pindar’s version of the Clashing Rocks, the Argonauts depend upon Poseidon, the god of the sea, for assistance, not Athena (*Pythian* 4.203-11).<sup>44</sup> Thus, it is clear that Apollonius deliberately selected Athena for this scene. She and Tiphys—both practitioners of *mētis* and resourcefulness—are the saviors and

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Tiphys’ leadership here to Odysseus’ in Book 12 of the *Odyssey* as he directs his men through the Wandering Rocks (12.201-22). See Knight (1995) esp. 41-48 for more discussion about how the Clashing Rocks scene in Apollonius is primarily modeled on this episode in the *Odyssey*. This is yet one more example, therefore, of how the Odyssean representatives in Book 2 of the *Argonautica* directly channel Odysseus.

<sup>44</sup> See Ch. 8 of Detienne and Vernant (1978), esp. 231-34, for Athena vs. Poseidon.

champions of the Argonauts.

Once again, therefore, an Odyssean representative has translated a Heraclean feat into an Odyssean victory: in Book 1 Heracles depended on his strength to row the ship singlehandedly through the storm, while here in Book 2, Tiphys saves the Argonauts from two threats at sea (the first wave at 2.169-76 and the Clashing Rocks) by relying on his skill and intellect. He is the new *aristos* of the text.

So, when Tiphys dies in the middle of the second book, both the expedition and, figuratively, the epic itself grind to a halt in much the same way it did when Heracles—a former *aristos*—was left behind in Book 1.<sup>45</sup> After Heracles’ absence, Jason is struck by “helplessness” (ἀμηχανίησιν, 1.1286), and after Tiphys’ sudden death, the whole group also collapses on the shore in “helplessness” (ἀμηχανίησιν, 2.860; cf. 2.885). In the first instance, Jason “ate his heart” in sorrow (θυμὸν ἔδων, 1.1289) and sat “motionlessly” (εὐκηλος, 1.1290) in shock, while in this scene the crew, also “motionless” (εὐκήλωσ, 2.861), ignores both food and water altogether (2.861-62). And in both situations, the Argonauts express their fears of facing great “destruction” (ἄτη: Heracles 2.151-53; Tiphys 2.889). Essentially, without their champions Heracles (Book 1) and Tiphys (Book 2), “the best” among them, the Argonauts break down. As Apollonius writes for the scene after Tiphys’ death, “Their spirits sunk low with distress, since all hope for a return home was completely gone” (κατήμυσαν δ’ ἀχέεσσιν / θυμὸν, ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὸν ἀπ’ ἐλπίδος ἔπλετο νόστος, 2.862-63). They have given up. And just as with Heracles and Polydeuces’ absences, this incident amounts not only to a plot-related crisis (i.e., the Argonauts have lost a

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<sup>45</sup> Tiphys is not the only Argonaut who dies in Bithynia: the prophet Idmon dies when a boar slices through his thigh and cuts straight through the bone (2.815-34). It is tempting to compare his injury to Odysseus’ scar which he received when he, too, was gored by a boar in the thigh, except (as Homer explicitly states) Odysseus’ injury did not reach to the bone and Odysseus therefore survives the attack (*Od.* 19.451).

leading crewmember and protector) but also to a narrative crisis: who will be the next unifying heroic figure? And what brand of heroism will he display?

In this case, the Odyssean is not yet finished. A new man of *mētis*—Ancaeus, the third incarnation thus far in Book 2—emerges to keep the quest going by repeating and repainting for the last time in Book 2 a Heraclean achievement.<sup>46</sup> Heracles’ angry speech urging the Argonauts to stop lingering at Lemnos runs from lines 1.865-74. Here in Book 2, Ancaeus’ speech goes from lines 2.869-77. Both speeches are nearly the same length and they come at almost identical points in their respective books. Moreover, the background and content of their speeches are also alike. In Book 1 (as I have already discussed), Apollonius notes that the crew would have delayed longer at Lemnos if Heracles had not spoken up (1.861-64), and here in Book 2, the men would have kept grieving “even longer” (ἔτι προτέρω, 2.864) if Hera had not spurred Ancaeus to step up. In both speeches, the men question the “nobleness” (καλόν, 2.869 [cf. ἀκλειῶς, 2.893]; ἐκλειεῖς, 1.869) of postponing the quest while delaying “in a foreign land” (γαίῃ ἐν ἀλλοδαπῇ, 2.870; σὺν ὀθνεῖησι γυναιξίν, 1.869). And at the end of Ancaeus’ speech, after proposing himself and others as potential replacements for Tiphys, he closes by asking Peleus to boldly encourage the men “to remember the quest” (ἐπιμνήσασθαι ἀέθλου, 2.877), the very crux of Heracles’

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<sup>46</sup> There are two Ancaeus’s on board: one is the son of Lycurgus (Catalogue entry: 1.163-71), the other is the son of Poseidon (Catalogue: 1.185-89). The former, as mentioned in Chapter 1, is a man of great *biē*—so great, in fact, that he shares the central rowing bench on the ship with Heracles (1.396-98, 531-32) and is right next to him slaughtering his own bull (1.426-31). He is clearly an Iliadic figure. The Ancaeus in Book 2 is Odyssean. It may be deliberate on Apollonius’ part, therefore, that their names come in mirrored positions in the Catalogue: after Heracles and Hylas are listed, there are nine names of various crewmen before Ancaeus-*biē* is introduced as the 39<sup>th</sup> crewmember; Ancaeus-*mētis* is listed as the 45<sup>th</sup>, and after him, another nine names finish off the list of participating Argonauts. Cf. Clauss (1993) 26-36 who observes a number of skill-*biē* oppositions in the Catalogue.

speech.<sup>47</sup> It would be a very strange coincidence indeed if Apollonius had not been aware of these striking parallels. As a result, it is clear that we are to consider Ancaeus as one of our Book 2 *aristoi*: he, like the others, repeats a Heracleian victory but, as we will see, as a figurehead of Odyssean heroics.

Indeed, the focus of Ancaeus' speech as he proposes various crewmen, including himself, who can fill Tiphys' place is on the saving grace of skill, not *biē*, thereby explicitly associating him with the Odyssean values I have been discussing in this chapter. Ancaeus states, "Jason is not leading me away from Parthenia in his quest for the fleece because of my skill in warfare but because of my familiarity with ships" (οὐ μὲν ἄρῃος / ἴδριν ἐόντα με τόσσον ἄγει μετὰ κῶας Ἰήσων / Παρθενίης ἀπάνευθεν, ὅσον τ' ἐπίστορα νηῶν, 2.870-71). Ancaeus is very clear about this fact: he is not a Heracles, dependent upon martial prowess (ἄρῃος). He is here as one of the carpenters, not woodcutters. Continuing his speech, he observes that there are others who are equally "knowledgeable" or "skilled" (δαήμονες, 2.874; cf. 2.887) in piloting a ship. By this point, Ancaeus has used three different adjectives in this passage, all of which have the same meaning of "experienced" or "skilled" (ἴδριν 2.871, ἐπίστορα 2.872, δαήμονες 2.874), stressing that the answer to their current plight is the kind of skill and expertise that helmsmen like Tiphys and he characterize.

Thus, to sum up, Ancaeus—the third representative of Odyssean values—keeps the quest going by offering his heroic worth as a man of skill. In fact, he becomes an influential enough figure that he is even the first at the end of Book 2 (not Jason or even Argus) to suggest that the

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<sup>47</sup> Vian (1978) 1030-31 suggests that Ancaeus addresses Peleus instead of the entire crew because he does not want to appear too presumptuous by straight-up taking control of the helm when there are other worthy sons of Poseidon among the crew (Erginus, Nauplius, and Euphemus). Vian compares Ancaeus' actions here to Jason's at Pagasae who, similarly, did not want to presume he was leader when greater heroes—like Heracles—were present.

crew should “plan” (μητιάασθαι, 2.1278) how to approach Aeetes once the Argo reaches Colchis. For a character who is never once mentioned in Book 1 outside of the Catalogue, here in Book 2 Ancaeus becomes a leader, a spokesman. Book 2, in many ways, *belongs* to the *mētis*-endowed helmsmen. It is here and nowhere else in the *Argonautica* that they shine.

### **The Odyssean Heracles**

There is one more Odyssean representative at the end of Book 2, and the selection is surprising: Heracles. In the first two-thirds of Book 2, Heracles is the man of might and violence we remember from Book 1. The Argonauts long for his strength after the Bebrycian episode (2.145-53), and Lycus reminisces about the time Heracles knocked all Titias’ teeth out in a boxing match (2.780-85). After Book 2’s preoccupation with the helmsmen has reached its *telos* with Ancaeus taking over the job, however, Heracles transforms into a man of *mētis* to serve as the fourth and final Odyssean hero. For Heracles to demonstrate *dolos* and strategy is not in any way unprecedented in Greek literature.<sup>48</sup> What is unusual is that this Odyssean Heracles is so very different from the Heracles that appears in the rest of the epic. There are, in effect, two different Heracles’s in the *Argonautica*: the Iliadic Heracles of Books 1, 3, and 4 (and the beginning of Book 2), and the Odyssean Heracles at the end of Book 2 who uses ambush and cunning instead of *biē* to defeat his enemies. Just as Polydeuces and the helmsmen replay Heracles’ challenges from Book 1 with Odyssean flair, now Heracles himself is getting a makeover, donning the mask of an Odysseus. This transformation is the climax of Apollonius’ intention to celebrate Odyssean heroism in Book 2 of the *Argonautica*.

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<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., Stesichorus *Geryoneis* (P. Oxy. 2617 fr. 4 and 5). Note also how Athena has a close relationship with Heracles, like Odysseus: e.g. *Il.* 8.362-69, 20.144-48; *Od.* 11.626; Hes. *Theog.* 318; Hes. *Aspis* 325-337, 443-65; Eur. *HF* 906-908, 1002-1006. For the complex relationship between Odysseus and Heracles in the *Odyssey*, see esp. Schein (2016).

### *Hippolyte and the Stymphalian Birds*

There are two scenes where Heracles demonstrates Odyssean heroics at the end of Book 2: his retrieval of Hippolyte's belt (2.966-69) and his rout of the Stymphalian birds (2.1052-58). In both of these episodes, Apollonius plants red herrings to lead the audience to believe he is following versions of the events where Heracles pursues violence and force. Both times, however, Apollonius veers off course part way through and resolves the situation with Odyssean means. This creative and teasing engagement with the audience's expectations makes the Odyssean surprise endings all the more patent and potent.

#### *a. Hippolyte and Odyssean Lochos*

In the mythic tradition, Heracles' labor to claim the belt of the Amazon queen (who goes by several different names in our records<sup>49</sup>) is frequently steeped in bloodshed. Diodorus Siculus, for example, gives a detailed account of how Heracles kills the women's twelve best warriors and then proceeds to mow down the rest of the Amazonians "such that their race was completely crushed" (ὥστε παντελῶς τὸ ἔθνος αὐτῶν συντριβῆναι). Melanippe is the queen of the Amazonians in this version, and after Heracles captures her, she buys her freedom by giving him the belt as a ransom (cf. ἀπελύτρωσεν, 4.16). In *The Library*, Apollodorus gives a rather different account that still, nevertheless, concludes with carnage: Hippolyte herself meets Heracles when he arrives and she offers to give him the belt, but when Hera disrupts the proceedings, war breaks out, and Heracles kills Hippolyte, steals the belt, and fights the rest of the women (2.5.9). A diplomatic resolution was possible, but it ended in catastrophe. The vast majority of our artistic records of the Labor are similarly violent in nature, often illustrating the

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<sup>49</sup> Apollonius is, in fact, our first extant literary record to call the queen Hippolyte, the name that became most popular; Gantz (1993) 399.

skirmish between Heracles' men and the Amazonians, or the one-on-one fight between Heracles and a single female warrior. While there are a handful of vases recovered from South Italy and dated to as early as the fifth century that appear to show a peaceful resolution, by far the most common scene depicts warfare.<sup>50</sup> In sum, while there are elements of diplomacy within our extant sources, our literary and artistic records most favor a climax that involves significant warfare.

In the *Argonautica*, Apollonius at first appears to follow this most common version of the story that culminates in violence and full-on assault. As the Argonauts draw near to the land of the Amazonians, they see the ghost of Sthenelus, a Greek man who had accompanied Heracles on his campaign against the women but who was wounded and died on the return journey. There are several indications in the narrative that Heracles' expedition was martial in nature:

Apollonius mentions the “valorous war against the Amazons” (Ἀμαζονίδων πολυθαρσέος ἐκ πολέμοιο, 2.912), and Sthenelus' ghost is arrayed in full battle gear “just as he was when he went to war” (οἷος πόλεμόνδ' ἴεν, 2.919-20). From just this information, the implication is that the Labor was won by the sword.

It was not. As we learn roughly fifty lines later, Heracles avoided a frontal assault and, instead, used ambush to retrieve the belt, a rather Odyssean maneuver. After making sacrifices and libations at Sthenelus' tomb, the Argonauts keep sailing for another three days or so before coming into sight of the Amazonians' territory. Immediately, Apollonius launches into a brief description of how Heracles actually accomplished the labor: “Here, a while ago, the hero

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<sup>50</sup> For a survey of the literary and artistic accounts of this episode, see esp. Brommer (1986) 37-40 and Gantz (1993) 397-400. Gantz (pg. 399) suggests that the artists of the vases showing a peaceful resolution may have been following the same source that Apollonius follows. Note also that in Hellanikos, all of the Argonauts join Heracles in his venture (4F106).

Heracles ambushed (ἐλοχήσατο) Ares' daughter Melanippe as she was traveling, and Hippolyte handed over to him the sparkling belt as a ransom (ἄποινα) for her sister, and he sent [Melanippe] back unharmed (ἀπήμονα)" (2.966-69). While Heracles may have started a war with the Amazons when he arrived as is implied by Sthenelus' ghost, the actual fulfillment of his labor is a demonstration of trickery, cunning, and negotiation, not violence. Melanippe is left unscathed, Hippolyte is not killed, and the Amazonians are not eradicated. This wholly nonviolent conclusion to one of Heracles' glorious labors is atypical to say the least, and far different from the Heracles we will see in Book 4 who, without a word to the Hesperides or any attempt at negotiation, marches in, kills Ladon, steals the apples, wreaks havoc on the ecological system of the place, and leaves.<sup>51</sup> Our Heracles here in Book 2 is, in fact, very Odyssean. As Edwards discusses in detail, the Homeric Odysseus is "the hero of the ambush" (19), and this aspect of his heroic identity is directly opposed to Achilles and other "spearfighter" heroic figures in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* who depend on *biē*.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, against the prevailing expectations of the Greek literary canon and in marked contrast to his actions in Book 1 and at Libya, Heracles recovers the belt through Odyssean, not Iliadic, tactics.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See my discussion on Libya in Chapter 4.

<sup>52</sup> Edwards (1985) 18-43. The words *λόχος/λοχάω* show up 10 times in the *Iliad* and a significantly larger 20 times in the *Odyssey*. Edwards analyzes how the *Iliad* has a mostly negative opinion of *lochos*, while in the *Odyssey*, *lochos* is a key theme and Odysseus proves himself to be the "master of this stratagem of trickery" (35). See esp. 34: "This contrast, then, in the two poems' respective views of the *λόχος* is ultimately a reflex of the contrast of Achilles and Odysseus as types within the epic tradition, and it directs our attention to a profound difference in the ethical values of the poems. In the *Odyssey*, figures of *βίη* are portrayed as villains; the *Iliad* regards cunning and trickery as a last resort for those whose strength is unequal to open confrontation. This is not to say that Odysseus' *βίη*, for instance, is hidden in the *Odyssey*, or that the *μητις* of Nestor as a counsellor is not prized in the *Iliad*, but that these qualities are marginalized in their positive aspect in the respective poems."

<sup>53</sup> Writing about the Hippolyte episode, Papadimitropoulos (2006) observes that the combination of the word "hero" (ἥρωας) with the verb "ambushed" (ἐλοχήσατο, 2.967) in the same line seems "contradictory and incompatible to Heracles' predominant image as an archaic hero." He

b. *The Stymphalian Birds and Odyssean Strategy*

As with the belt of Hippolyte, Apollonius plants red herrings that encourage his audience to expect that Heracles defeated the Stymphalian birds through force. There are several different versions of this myth in our literary and artistic sources. In some accounts (predominantly our visual records), Heracles defeats the birds by shooting them down. Other versions describe Heracles scaring them away with the noise of castanets or a rattle that either Athena gives him or he himself creates (e.g. Diodorus 4.13.2). Still others combine the two traditions, having Heracles startle the birds with loud sounds then shoot them as they take to the skies (e.g. Apollodorus 2.5.6).<sup>54</sup> In our extant traditions of this story, therefore, *mētis* or *biē* or both were used in this labor. When the Argonauts draw near to the island of Ares, Apollonius makes it seem like he will be choosing the violent version. One of the crewmembers is speared by a falling feather, and Clytius is quick to unleash an arrow at the next passing bird before it, too, can harm them (2.1032-45). His display of archery evokes the artistic and literary depictions of Heracles similarly disposing of the Stymphalian birds by shooting them down, suggesting that Apollonius will adhere to that version of events. Apollonius' decision to single out Clytius here of all other Argonauts is also significant, considering that it was Clytius' father, Eurytus, who taught Heracles—and surely Clytius as well—how to shoot a bow in the first place (e.g. Theoc. *Idyll* 25.105, Apollodorus 2.4.9). Clytius, therefore, is something of a proxy for Heracles, using

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concludes, “The phrase as it stands sounds ironic and undermines Heracles' heroic status” (50 n. 33). He is half correct: it may undermine Heracles' heroic merit as an *Iliadic* hero, but, as an *Odyssean* hero, it elevates him. Note, also, how Zeus sends a wind to allow the Argonauts to completely avoid a skirmish with the Amazonians, even as both sides were preparing for battle (2.985-95). See Rose (1984) 133ff who discusses how, beginning in Book 2, warfare and combat become increasingly inadequate for the Argonauts. This is fitting since Book 2 is of the Odyssean, not Iliadic, world.

<sup>54</sup> See Brommer (1986) 26-28 and Gantz (1993) 393-94 for the artistic and literary versions of Heracles' labor with the Stymphalian Birds.

the skills that Eurytus taught the both of them to dispatch the birds of Ares.

Or, rather, Clytius is a proxy for the version of Heracles who *does* shoot down the Stymphalian birds. As Apollonius goes on to inform us, his Heracles pursued a different avenue. In fact, Apollonius gives us a Heracles whose *mētis* is magnified even at the expense of his *biē*. After Clytius kills one of the birds, Amphidamus, a former companion of Heracles, speaks up and notes that when Heracles himself encountered the birds, he “did not have sufficient strength” (οὐδὲ ἔσθενε, 2.1052-53) to kill the birds with his arrows. Instead, he made loud noises to scare the birds off. Amphidamas suggests the Argonauts follow Heracles’ example, and the plan he proposes to the crew is referred to as a *mētis* three times (2.1050, 1058, 1068; cf. 2.383).<sup>55</sup> This is exceptional. The hero who shot numberless Earthborn men and rowed the *Argo* singlehandedly in Book 1 is now, in Book 2, represented as too weak to triumph and must instead employ cleverness. *Mētis* has prevailed over *biē*. The Argonauts decide to adopt Heracles’ tactical plan, and they, too, are able to bypass the obstacle. Thus, even though Heracles is absent, his presence still looms near as he helps the expedition along like he did in Book 1, but now it is through the guise of a man of *mētis* instead of *biē*. Apollonius led us to believe we would see a Clytius. Instead, we received an Odysseus.

### *The Chameleon Heracles*

The Heracles at the end of Book 2, therefore, is our fourth and final Odyssean representative. This Heracles “does not have sufficient strength” to depend solely on his might as he does elsewhere in the *Argonautica*. Rather, he participates in the aspect of Odysseus’ *mētis* that crafts cunning resolutions instead of resorting to brute violence, the kind of *mētis* that

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<sup>55</sup> Holmberg (1998) 139 makes a distinction between Heracles’ “overt confrontational μῆτις” when he stands out in the open shaking his rattle, and the Argonauts who hide under their shields while making noise.

bypassed the impregnable walls of Troy with a wooden horse after years of combat, and that brought down the man-gobbling Cyclops with clever words and a clever scheme. While several scholars have also noted that Heracles seems to be acting out of character in the two episodes I have been discussing, no one has observed or attempted to explain why these two examples of Heracles favoring *mētis* are *only* in Book 2.<sup>56</sup> Nor has anyone provided a very good explanation for Heracles' changed persona. Some—Levin foremost among them—have concluded that these scenes suggest that Heracles is less of a brute than he first appears, that he is capable of strategy and careful reasoning, not merely force. This is only partly true: the Odyssean Heracles in Book 2 *is* indeed capable of *mētis*, but elsewhere, he is simply the brute. Thus, it is almost as if Heracles has been *rewritten* to fit into the Odyssean framework of Book 2.

And so, there are two versions of Heracles in the *Argonautica*: an Iliadic version for the Iliadic Book 1, and an Odyssean version for the Odyssean Book 2. But why does Apollonius do this? Why risk sacrificing the integrity of Heracles' character by lending him two different, conflicting masks to wear as he participates in the *Argonautica*? For one thing, Heracles' innate, mythical persona can survive such manipulation. As I discuss in the Appendix, Heracles is veritable clay in poets' hands. He can be shaped into whatever form is needed by the context. Conflicting versions of Heracles thrive and coexist in the Greek literary canon with little to no problem. The philosopher stands next to the glutton, the father next to the killer, the protector next to the destroyer, and on and on. It follows, then, that Apollonius chose to give us two versions of Heracles *because he could*. Apollonius takes advantage of the hero's distinctive plasticity in order to make a blatant statement of his authorial intent: if Heracles is to play a part

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<sup>56</sup> E.g., Levin (1971a) 198-201; Levin (1971b) 25-28; Feeney (1986b) 60; Papadimitropoulos (2006) 50.

on the Odyssean stage of Book 2, he must *also*, like a chameleon, become Odyssean. As such, Heracles' transformation is the most explicit and potent confirmation of what I am attempting to argue in this dissertation. Book 2 *belongs* to the Odyssean man.

### **Conclusion: The Many Faces of *Mētis***

Four Odyssean representatives—four faces of *mētis*—accept the mantle of *aristos* to safeguard and lead the expedition in Book 2. Polydeuces stands for the aspect of Odysseus' heroic core that blends *mētis* with might, relying more on the strength of prudence and strategy than muscle. The helmsmen embody Odysseus' professional skill and intellect, reading the waves of the sea and determining the best course corrections to stay afloat. And Heracles exemplifies Odysseus' cunning and strategizing, utilizing ambush and other clever schemes to solve problems where brute force fails. These four men together confirm their heroic merit by demonstrating the efficacy of Odyssean values, and, combined, they wield a force that is just as effective as Heracles' grand heroics in Book 1: Polydeuces defeats his chthonic monster as easily as Heracles defeated the Earthborn men, the helmsmen manage to steer the ship through hazards on the sea without even threatening the integrity of the ship itself as Heracles had done when he rowed the ship alone, and the unassuming Ancaeus—confident in his *mētis* and skill as a pilot—is able to wield as much influence over the crew as Heracles did at Lemnos. We have, therefore, our unifying hero figure; he is simply composed of four different, Odyssean entities.

Thus, there is a dramatic shift from Book 1 to Book 2 in the type of heroic character that dominates, a move from using a force-centered *modus operandi* (like Achilles) to one that utilizes *mētis* (like Odysseus). And this shift cannot only be connected to the fact that Heracles is not physically present anymore because he, too, undergoes this change, temporarily shedding his similarities to Achilles and donning the costume of an Odysseus. In effect, Apollonius has

moved us through an Iliadic world and into an Odyssean, from the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*.

Having thus staged Iliadic heroics in Book 1 and Odyssean values in Book 2, Apollonius now moves to Book 3 where we will finally witness Jason's new brand of heroism in action. While he shares with Odysseus several qualities (chief among them his eloquence), Jason is, fundamentally, neither an Odysseus nor an Achilles. Far from being Homeric, Jason is something of a Hellenistic man: realistic, dependent on others, diplomatic, and anxious to preserve *homonoia*. The curtain has closed on Homeric heroic models. Next to take the stage is Apollonius' own heroic apparatus.

### Chapter 3: Jason and Hellenistic Heroism in Book 3

Books 1 and 2 stage Homeric conceptions of heroic behavior with the Iliadic Heracles and the Odyssean figures taking starring roles. Jason himself has been little more than a supporting actor, showing up for a handful of important scenes (e.g. Lemnos) but not holding a sustained dominant presence in the text. This changes at Colchis. With a new invocation that suggests the epic is restarting, Apollonius opens Book 3 by stating, “Come now, Erato, stand beside me and tell me how Jason brought the fleece to Iolcus from there” (Εἰ δ’ ἄγε νῦν, Ἐρατώ, παρά θ’ ἴστασο, καί μοι ἔνισπε, / ἔνθεν ὅπως ἐς Ἴωλκὸν ἀνήγαγε κῶας Ἰήσων, 3.1-2). Jason’s name comes noticeably in line-end position, and grammatically it is he, not the Argonauts as a whole, who will be carrying the fleece back home to Pelias. This is vastly different from the invocation of Book 1 which introduced the heroes as a single entity without isolating any one Argonaut as singularly important (1.1-4). The discrete attention paid to Jason at the beginning of Book 3 is an explicit signal that he will finally be taking a leading role in the expedition he has only nominally been commanding the whole time.

And he will not be acting alone. In a clever use of enjambment, the sentence in lines 1-2 concludes in line 3 with a simple prepositional phrase: “[Jason brought the fleece to Iolcus] because of Medea’s love” (Μηδείης ὑπ’ ἔρωτι, 1.3). After introducing Jason as the hero who will triumphantly bear the fleece home, Apollonius tacks on the qualification that he will only be successful because of the love-afflicted Medea. Indeed, while Heracles mocked Jason’s sexuality back at Lemnos, the implication is that Jason’s expert ability to woo women will be the key to completing the objective of the quest and achieving his *nostos*. Straight out of the gate, therefore,

Apollonius is signaling that a new heroic apparatus is emerging for Book 3: Jason will be the star, and he will prove his heroic merit not through *biē* or *mētis*, but through the Hellenistic collaborative values he has already demonstrated at various points in the poem, chief among them Love.

The first 575 lines of Book 3 set the stage for this new heroic model to ascend by way of disrupting the potency and viability of Iliadic and Odyssean heroics. To do so, Apollonius repeats his tactics from Book 2 where, as discussed in the preceding chapter, he dismisses Iliadic heroism through a process of conversion and neutralization: the Odyssean heroes replay Heracles' feats from Book 1 but use *mētis* instead of *biē* to succeed, and Heracles—able to draw from a seemingly endless well of power in Book 1—suddenly “does not have sufficient strength” to defeat the Stymphalian birds. *Biē* is replaced by *mētis*, and the Iliadic is stripped of all efficacy in order to contribute to the creation of an Odyssean world. Book 3 replicates this process for similar effect. In the Olympian scene of lines 1-166, the goddesses outright reject the Homeric heroism of Books 1 and 2 as a means to accomplishing the quest, and Iliadic and Odyssean heroism are converted to make way for Jason's sexuality and Medea's magic: martial warfare becomes erotic warfare, and “male” *mētis* becomes “female” *mētis*. When the Argonauts, ignorant that the rules of the game have changed, attempt to pursue Homeric heroics in lines 167-575, they invariably fail. The superheroic potential of Iliadic *biē* and Odyssean *mētis* are no longer accessible for the heroes. At Colchis, the efficacy of Homeric heroics has been effectively deactivated. Thus, pursuing a similar course of conversion and neutralization that he employed in Book 2, Apollonius signals the termination of Iliadic and Odyssean heroics in the epic.

And once these Homeric models are defunct by line 575, Jason rises to demonstrate the heroic worth of his Hellenistic collaborative values. Depending on diplomatic and romantic

skills, he is able to win Medea and thereby assure his victory not only in Aeetes' contest but also in the quest that Pelias had assigned. We have reached, therefore, the zenith of Apollonius' masterful engagement with epic heroism in the *Argonautica*: where Book 1 celebrated the Iliadic and Book 2 the Odyssean, here in the third book we witness the emergence and triumph of a post-Archaic, modern man.

### **Rejection and Transformation of Iliadic and Odyssean Heroism (3.1-166)**

After the invocation, Apollonius draws back the curtain and gives us our first view of Olympus, revealing the gods' (or, more accurately, the *goddesses*') intentions and schemes. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we learn of the gods' maneuvers taking place behind the scenes as early as the first book, while here in the *Argonautica*, Apollonius withholds this knowledge until halfway through the poem. Their appearance at this tardy moment, therefore, has special weight, and taken together with the invocation, the feeling that the epic is starting anew is intensified.

Indeed, when the goddesses hatch a plan to enchant Medea with love for Jason, they reject any kind of Iliadic or Odyssean conclusion to the quest. Instead, the qualities of both heroic models are *transformed* to accommodate the goddesses' scheme: instead of physical warfare on the plains of Colchis, we will have warfare of the heart, and instead of masculine Odyssean *mētis*, we will have a variant that falls under the domain of women. Similar to how Polydeuces served as the pivot point between the Iliadic world of Book 1 to the Odyssean world of Book 2, the goddesses are the hinge between the Homeric world of the first half of the *Argonautica* to the Hellenistic world of the second half. With their arrival come the termination and transformation of the Homeric sensibilities of Books 1 and 2. Lines 1-166, therefore, represent the first stage in preparing for the ultimate elevation of Hellenistic heroism in Book 3.

*From Iliadic Warfare to Emotional Warfare*

We learn in the invocation that Love will be the key to retrieving the fleece. But the novelty of such a resolution is substantiated when Aphrodite herself—Love embodied—expects that the culmination of the quest will come through *biē*, not sexuality. Several scholars have remarked on the novelty of Apollonius' inclusion of romance as a core element of the *Argonautica*. As Zanker claims, Apollonius “was the first to treat of the love theme in epic to this extent.”<sup>1</sup> While it is dangerous to make such sweeping generalizations about a genre for which we have so precious little extant,<sup>2</sup> for Homer, at any rate, it is a rather novel inclusion. Achilles and, especially, Odysseus have erotic experiences, but neither achieves the apex of their heroic persona through sexuality as Jason does. Thus, at least from the perspective of Homeric epic, love as heroic *telos* is indeed surprising. Accordingly, when Hera and Athena approach Aphrodite and announce that the success of the quest is dependent upon her, Aphrodite is struck by “speechlessness” (ἐνεοστασίη, 3.76)<sup>3</sup> and surprise (cf. “she stood in awe,” ἄξετο, 3.77). She responds by promising to help but admits to having “weak” (ἡπεδανάι) hands (3.79-80), suggesting that at least a portion of her startled reaction is because she feels that she may be incapable of helping. It appears that Aphrodite, like the civilians back at Iolcus and the Argonauts themselves, has Iliadic expectations for the culmination of the quest and never even considers that love—her personal domain where she is, indeed, powerful, not weak—might play

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<sup>1</sup> Zanker (1979) 69. Cf. Glei (2011) 8 and Beye (1969). Also Feeney (1991b) 78 who discusses how Eros/Cupid is not a character in any extant epics or fragments of epics, and may thereby also represent an innovative inclusion into the epic genre: “for Apollonius, he is a creature of lyric, epigram, and other ‘minor’ genres.”

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle suggests that many epics on Theseus were in circulation prior to Apollonius (*Poet.* 1451a). If this is true (and see Holt [1992] 44-45 for veracity), surely at least some of them addressed the hero's seduction of Ariadne. Even Jason refers to how Ariadne was crucial for the survival and success of Theseus (3.997-1004, 1096-1101).

<sup>3</sup> Translation Hunter (1989a) 106.

a role in such elevated, serious matters.

Hera, Jason's personal patron, is quick to correct Aphrodite's misconception when she unequivocally rejects using Iliadic force to retrieve the fleece. Neither Hera nor Athena even consider violence an option during their strategizing session (3.6-35), and in response to Aphrodite's startled reaction, Hera states, "We are not here in need of *biē* or the strength of hands" (οὐ τι βίης χατέουσαι ικάνομεν οὐδέ τι χειρῶν, 3.84). Notably, the first use of the word *biē* in the *Argonautica* is Heracles' introduction into the text as "the *biē* of Heracles" (βίην Ἡρακλῆος, 1.122). He, with his exceptional strength, was the Argonauts' hope for easy success against the likes of Aetes (cf. 3.1231-34). But the Iliadic Heracles is gone, and his *biē* is no longer needed or wanted by the goddesses. Instead, as Hera continues in her speech, she requests that Aphrodite "call upon [her] son to enchant the daughter of Aetes with desire for the son of Aeson" (τεῶ ἐπικέκλεο παιδὶ / παρθένον Αἰήτεω θέλξαι πόθῳ Αἰσονίδαο, 3.85-86). Hera is repeating some of the language from the invocation (e.g. παρθενικάς, 3.5 also in line-initial position; θέλγεις, 3.4), confirming that the narrator and gods are on the same page about love's centrality and further derailing the epic from the trajectory it had been following in Books 1 and 2. Hera places brute force in direct opposition to enchantment and love, and the message of the queen of the gods is unmistakable: Iliadic strength will *not* be the instrument of success at Colchis. Against the expectations of Aphrodite and the people of Iolcus, it is Aphrodite's sexual domain, not her muscle, that Hera needs.

To indicate the termination of Iliadic strength and the emergence of sexuality as the new means of heroic advancement in the text, Apollonius models Hera's visit with Aphrodite and, later, Cupid's assault against Medea on scenes from the *Iliad*, except that Apollonius converts Homer's celebration of martial warfare to the experience of erotic warfare. Several scholars have

noted the similarities between Hera’s and Athena’s appeal to Aphrodite in Book 3 of the *Argonautica*, and Thetis’ appeal to Hephaestus in Book 18 of the *Iliad*.<sup>4</sup> Hephaestus is busy at work in both scenes, fashioning “cunningly wrought” (δαιδάλα, *Il.* 18.379; δαίδαλα, *Arg.* 3.43) items, and the visiting goddess(es) are welcomed by his wife: Charis (in the *Iliad*) and Aphrodite (in the *Argonautica*). The wives’ opening salutations are remarkably similar—they ask why their visitor(s) have come, especially seeing as how they have not visited frequently before (πάρος γε μὲν οὔ τι, 18.385-87, cf. 18.424-27; οὔ τι πάρος γε, 3.52-54)—and the wives and their female guest(s) proceed to sit in chairs to chat (18.389-90; 3.49-50). The visiting goddess(es) then explain why the male hero they cherish must be saved because of his personal connection to them (Thetis wants help for her son Achilles, 18.429-61; Hera for the pious Jason, 3.56-75).

But the manner of help the goddess(es) expect and the person whom they address is radically different: Thetis begs Hephaestus for new armor while Hera requests that Aphrodite manipulate Medea’s emotions. One requests the god of craft to fashion the external tools for an Iliadic contest while the other asks the goddess of sex for internal, inflamed passions. Notably, while Hephaestus is mentioned in the Argonautic account, he is absent from the house when Hera and Athena arrive (3.41-43). Apollonius even specifies that Aphrodite is home “alone” (μούνη, in line-end position 3.43) when the goddesses intrude upon her in the middle of fixing her hair. This is a decidedly domestic and female scene. In this regard, the episode more closely mirrors Hera’s seduction of Zeus in Book 14 of the *Iliad* when she dresses herself up, including doing her hair (14.170-86; cf. 3.43-50), and asks Aphrodite for help (14.187-223) in a rare

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<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Clauss (1997) 153-54, Hunter (1989a) 101 ff, Lennox (1980), and Beye (1969) 48-49, several of whose observations I reproduce here. See these sources and Knight (1995) 292-97 for additional Homeric scenes evoked by the opening of Book 3 as well.

example in the *Iliad* of the utility of sex.<sup>5</sup> Regardless, Apollonius' makeover of the Thetis-Hephaestus episode in Book 18 of the *Iliad* is a potent marker of the shift from Books 1 and 2 of the *Argonautica* to Book 3: heroic aid is now being delivered by women instead of men, and arms have been replaced by *amor*.

The decisive moment where Cupid shoots Medea similarly appropriates Iliadic material to convert the glorious, bloody battlefield of Troy to the erotic, internal battlefield waging within Medea's own heart. The scene is modeled on Pandarus' attack on Menelaus in Book 4 of the *Iliad*.<sup>6</sup> Athena, disguised as Laodocus, goads Pandarus into shooting Menelaus by assuring him that he will win "fame" (κῦδος) and that Paris will give him "splendid gifts" (ἀγλαὰ δῶρα) if he is successful (4.93-103). Comparably, Aphrodite bribes Cupid to shoot Medea by promising Zeus' ball (3.131-44).<sup>7</sup> But where Pandarus would be winning *timē* and *geras* (proper heroic prizes), Cupid will win a flashy toy and one which—according to an epigram by Glaucus—was the kind of gift an *erastēs* traditionally gave to boys to win their affection.<sup>8</sup> Heroic glory for the warrior has become a lover's plaything. The actual scene where Pandarus and Cupid shoot their targets include many of the same meticulous details, further evidence that Apollonius has

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> See esp. Lennox (1980) 62-68 for a detailed and influential discussion about the similarities between the Pandarus and Cupid episodes. Also Clauss (1997) 157-58.

<sup>7</sup> Clauss (1997) 153 notes how the ball is Hephaestus' creation. Thus, while in the *Iliad* Hephaestus makes Achilles' golden armor, here he has fashioned a golden toy: "The substitution of a plaything for a shield, so typical of Alexandrian sensibilities, complements the thematic blending of amatory and military themes."

<sup>8</sup> *AP* 12.44 (part of Meleager's collection; translation by Paton [1918]): "There was a time long, long ago, when boys who like presents were won by a quail, or a sewn ball (ῥαπτὴ σφαῖρα), or knuckle-bones (ἀστράγαλοι), but now they want rich dishes or money, and those playthings have no power. Search for something else, ye lovers of boys (παιδοφίλοι)." Knight (1995) 295 n. 111 drew my attention to this epigram and its potential meaning for the passage.

modeled his Cupid episode from this passage in the *Iliad*.<sup>9</sup> But where Pandarus is shooting an arrow that can cause external physical wounds, Cupid's arrow brings internal wounds. Menelaus bleeds (4.140, 4.148-52) while Medea burns from within (3.286-98). While she may not be at risk of dying, her love-bringing arrow is no less "destructive," "cruel," and "baneful" (all possible definitions of the οὐλος in 3.297). Love is the battlefield of this book. Where soldiers at Troy fight for *kleos* and for their very lives, Medea's heart is on the line, purchased at the trifling cost of a bauble.

The Iliadic, therefore, is not welcome at Colchis. Hera rejects a resolution for the quest that is founded on strength or violence, and allusions to the *Iliad* are repainted to revolve around the potency of love instead of the demonstration of martial prowess. Heroic *Erōs* has replaced *Arēs*, setting up the chain of events where Jason will complete Aeetes' deadly contest of strength by wooing Medea and winning her magical aid. Of course, this is not the first time in the epic tradition that a meeting of these three goddesses—Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite—have resulted in the formation of an ill-fated love between a Greek and a foreigner: so, too, did the goddesses gather before Paris to be judged, leading to the seizure of Helen and the commencement of the Trojan War.<sup>10</sup> This time, however, love will be the *culmination* of the epic, not the *cause*. And while Jason was mocked for his eroticism at Lemnos by Heracles, much like Paris is derided for his sexuality by his own brother (*Il.* 3.38-57), *only* Jason—not Paris—will ultimately be allowed

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<sup>9</sup> I.e., Pandarus and Cupid keep out of sight of their target (*Il.* 4.113-15; ἄφαντος and λαθών, *Arg.* 3.275 and 3.280), string the bow, remove the arrow from the quiver (n.b. ἀβλήτα, *Il.* 4.117 and *Arg.* 3.279), notch the arrow, pull back the string, and release it (*Il.* 4.104-26; *Arg.* 3.275-84).

<sup>10</sup> As Herodotus tells it, Paris was inspired by Medea's abduction to steal Helen in the first place (1.2-3), explicitly connecting the two affairs. Knight (1995) 295-96 makes these (and other) observations about the similarities between the beginning of Book 3 and the origins of the Trojan War. Cf. Lennox (1980) 72: "That Hera and Athene, those two independent goddesses of the *Iliad*, should here concoct a plan which depends for its success upon the active support of their Iliadic opponent Aphrodite is not only ironical but gently humorous..."

to prove his heroic worth *through* love. Book 3 of the *Argonautica* is changing the rubric of how one can achieve heroic status.

*From Odyssean Mētis to Female Mētis*

Apollonius reveals that the Odyssean, like the Iliadic, also has no place at Colchis when he deprives Athena of the *mētis* that she, as a goddess, embodies. At the beginning of Book 3, Hera comes to Athena and asks for help coming up with a plan to save Jason. Athena (who so recently saved the Argonauts from the Clashing Rocks) confesses to be at a loss on how to help Jason succeed, explaining that she has been ruminating on the problem for some time but—in her words—“I have not yet thought up a cunning plan [with which] to advise [you] that will improve the heroes’ spirit” (οὐ πῶ / φράσσασθαι νοέω τοῦτον δόλον, ὅς τις ὀνήσει / θυμὸν ἀριστήων, 3.19-21). The verb used here (φράζομαι) is frequently associated with *mētis* (Nagy [1999] 46 n. 4), and because of her inability to wield that skill, she leaves all the plotting and, even more surprisingly, all the speaking to Hera (3.35). These are the two traits from which Odysseus, her clear favorite, derives his heroic worth. The thought that Athena is experiencing this *amēchania* and aphasia is absurd and, at the very least, highly abnormal.<sup>11</sup> It flies in the face of her very divinity.

Comparing this episode to an analogous scene in the *Iliad* where Athena lives up to her status as the goddess of resourcefulness reveals just how out of character she is being at Colchis. In Book 8 of the *Iliad*, Hera, concerned for the Greeks who are being hounded by Hector (8.335-49), goes to Athena and solicits her opinion on how to save them. Unlike in the *Argonautica* where Athena is clueless and reticent to speak, she gives an impassioned speech about how

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Holmberg (1998) 143 who remarks on the “certainly...unique position” Athena shows here as she is unable to think of a *mētis* to help. Also Beye (1982) 126-27.

unfair she feels Zeus is being, and proposes that she and Hera personally enter the battlefield to turn the tide of war against the Trojans (8.357-80). Following her speech, Homer succinctly says, “And the white-armed goddess, Hera, did not disobey” (οὐδ' ἀπίθησε θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρα, 8.381). While Zeus interferes and the two are never able to carry out their plan, it is significant that Homer’s Athena offers a solution that Hera willingly pursues, while Apollonius’ Athena remains uncertain and it is up to Hera to come up with a plan for Athena to dutifully follow.<sup>12</sup> As Knight says, “The contrast with the collaboration in *Iliad* 8 suggests that here [i.e. in Book 3 of the *Argonautica*] Athena is in the wrong place, in a situation where her many skills are useless” ([1995] 293). When Apollonius wanted to elevate Odyssean *mētis* over Iliadic *biē* in Book 2, he did so by stripping the Iliadic of its potency, such as when Heracles—so mighty in Book 1—no longer had sufficient strength to get rid of the Stymphalian birds (2.1052-53). Here, Apollonius is pursuing the same program of destabilization: the virgin Athena’s powers are neutralized at Colchis. The Odyssean no longer holds any efficacy or potency.

But this does not mean that the attribute of *mētis* is dead. In fact, Hera herself is the one to provide a “shrewd strategy” (ποικινὴ μῆτις, 3.30) when Athena cannot, and the word shows up an additional seven times in Book 3, more than in any other book of the *Argonautica*. *Mētis* is very much alive. It has, however, transformed. Like Iliadic warfare morphed to emotional warfare, *mētis* is now divorced from Odysseus and rests firmly in the domain of women. As Holmberg discusses in her article “Μῆτις and Gender in Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica*,” the *mētis* that shows up in Book 3 is not the same Odyssean *mētis* we saw in the first half of the epic. In Books 1 and 2, the men’s use of *mētis* is “beneficial and salvational:” it manifests through the application of skill and intellect (e.g. Tiphys’ navigation) or ingenuity (e.g. the birds of Ares),

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<sup>12</sup> See n. 4 for scholars who have compared these two scenes.

and serves as a saving grace for the crew. This is the version of *mētis* that Odysseus in the *Odyssey* performs ([1998] 137-39). In contrast, every example of *mētis* in Book 3 but one (3.184, which I will discuss below) either directly or indirectly involves Medea, and is enshrouded in trickery, manipulation, or treachery.<sup>13</sup> This “female” *mētis*, as Holmberg calls it, is the kind of dangerous and deceptive version of the attribute that such figures as Circe, Calypso, and Helen demonstrate in the *Odyssey*. We have moved from constructive “male” *mētis* to destructive “female” *mētis*.

Where Odysseus establishes his heroic worth by suppressing this “female” *mētis* in the *Odyssey*, however, Jason in the *Argonautica* achieves *kudos* by embracing it. Holmberg discusses how the conflict between these two versions of *mētis* is a central feature of the *Odyssey*: “Both the text of the *Odyssey* and its hero succeed in marginalizing and controlling the ambiguous, dangerous qualities of μῆτις that arise in the female” (136). Odysseus wields his *mētis* with superior skill and thereby subdues the sinister female element in the poem and proves his dominance. Conversely, Jason in the *Argonautica* cultivates this “female” *mētis* when he accepts Medea’s aid: “the text of the *Argonautica* allows what is effectively repressed in the *Odyssey* (μῆτις and the female) to become the means to the hero’s end” (148). Book 3 sets loose the “female” *mētis* that previous Homeric heroes like Odysseus had studiously attempted to

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<sup>13</sup> The examples of *mētis* in Book 3 include the following: Argus proposes the plan that the Argonauts lure Medea to their cause so that Jason can cheat his way through Aeetes’ trial (3.475), Mopsus agrees that they should use every kind of *mētis* to entice her (3.548), an oracle warns Aeetes of treachery from his own family but he mistakenly does not fear a “loathsome scheme” (μῆτιν στυγερήν) from his daughters (3.603), Chalciope begs Medea to “dare to think up either a trick or some scheme” to save Jason and her sons from Aeetes’ wrath (3.720), Medea tries to come up with a trick or “thievish/wily *mētis*” (μῆτις ἐπίκλοπος) to avoid repercussions from helping the Argonauts (3.781), and Medea lies to her handmaidens in what is again called a “wily *mētis*” (ἐπίκλοπος μῆτις, 3.912). This is a *mētis* of beguilement and treason, rather different from the *mētis* of Book 2 that tended to rest upon the merit of skill and the application of intellect.

contain and neutralize, and it plays a significant role in Jason completing his heroic task. In short, to summarize Holmberg's argument, the "male" *mētis* of Books 1 and 2 of the *Argonautica* is supplanted in Book 3 by "female" *mētis*, and Jason's acceptance of this dangerous aspect of *mētis* is one of the ways in which he distances himself from traditional heroic values and, more specifically, from Homer's Odysseus.

Crucially, it is the goddesses at the beginning of Book 3 who lay the groundwork for promoting this "female" *mētis* over the "male" *mētis* of Books 1 and 2 as the means of Jason's success. Hera and Athena's conversation in lines 7-35 repeatedly mentions words denoting trickery and scheming: "devise a trick/stratagem" (δόλον μήσειαι, 3.12), "indicate a trick/stratagem" (φράσασθαι δόλον, 3.20), "devise" (μητιώωσα, 3.24), "a shrewd *mētis*" (ποικινή μητις, 3.30). But they are not participating in Odyssean *mētis*. Hera's plan adopts the "female" side of the equation: instead of finding a way for Jason to face his troubles head-on and to demonstrate his self-reliance, the goddesses will clandestinely manipulate the humans' affairs by compelling the "wily" (δολόεσσα, 3.89) Medea to fall in love with Jason so that she will be veritably tricked into using her own magical, "female" *mētis* to assist him in cheating his way through the trials.<sup>14</sup> As Holmberg succinctly puts it, "Medea is thus both the object and the subject of μητις" (143). She is both a victim to and the perpetrator of its destructive, deceitful potential. *Mētis*, therefore, has changed its colors for the third act of the *Argonautica*: it is now secretive, dangerous, feminine, and, fundamentally, un-Odyssean.

Our epic has, therefore, indeed restarted. A new invocation and our first Olympian scene lead the charge, and Apollonius uses these two authoritative voices—arguably *the* most

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<sup>14</sup> Campbell (1983) 7 proposes that Apollonius decides to have Hera and Athena withdraw from the rest of the gods in order to "underlin[e] the atmosphere of intrigue and deception that characterises the Olympian episode."

authoritative voices in epic to reveal current and future plot—to reject Iliadic and Odyssean heroism, and to legitimize a new and unusual course where the conquering hero will find success “because of Medea’s love” (1.3). To initiate this decisive transition from the Homeric heroism of the first half of the *Argonautica* to the Hellenistic heroism of the second half, Apollonius implements a process of conversion: Iliadic warfare transforms into the emotional warfare of erotic attraction (preparing the way for Jason to demonstrate his heroic sexuality) and Odyssean *mētis* is now “female” *mētis* (preparing the way for Medea’s involvement in the quest). By authorial and divine decree, the heroic models of Books 1 and 2 must come to an end, and Love will take their place.

### **Neutralization of Iliadic and Odyssean Heroism (3.167-575)**

But the Argonauts, unlike the audience, are unaware that the poem has changed course. Accordingly, between lines 167 and 575, they trust that the Iliadic and Odyssean solutions already modeled in the first two books will again be used at Colchis. After the Olympian scene, we return to the Argonauts where Jason gives a speech, discussing with the men what they should do next. If they are unable to persuade Aetes to hand over the fleece, he says, “we will ponder whether to engage him in battle or whether some other beneficial plan exists” (φρασσόμεθ’ εἴτ’ ἄρηι συνοισόμεθ’ εἴτε τις ἄλλη / μῆτις ἐπίρροθος ἔσται, 3.183-84). There are, in Jason’s mind, only two options if Aetes does not yield to verbal appeals: to respond as the *Iliadic* Heracles would (that is, through force and war: ἄρηι) or the *Odyssean* Heracles (through *mētis*). In fact, the phrase “beneficial plan” (μῆτις ἐπίρροθος) shows up only three other times in the *Argonautica*: Phineus uses it once to complain that he has no solution for his problems (2.225; significantly, the Argonauts themselves become the μῆτις ἐπίρροθος for him), and the phrase appears twice—and most recently—to refer to Heracles’ and Amphidamus’ strategy

against the birds of Ares (2.1050, 2.1068). It is, therefore, clearly a reference to the Odyssean, male version of *mētis*, not the new, “female” *mētis* of the goddesses and Medea.<sup>15</sup> Thus, like the people of Iolcus and Aphrodite herself who assume the quest will have a Homeric (specifically Iliadic) resolution, Jason’s speech reveals that the Argonauts still believe that their quest will have a Homeric resolution. In their minds, Iliadic force or Odyssean *mētis* will be the answer to their difficulties.

They are wrong, and their attempts to pursue such avenues before line 575 invariably fail. The Argonauts are—as if a switch has been flipped—completely shut off from the fantastical power of Homeric heroism they had skillfully performed in Books 1 and 2. They are also, at Colchis, the most *human* they have ever been. Unable to access the superheroics of archaic heroic models, they do not perform any impossible feats and must, rather, come to terms with their mortal limitations. As I will demonstrate in this section, Jason will attempt to be an Odysseus when he approaches Aeetes but will find that he lacks the hero’s consummate mind. Various crew members will attempt to be Iliadic martial heroes when they volunteer for the contest but they find that they lack sufficient strength and prowess to be successful. The Iliadic and the Odyssean are no longer feasible for the heroes. Such abrupt ineffectiveness is significant for the plot (i.e. the Argonauts’ self-sufficiency has to be dissolved so that they will be willing to turn to Medea for help) but also holds metapoetic weight (i.e. Books 3 and 4 adopt Alexandrian literary sensibilities where realism and the commonplace, not the epic and fantastical, are celebrated). Thus, like the mighty Heracles whose strength is nullified in the Odyssean Book 2, and like Athena herself who is *mētis* embodied but in the world of Book 3 is completely

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<sup>15</sup> Holmberg (1998) 144. Previously, I noted that seven of the eight uses of *mētis* in Book 3 dealt directly with Medea and carried a deceitful or treacherous connotation. This is the eighth use and distinctly refers back to the kind of *mētis* practiced in Book 2.

disabled, Apollonius neutralizes Iliadic and Odyssean heroics at Colchis as the second and final step in his agenda to prepare for Jason's heroic elevation as the epic's Hellenistic representative. After line 575, Homeric heroics will be completely defunct on both the divine and mortal levels.

*Failure of the Odyssean: Jason and the Cyclopean Aeetes*

As I examine in the Introduction, Jason shares several similarities with Odysseus. It is fitting, therefore, that he is the one to attempt Odyssean heroics at Colchis. Scholars have observed that there are numerous parallels between Jason's encounter with Aeetes and Odysseus' legendary confrontation with the Cyclops in Book 9 of the *Odyssey*.<sup>16</sup> Jason plans to first "test" Aeetes (πειρήσω, 3.179; πειρηθῆναι, 3.185) to see if the king will give the fleece willingly; Odysseus similarly sets out to "test" (πειρήσομαι, 9.174) the inhabitants of the island of the Cyclopes to see what kind of people they are. Both entrust their safety to the Greek civil laws of *xenia* (3.192-93; 9.269-71) and invoke Zeus Xeinius (ξεινίου Ζητός, 3.193; Ζεὺς ξείνιος, 9.270-71). When their host either breaks or threatens to break that *xenia*, both heroes demonstrate impressive and sensible restraint by keeping their emotions in check (3.377-96; 9.299-305). And, finally, both employ persuasive language—"honeyed" words, specifically (μελιχίσιον, 3.385; ἔπεσσι μελιχίσιον, 9.363)—to attempt to disarm their foes. In fact, before setting out to see Aeetes, Jason reveals great trust in the potency of words, observing that words can "often" (πολλάκι) find success where "prowess" (ἠνορέη) cannot (3.185-90). As Hunter notes, this "[p]raise of *muthos* marks Jason as a leader with some Odyssean characteristics" ([1989] 118). On the flip side, the heroes' antagonists—Aeetes and the Cyclops—also share many similarities: e.g. both suspect the heroes of being robbers and bandits (3.589-93; 9.253-55), they disregard

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<sup>16</sup> See esp. Hunter (1989a) 117-19 and Knight (1995) 133-38 for this section. Since they and others have already noted the many parallels and differences between the two episodes, I will focus on only the most striking of similarities.

*xenia* and plan to kill their guests (3.579-83; 9.369-70), they received oracles in the past that relate to the current events which they misunderstood because they underestimated others (3.597-605; 9.507-16), and they are only bested by the heroes' use of trickery (i.e. Medea's magic and Odysseus' clever plan). In a nutshell, there are enough similarities between these two scenes, its heroes, and its antagonists to make it obvious that we are meant to consider Jason's approach to Aetes in an Odyssean light.

But we, the audience, already know that Apollonius does not intend for Jason to succeed as an Odysseus. We learned from Athena herself that Odyssean *mētis* is impotent, ineffective, and effectively dead at Colchis. Thus, when Aetes throws a curve ball into the proceedings, demanding that Jason participate in an impossibly difficult contest, Jason is unable to think himself out of his trouble and thereby reveals his inadequacy as an Odyssean hero. After listening to Argus and Jason, Aetes refuses their offers and announces that the only way he will hand over the fleece is if Jason completes the deadly trial of mastering the fire-breathing bulls, sowing the dragon's teeth, and killing the Earthborn men. In response to this daunting challenge, Jason is "speechless" (ἄφθογγος, 3.423), "fixes his eyes [on the ground] in front of his feet in silence" (ὁ δὲ σῖγα ποδῶν πάρος ὄμματα πήξας, 3.422), and only accepts the contest because he does not know what else to do: "Over the course of a long time he tried to think of a plan [i.e. to get out of Aetes' challenge], and he had no way of undertaking the task with confidence because it seemed so big" (3.424-25). Later, he similarly tells the Argonauts that he agreed to Aetes' tough terms "for there was no other thing better to consider/devise" (οὐ τι γὰρ ἄλλο / βέλτερον ἦν φράσασθαι, 3.500-501). As mentioned above in my discussion on Athena, the verb "to devise" (φράζω) is associated with the action of *mētis*. Jason, therefore, does not have a very Odyssean reaction to his dire circumstances. He enters Aetes' palace in an Odyssean mask, but

when crisis strikes, he is stripped of his costume. He loses his ability for speech and finds himself “helpless” (ἀμήχανος, 3.423 and 3.432).<sup>17</sup> Confronted by the Cyclops, Odysseus—who is often described by the opposite epithet “resourceful” (πολυμήχανος)—finds a way out of his situation. And confronted by the mighty Amycus and his similarly fatal contest, Polydectes, our Odyssean representative in Book 2, also successfully employs *mētis* to survive. But Jason cannot. For both Athena and him, the efficacy of Odyssean heroism is nullified at Colchis.

In fact, Jason’s reaction to Aetes’ challenge is remarkably similar to the impotency Athena experiences at the start of Book 3. She, too, is speechless (albeit by choice, 3.34-35; cf. 3.422), she fixes her eyes on the ground in front of her in contemplation (ποδῶν πάρος ὄμματ’ ἔπηξαν, 3.22; cf. the very similar language in 3.422), and she is unable “to devise” (φράζω) a solution although she has spent a long time thinking about it (3.18-21; cf. 3.424-25). Both Jason and the goddess are unable to generate Odyssean *mētis*. It has failed them here at Colchis.

#### *Failure of the Iliadic: Iliadic Heroes and Death*

For the obsolescence of Homeric heroism to reach its full conclusion at Colchis, however, the Iliadic must also fail the Argonauts. And, considering that Aetes’ challenge is specifically a trial of *biē*, it seems as though the crew’s Iliadic warriors might actually have a chance of success. Indeed, Aetes is something of a roughly Iliadic hero himself. Of all the characters in the *Argonautica*, he is most associated with the emotion of wrath, an Iliadic trait (see Chapter 1),<sup>18</sup> and as Thiel thoroughly examines, Aetes is modeled on the Homeric warrior

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<sup>17</sup> As Vian (1978) 1031-32 notes, Jason’s response to Aetes’ contest is very realistic: any normal human faced with such a test would feel helpless and dejected. Cf. Jackson (1992) 157.

<sup>18</sup> Hunter (1993b) 109 n. 75 mentions the following places where Aetes exhibits anger: 3.367-68, 449, 493, 607, 614, 632; 4.9, 235, 512, 740, 1083, 1205.

archetype.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, the king demands a test of Iliadic *biē*. In his own words, “The trial will be a contest of both strength and might” (πεῖρα δέ τοι μένεός τε καὶ ἀλκῆς ἔσσειτ’ ἄεθλος, 3.407; cf. 3.399). The phrase “both strength and might” (μένεός τε καὶ ἀλκῆς) is sandwiched between “trial” (πεῖρα) and “contest” (ἄεθλος), thereby syntactically making “strength and strength” the center of the line and denoting Aeetes’ emphatic insistence that a test of brawn is the *only* thing he will accept. This is a contest for the Heracles’s and Achilles’s of the world.

And in Books 1 and 2, the Argonauts repeatedly express great confidence that they can be an Achilles, able to meet Aeetes sword for sword if need be. Back at Iolcus, the people had assumed that it was the journey to Colchis that would be impossible (ἄπρηκτος, 1.246) and that getting the fleece from an unwilling Aeetes would be a simple matter of razing his palace “in a single day” (αὐτῆμαρ, 1.244). In their minds, an Iliadic solution would be easy, effective, and quick. At Pagasae, Idas boasts—albeit with an arrogance and hubris the rest of the Argonauts find contemptible—that with him on the expedition, there would be no way the “contest” (ἄεθλον, 1.469, in line-end position like 3.407) could ever be left unfulfilled (ἄκράαντον, 1.469) even if a god opposed them (1.468-70). And in Book 2, it is clear that the Argonauts still hold such confidences: when Argus warns the crew of Aeetes and the snake, Peleus boldly claims that the Argonauts’ martial skill is not inferior to the combined might of Aeetes and all the Colchians (2.1219-25). Considering that Aeetes himself has carried out the deadly tasks he has assigned Jason (3.408), the Argonauts—at least according to Peleus and Idas—should be able to easily triumph.

But here in Book 3 their confidence abruptly turns to ash. When Jason returns to the

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<sup>19</sup> Thiel (1996) points especially to Aeetes’ Homeric epithets and his arming scene at the end of Book 3 (3.1225-45), both of which make him stand out as a “Krieger” directly opposed to Jason. See also Rose (1984) esp. 127.

Argonauts and describes Aeetes’ trial, the men—at first “joyful” (γηθόσυνοι, 3.490) in their hopes that the quest will soon be complete—fall into despair. For “all of them” (πάντεσσι), the contest seems “impossible to complete” (ἀνήνυτος; cf. ἄπρηκτος, 1.246; ἀκράαντον, 1.469) and they are depressed by their “ruin and helplessness” (ἄτη ἀμηχανίη τε, 3.502-504). Peleus stands up to volunteer to take Jason’s place in the contest, but he, too, has lost faith in his *biē*. When he admits that “the worst pain will be but death” (ἐπεὶ θάνατός γε τὸ κύντατον ἔσσεται ἄλγος, 3.514),<sup>20</sup> his use of the future indicative as opposed to a less sure optative reveals his conviction that death will be the certain end for whoever attempts the trial. This hopelessness represents a stark contrast to the Argonauts’ self-assurances in Books 1 and 2: where before, the Iliadic was a powerful weapon in their hands, ready to be unleashed at Colchis, now it is powerless.<sup>21</sup>

The Argonauts, therefore, can no longer draw from the Iliadic well of boundless might and martial excellence. At Colchis, their natural human strength is too poor, and to attempt the contest would be to undertake little more than a suicide mission. That does not stop Peleus or five other Argonauts, known for their feats of strength on the journey thus far,<sup>22</sup> to volunteer:

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<sup>20</sup> Translation Race (2008) 257. Also see Vian (1978) 1032 who notes that Peleus’ words here echo Jason’s (3.427-31): “Pélée, par ses réactions, se comporte comme le double ‘héroïque’ de Jason.” There is, however, one big difference: where Jason has never identified as an Iliadic warrior who depends on his strength, Peleus is repeatedly associated with *biē* in the *Argonautica*. Thus, for Peleus to experience the same *amēchania* Jason feels represents the complete destabilization of Iliadic potential at Colchis.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Vian (1978) 1027-28 who also discusses how different the expectations of the people of Iolcus are to the actual reality of Colchis. Granted, Aeetes’ contest is exceedingly difficult—the adjective “deadly” (ὀλοός, 3.408, 436, 906, 1028, 1049, 1338) is frequently used to describe it—and the Argonauts were likely being overly optimistic in the first two books regarding their ability. Regardless, it is still patently obvious that Books 1 and 2 are confident in the potency of Iliadic heroics, while here in Book 3 those confidences disappear.

<sup>22</sup> The moments in the *Argonautica* where these five men have done something that displays either strength, *mēnis*, or martial excellence up to this point include the following: Telamon (1.1045, 1.1289, 2.121-22), Idas (1.466-92, 1.1044, 2.830-31), Polydeuces (1.1045, 2.19-97), Castor (1.1045), and Meleager (1.196-98, 1.1046).

Telamon, Idas, Polydeuces, Castor, and Meleager (3.515-20). As Apollonius says, their great “spirit/courage” (θυμός, 3.515, 520) inspires them to stand, a quality which Hunter links to other impulsive heroes like Achilles (Fantuzzi-Hunter [2004] 110), and their willingness to die on the battlefield is a heroic trait that is commonly attributed specifically to Iliadic warriors.<sup>23</sup> But here, there is no real profit to the death. None of them have any hope that they could actually win the contest; they are merely volunteering because their impulsive Iliadic values are spurring them on. They are unable to *not* volunteer. And the emptiness to their sacrifice is made especially apparent by the addition of the youthful Meleager: when he stands to offer his services, Apollonius reminds us that “he was sprouting not even a little down flowering [on his cheeks]” (3.518-20; cf. Catalogue 1.190-201).<sup>24</sup> He is but a boy in the early stages of manhood, ready to embrace death to satisfy his Iliadic honor. This scene offers a poignant statement on both the futility of Iliadic heroism at Colchis and the liability of its impulsivity.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Fantastical Heroes vs. Human Heroes*

The process of neutralizing both Iliadic and Odyssean heroism at Colchis is complete, therefore, leaving our Argonauts the most human they have been thus far in the epic. In the Homeric heroic world of Books 1 and 2, they have access to supernatural power: several crewmembers in the Catalogue have fantastical abilities or qualities (Orpheus’ magical music, 1.28-31; Lynceus’ x-ray vision, 1.153-55; Euphemus’ ability to run on water, 1.182-84; the

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<sup>23</sup> See, esp., Finkelberg (1995) 1: “The *Iliad* proceeds from an idea of hero which is pure and simple: a hero is one who prizes honour and glory above life itself and dies on the battlefield in the prime of life.” Cf. Lawall (1966) 139 who says that Peleus’ acceptance of death before disgrace is an “affirmation of the Achillean heroic code.” Also Hunter (1993b) 8-9.

<sup>24</sup> Translation Hunter (1989a) 153.

<sup>25</sup> Jackson (1992) 157-59 compares Jason’s reasoned response to Aeetes’ challenge with these six men’s impulsive reaction, and concludes, “Apollonius’ point here is once again to decry the attitude of the traditional epic hero” (159). See, also, Lawall (1966) 136-43 more generally for an analysis of this scene.

Boreads' wings, 1.219-23), Heracles completes many phenomenal feats with his god-like strength (esp. the rowing scene, 1.1161-71), Polydeuces shatters Amycus' skull with one blow (2.94-96), the Boreads run faster than the west wind as they chase the Harpies (2.273-96), and Tiphys twice saves the ship from colossal waves fantastically higher than the clouds (2.169-76, 575-87). In the first half of the epic, the Argonauts perform, time and again, incredible achievements. In the second half, setting aside two crucial episodes that I will discuss in Chapter 4 (i.e. Jason's magically enhanced contest, 3.1247-1407; and the Boreads, Euphemus, and Lynceus at Libya, 4.1461-84), not one Argonaut does something beyond normal human potential. They no longer have access to the Homeric superheroics of Books 1 and 2. Instead, at Colchis and beyond, the Argonauts come to terms with realistic, human limitations.

On the one hand, their sudden vulnerability accommodates the plot: Apollonius has painted the Argonauts into a corner, stripping them of their self-reliance and leaving them little choice but to accept Argus' proposal that they ask Medea for help. On the level of metapoetics, the realism of our Argonauts at Colchis is a reflection of Hellenistic literary sensibilities. As I discuss in the Introduction to this dissertation, Jason's human realism is a key component of his Hellenistic heroic persona. Alexandrian poets like Callimachus and Theocritus were invested in the domestic and realistic. Ordinary people like Hecale, Molorcus, and shepherds often took the pride of place in poems, and other times, epic figures received makeovers, like Theocritus' *Idyll* 11 which thrusts Odysseus' man-gobbling Cyclops into the role of a spurned lover. Apollonius brings these same domesticating impulses to life in his own poem when his characters, too, receive something of a makeover: the first half of the *Argonautica* establishes our heroes as Homeric epic figures (Iliadic in Book 1, Odyssean in Book 2), while the second half transforms them into more human, more believable, more modern heroes. We have moved from the old to

the new.

And the heroes are not the first to receive this injection of Hellenistic realism. The opening Olympian scene is, as many scholars have noted, a touchstone of Alexandrian domesticity and authenticity.<sup>26</sup> We are immediately thrust into a feminine sphere when Hera and Athena go “far away from Zeus himself and the other immortal gods” (3.8-9), retreating to a “bedroom” (θαλαμόνδε, 3.9) for their private council.<sup>27</sup> And after they are done scheming with each other there, they run off to another bedroom, this time the one Aphrodite shares with Hephaestus, the man of the house who, pointedly, is absent (3.36-44).<sup>28</sup> These private locations increase the intimacy of the women’s interactions, while also subtly reminding us of Jason’s excellence in bed (cf. 1.872-74) and of the emotional turmoil Medea will experience in her own bedroom later in Book 3 (3.616-64, 751-824, 1159-62). We have entered the domain of the commonplace, of the private. Aphrodite herself is a lesson in realism—she is in the middle of braiding her hair when we first see her (3.43-50),<sup>29</sup> and, like mothers all over, she feels

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<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Clauss (1997) 152, Feeney (1991) 77-78, Zanker (1987) 205-207, Campbell (1983) 7 ff. See also Rostropowicz (1995) who discusses the various realistic tendencies of the female goddesses in Book 3: “In ihren Porträts hat der Dichter alles das exponiert, wofür sich die Menschen der hellenistischen Epoche besonders interessiert haben – also den Menschen mit allen seinen persönlichen, menschlichen Problemen, Erlebnissen und seinem Charakter. Die von Apollonios geschaffenen göttlichen Gestalten sind in der Tat vorzügliche, psychologisch wahrhaftige, sehr unterschiedliche Frauencharaktere” (193).

<sup>27</sup> While Homer certainly includes domestic scenes of Olympus (e.g. Hera’s seduction of Zeus), we also witness many somber councils where the absolute right of law is in male hands. In the *Argonautica*, Apollonius suggests that such a gathering is occurring when he notes that Hera and Athena retreat “far away from Zeus himself and the other immortal gods” (3.8-9), but we never see it. See also Rostropowicz (1995) esp. 193 who discusses how the divine assemblies of old epic have been replaced by the intimate conversations of women in both Book 3 (ll. 7-157) and Book 4 (ll. 753-842, Thetis and Hera).

<sup>28</sup> Campbell (1983) 7 is the first scholar to have directed my attention to the significance of “bedrooms” in this episode.

<sup>29</sup> Rostropowicz (1995) 193 calls the scene where Athena and Hera interrupt Thetis at her toilette as “einer rein alexandrinischen Szene.”

overwhelming frustration (e.g. 3.91-99) yet tender love (e.g. 3.149-50) for her unruly child—and the orchard scene with Cupid and Ganymede playing knucklebones is a remarkably vivid depiction of childhood (3.111-66). Even now, over two thousand years later, these scenes are familiar to us—as mothers, fathers, children, and, fundamentally, as humans. In the same way that the goddesses were the first to reject Iliadic and Odyssean heroism, therefore, they are also the first in Book 3 to bring the tone of the epic to a realistic and domestic register, while also opening the heroic field to the realm of romanticism and women.<sup>30</sup>

To conclude this chapter thus far, Apollonius has used the same process of conversion and nullification that he used in Book 2 to signal the end of one heroic apparatus and the emergence of a second. In lines 1-166, the goddesses—painted with broad, Hellenistic strokes—reject Iliadic and Odyssean heroism, converting martial warfare to erotic warfare and “male” *mētis* to “female” *mētis*. They have set the stage for Jason’s sexuality and Medea’s magic to act as powerful forces in the events to come. And moving to the mortal sphere in lines 167-575, the Argonauts attempt to pursue Iliadic and Odyssean heroics, but find that the potency and efficacy of these models are no longer viable. Instead, the heroes are now the most human they have ever been—the most like Apollonius’ own audience, in fact. Gone are the superheroes. Now we just have heroes. With the “death” of the Iliadic and the Odyssean complete, and with the crew’s human realism established, it is now time for the Hellenistic to take the spotlight.

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<sup>30</sup> This is certainly *not* to say that the gods and goddesses of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are bereft of realism. There are equally tender, feminine, and erotic episodes in Homer’s depiction of the divine. Thus, saying that Book 3 opens on an emphatically “Hellenistic” note is not the same as saying that it is “un-Homeric.” Cf. my discussion in the Introduction about Jason’s Hellenistic heroic persona.

## A New Heroism: Diplomacy and Love

As I discuss in Chapter 1, the Argonauts' stay at Lemnos is a dry run for Colchis where Jason tests his diplomatic and sexual skills with Hypsipyle. At the time, however, we were in the Iliadic world of Book 1 where Heracles, not Jason, was the *aristos* of the epic. Accordingly, Heracles mocks Jason's sexuality, sarcastically suggesting that the Argonauts continue to Colchis so that they can achieve true *kleos* while Jason stays behind at Lemnos to win a "great reputation" (μεγάλη βάζις, 1.874) by fathering a nation of Lemnians. Heracles directly pits traditional heroic merit gained through one's personal and active labors, against Jason's new heroism that is founded on interpersonal relationships, and Heracles finds the latter sorely lacking. Shamed by Heracles' ridicule, the Argonauts, including Jason, immediately pack up and leave. Thus ended Jason's foray into what would become his signature approach to heroic success.

At Colchis, there is no Heracles to stop Jason this time. Rather, now that the Iliadic and Odyssean models of Books 1 and 2 are defunct, Hellenistic heroism is free to thrive, and Jason will finally be able to demonstrate the heroic merit of his sexuality and diplomacy. He approaches Aeetes with a keen grasp of the process of negotiation, engaging him in the same way a modern leader would attempt to enter into a treaty with a foreign power. And when Aeetes is unwilling to enter into a diplomatic agreement with the Argonauts, preferring, instead, an archaic test of strength designed to kill the Greek leader, Jason pursues a back-door agreement with Medea, the king's daughter. His conversation with her is arguably the single most important moment in the text for Jason both in terms of plot and establishing his heroic supremacy: masterfully engaging with Medea on both a political and sexual level, he is able to win her over and thereby acquire the means to complete Aeetes' contest *and* Pelias' quest. In this scene,

therefore, Jason proves once and for all the worth, efficacy, and potency of his un-Homeric, Hellenistic, collaborative values. Against Heracles' expectations, Jason will indeed win "great reputation" (μεγάλη βάζις, 1.874) in bed.

### *Jason vs. Odysseus*

Before I go on to discuss Jason's conversation with Aeetes, a clarification about the difference between Hellenistic and Odyssean heroics is in order. Above, I demonstrated how Jason approaches the Cyclopean Aeetes in a distinctly Odyssean fashion. When the Cyclops starts eating men, the "resourceful" (πολυμήχανος) Odysseus is able to come up with a *mētis* to solve his predicament. In contrast, when Aeetes demands the contest, the "helpless" (ἀμήχανος, 3.423 and 3.432) Jason is stuck, thereby providing evidence for the neutralization of Odyssean heroics at Colchis. Now, I will be demonstrating how Jason proves his heroic worth as a Hellenistic hero through diplomacy and romance. Odysseus, too, however, is known for his diplomatic and sexual exploits throughout his career. Thus, what distinction is there between Jason's Hellenistic heroism and Odyssean heroism?

As I examine in greater detail in the Introduction, "Hellenistic" does not necessarily mean "un-Odyssean." Rather, the fundamental difference between Jason and Odysseus is that Homer's protagonist does not reach the *apex* of his heroic identity through diplomacy and sexuality while Jason does. Sex and negotiation may be a *part* of Odysseus' heroic identity, but it is not the *primary means* whereby he exercises his dominance over other heroes. Similarly, Jason has several of Odysseus' characteristics—eloquence, chief among them—and that is a part of Jason's character, but he ultimately proves his heroic dominance through collaborative values instead of through *mētis*.

In fact, in Jason's first speech to the men at Colchis (the very speech where many of the

similarities between Jason-Aeetes and Odysseus-Cyclops are derived), Jason places a great deal of importance on the value of the crew's opinions and consensus, a very un-Odyssean pursuit. Claiming that the men's needs and right to speak are the "common property of all" (ξυνή, ξυνοί, 3.173; cf. 1.336 and 337), he urges the men to listen to his proposal but to feel free to object. Indeed, it is every man's *responsibility* as a member of the expedition to voice their feelings: "let the man who, in silence, withholds his opinion and counsel know that even he, alone, robs us of our voyage home" (3.174-75). Similar to the election scene at Pagasae, Jason is insistent that he have the crew's consensus before acting. This is, as Hunter says, "virtually a programmatic rejection of Odyssean behaviour" ([1993] 24). Odysseus is ever the self-reliant individualist. Jason is revealing in this speech, therefore, a blend of Odyssean and Hellenistic impetus. While somewhat dizzying, it is also rather efficient: Jason carries out double duty by performing both Odyssean and Hellenistic heroics when he approaches Aeetes. But where he fails the Odyssean side of the equation, he aces the Hellenistic side when he wins Medea's help.

#### *Jason and Diplomacy at Colchis*

When Jason meets with Aeetes for the first time, he reveals a sharp grasp of the tools of negotiation and only fails because of the Colchian king's complete disregard for Hellenistic diplomatic processes. As Apollonius notes, "[Jason] himself carried the scepter of Hermes" (3.197), a sign of diplomatic intent and, for that matter, diplomatic immunity. He also shows great forethought in the companions he chooses to accompany him: Telamon (whose own dedication to strength and martial prowess Aeetes would surely admire), Augeas (who, like Aeetes, is a son of Helios and thus might win the king's favor purely because of shared blood),

and Argus (the son of Phrixus and Aetes' own grandson).<sup>31</sup> In the person of Argus, in fact, Jason has found for himself a proper diplomat: Argus has Greek roots but is from Colchis by birth, he provides insider information to Jason about Colchian affairs (e.g. he is the one to tell Jason about the Sauromatae, 3.350-53) and the royal family (e.g. he tells Jason about Medea's magical powers, 3.475-83), and it is Argus—not Jason—who first addresses Aetes, introducing the Argonauts and their intentions like a true intermediary between the two nations. Argus emphasizes, surely at Jason's direction,<sup>32</sup> that the Argonauts are willing to work out a deal. They do not intend to compel Aetes to hand over the fleece through force but rather under the terms of a mutually beneficial arrangement where the Greeks will subdue in Aetes' name the Sauromatae, a neighboring enemy. This would be, Argus stresses, “worthy recompense” (ἄξια δωτίνης, 3.351-52) for the fleece. Argus also makes it clear that if Aetes does not find the proposed arrangement satisfactory, the Argonauts are open to discussing other options: “as it is pleasing to you yourself, just in that way it will come to pass” (αὐτῷ δ' ὡς κεν ἄδη, τὼς ἔσσειται, 3.350). This is only the first round of negotiation. The Argonauts are ready and willing to talk the matter through to come up with an agreement that works for both parties. Jason appears,

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<sup>31</sup> It does appear, as well, that Aetes is immensely proud of his divine heritage; see, e.g., 3.309-13. Also see Clare (2002) 40 who observes that we are first introduced to Aetes in the poem through Augeas' Catalogue entry (1.172-75) where it is said that Augeas joins the expedition hoping to meet his step-brother. Clare says, “Latent in the emphasis upon the blood ties of Aetes to one of the Argonauts is the suggestion that the Colchian king might be predisposed to receive the heroes in a spirit of hospitality and co-operation.” For Jason to choose Augeas to accompany him, then, is faithful to his optimism (however misconstrued) in the strength and success of diplomatic relations.

<sup>32</sup> Hunter (1989a) 138 argues that it is not a certainty that Argus and Jason decided beforehand what the terms of the deal would be. I find it very unlikely, however, that the Jason who reveals such careful forethought and consistently solicits other people's opinions (e.g. 3.171-93) would *not* collaborate with Argus in advance on how best to approach Aetes. I also find it very unlikely that Argus himself would not want to plan ahead: it is clear at several points that he is terrified of Aetes (e.g. 2.1196-1215, 3.317-19), and the clear organization and flow of his speech appear to be the product of careful consideration and planning.

therefore, to have done everything right: he has arranged for himself diplomatic immunity, lets his ambassador initiate negotiations, gives Aeetes a starting offer that is worth considering, and states his intentions to work something out that is mutually agreeable. This appears to be a textbook case of diplomacy between two powerful nations.

When Aeetes responds with violence and paranoia (3.372-81), threatening to break up the negotiations, Jason again reveals his diplomatic panache when he curbs any kind of emotional response (unlike Telamon, 3.382-85) and, instead, seeks to soothe tensions. He delivers a speech “with conciliatory (words)” (μειλιχίοισιν, 3.385; cf. μειλιχίως, 3.319) and “in a gentle voice” (3.396) that is brief yet extremely effective: he appeals to Aeetes’ reason (3.386-90, observing that no one in their right mind would cross the ocean simply to steal something), piety (3.391, reminding Aeetes that the Argonauts are suppliants), ego (3.391-92, promising to spread to Greece Aeetes’ “wondrous fame” [θεσπεσίην κληροδόναι]), and expansionist aspirations (3.392-95, again offering to subdue neighboring peoples in his name as “swift recompense” [θοήν ἀμοιβήν] for the fleece). In a matter of only ten lines, Jason is able to cover an impressive range of topics, showcasing his level-headed eloquence. The very rapidity of his speech—mirrored in the adjective “swift” (θοήν)—also suggests that Jason understands that his best chance of success is to defuse Aeetes’ wrath and the tense situation as quickly as possible. Mori calls Jason’s speech a “heroic performance indeed, and one that might have won even Heracles over.”<sup>33</sup> It is a masterpiece of mediation, and a brilliant sample of his Hellenistic diplomatic savvy.

But Aeetes cannot be won over. As we have heard both from Hera’s mouth (3.14-15) and his own (3.314), Aeetes does not like words. Nor, as we learn from Medea later, does he have

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<sup>33</sup> Mori (2007) 468. See the entire article more generally about the importance of persuasive speech in this episode and throughout the *Argonautica*. Vian (1978) 1033-34 similarly analyzes how Jason’s reaction to Aeetes’ demand is skillful, astute, and clever (cf. κερδαλέοισιν, 3.426).

any respect for “agreements” (συνημοσύνας, 3.1105-1108).<sup>34</sup> Jason approaches him like a modern man would approach a modern foreign power, but Aetes does not “speak” Hellenistic. He is, as I discussed above, a staunchly archaic figure. As such, it is no wonder that Jason fails to engage Aetes on a diplomatic level. The only kind of person who could ever face this caricature of archaic heroic might is Heracles (3.1232-34) who is, himself, also an embodiment of archaic ideals and might. That Jason is able to even talk Aetes out of his murderous mood and into an agreement of sorts (albeit a test of impossible strength) is victory enough (Mori [2007] 469).

### *Jason and Love at Colchis*

But not all hope is lost. Jason has one more chance to try his hand at negotiation, this time pursuing a “back-door” political alliance with the princess of Colchis that gives him the tools necessary to succeed in Aetes’ contest. While it is true that Cupid has enchanted Medea to fall for Jason and thus be more inclined to help him, her actually delivering that aid has not yet been set in stone. Indeed, Medea repeatedly fights the impulse. After dreaming that she herself completes the contest in Jason’s stead (3.616-29), Medea wakes up and decides to help the stranger (3.636-44). But even after she has made up her mind to get involved, Medea repeatedly questions that decision, and Apollonius describes her vacillating mind in vivid detail. She begins to leave her bedroom to go to Chalciope to offer assistance, but three times she retreats back into her room before collapsing onto the bed in tears (3.645-64). Later, even after promising the aid, she continues to dither in the privacy of her bedroom as she contemplates giving Jason the drugs and not giving them, killing herself and not killing herself (3.751-824). The uncertainty and emotional anguish Apollonius describes in these scenes are harrowing, and several scholars have

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Mori (2007) 466-67: “Aietes’ obstinacy creates the very type of political crisis that Hellenistic handbooks of rhetoric sought to forestall, namely, the failure of rhetoric during a formal council with a powerful autocrat.”

discussed how his development of Medea's internal psychology is striking, realistic, and, indeed, rather modern.<sup>35</sup> Regardless, while there are no overt signs of further fluctuations the morning that Medea prepares to meet Jason (3.828-912), one cannot help but wonder if she will change her mind yet again. There is the sense, therefore, that Medea's commitment to helping the Argonauts is not yet assured. Hera and Cupid have nudged her towards Jason, but she still lacks the final push.

That is where Jason comes in, love-hero extraordinaire. Similar to Jason's interaction with Hypsipyle at Lemnos, Jason's first meeting with Medea near the temple of Hecate is cast in heroic light but celebrates erotic, not martial, prowess. As Jason sets out from the *Argo* to join Medea, he is described in grandiose, heroic terms: "Never before had there been such a man in earlier generations, neither among all the descendants of Zeus himself nor among all the heroes (ἥρωες) sprung from the blood of the other immortals, as on that day Zeus' wife had made Jason, both to behold and to converse with. Even his very comrades marveled as they gazed upon him, radiant with graces (χαρίτεσσιν)" (3.919-26).<sup>36</sup> Jason stands above all other heroes not for his skills as a soldier or a strategist, but as a symbol of attractiveness and charisma. To quote Beye, "[These lines] convey the grandeur of any traditional epic hero's entrance into battle, except that *kallos* and *kharitas* replace *menos*."<sup>37</sup> He brings as weapons not a sword but his charm and sexual allure. Notably, while Athena similarly beautified Odysseus before his meeting with Nausicaa (6.229-37), Homer only notes that Athena made him appear taller and stronger with prettier hair; there are no sweeping statements about Odysseus looking more spectacular than

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<sup>35</sup> Esp. Barkhuizen (1979).

<sup>36</sup> Translation Race (2008) 289.

<sup>37</sup> Beye (1982) 137; cf. Hunter (1993b) 48: "In preparing to meet both Hypsipyle and Medea Jason 'arms' himself with gleaming beauty...in an erotic rewriting of a Homeric warrior's preparations for a duel."

any other hero ever born. That is Jason's own special privilege as the "Eros-Heros."<sup>38</sup>

And Jason does not even technically need Hera's help to stand out as a sex magnet: at Lemnos, without any god's embellishments, he attracted all of the women's eyes (3.774-86); at Colchis, after first meeting with Aeetes, Jason departs with his companions and Apollonius notes how "wondrously among all of them the son of Iason was distinguished for his beauty and graces (κάλλει καὶ χαρίτεσσιν)" (3.443-44);<sup>39</sup> and Medea, too, has already become spellbound by his natural attractions (esp. 3.451-58). Jason appears to be, quite simply, a stud. And this appraisal of the hero is even more pronounced if, as some scholars propose, the gods are interpreted not as actual characters in the poem but as "allegorized psychology" (Beye [1982] 126), namely, that Cupid's arrow is not real but rather serves as a dramatization of how Jason's own sexual attraction provokes and inflames Medea's passion.<sup>40</sup> Regardless, Jason's sexuality is—with and without divine help—potent, and Apollonius is clearly bestowing on that eroticism heroic flavor.

When Jason is compared to the rising Sirius, a simile used in the *Iliad* to describe Diomedes and Achilles right before their most significant contributions to the Trojan war, Apollonius further suggests that Jason's meeting with Medea is a kind of *aristeia*. As soon as Medea catches her first glimpse of Jason, Apollonius jumps into a simile that compares Jason to

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<sup>38</sup> This clever title comes from Thiel (1996) 12.

<sup>39</sup> Granted, Apollonius turns to Medea's thoughts directly after saying this, so we may be encouraged to read it as if coming from Medea's perspective. But since Apollonius does not specify that, objectivity and subjectivity blur together.

<sup>40</sup> See esp. Beye (1982) for this reading who draws particular attention to the fact that Cupid is standing directly under Jason (ἀὐτῷ δ' ὑπὸ βαιῶς ἐλυσθεῖς / Αἰσονίδῃ, 3.281-82) when he shoots his arrow, a position that could be understood as a dramatic manifestation of Jason's own sex appeal arousing Medea. Feeney (1991b) 81-84 and Hunter (1993b) 75-77 disagree with this allegorized interpretation. As Feeney in particular notes, turning Erōs into a symbol strips Book 3's narrative of its force. The tragedy is more tragic when Medea is being toyed with, her inner battle becomes ever more hopeless, and the gods just that much more sinister. I agree with Feeney: Apollonius could have given us a stripped down, purely psychological story without Erōs, but Erōs is there, as are the gods, and we should not deny them their dramatic dynamism.

the star Sirius: “But soon he appeared to her longing eyes, striding on high like Sirius from the Ocean, which rises beautiful and bright to behold (καλὸς μὲν ἀρίζηλός τ' ἐσιδέσθαι), but casts unspeakable grief on the flocks. So did Jason come to her, beautiful to behold (καλὸς εἰσοράασθαι), but by appearing he aroused lovesick distress” (3.956-60).<sup>41</sup> The adjective “beautiful” (καλὸς) appears twice in this passage in the same metrical position. In contrast, when Diomedes (*Il.* 5.1-8, preparing to enter the battlefield for his *aristeia*) and Achilles (*Il.* 22.25-32, advancing on Hector for their final climactic battle) are compared to Sirius, the star is conspicuous for its brightness (μάλιστα / λαμπρὸν παμφαίνησι, 5.5-6; λαμπρότατος, 22.30), not its beauty, and the gleam of Sirius is specifically connected to the sheen of the heroes’ armor (Diomedes’ helmet and shield; Achilles’ bronze breastplate). The focal point in Homer is on the Iliadic warriors’ tools of war. In Apollonius, Jason’s only weapon is his attractiveness.<sup>42</sup> And yet it is no less effective at producing physical symptoms similar to death in Medea: her heart falls out of her chest, her eyesight darkens, and her body freezes, unable to move (3.962-65).<sup>43</sup> Jason conquers through passion, not steel. Therefore, as Beye says, Apollonius sets the stage for Jason’s interaction with Medea in this scene to be “almost a preliminary *aristeia*” ([1982] 137). Like Diomedes who is about to commence his famous rampage and Achilles who will soon kill the best of the Trojan warriors, Jason will be participating in an event that will determine his fate as a hero. He cannot win Aeetes’ trial alone, and thus far, acquiring Medea’s assistance has been

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<sup>41</sup> Translation Race (2008) 293.

<sup>42</sup> See esp. Beck (2014) 38-42 for more analysis of the heroic dimension of this passage: “the simile that he shares with Achilles emphasizes that while Achilles displays his might on the battlefield, Jason gains his status as a hero mainly through his erotic exploits rather than with weapons” (41). She also examines the negative implications this simile holds for Jason and Medea’s future.

<sup>43</sup> See Hunter (1989a) 203-204 for how these descriptions are also frequently used in descriptions of people experiencing love.

the best (and only) feasible plan presented to the Argonauts. Jason's success, therefore, is vital. It is, without a doubt, the most important moment in Jason's career thus far.

And he performs admirably. His keen blend of diplomacy and romance cuts through all of Medea's indecision and wins him her full support. In his first speech, Jason sets up (as he did earlier with her father) many of the hallmarks of successful negotiation: Argus—continuing in Jason's role as intermediary between the Greeks and Colchians—is the one to arrange the meeting, and when Jason meets alone with Medea, he notes that the two of them have come to the table “with good will for each other” (ἀλλήλοισιν εὐμενέοντες, 3.980), observes that the temple of Hecate provides neutral and safe ground for their deliberation (3.981), emphasizes his status as a suppliant and guest in her land (3.985-989), and states that Medea should be upfront about her questions and conditions (3.3.978-79, 982). When Jason and Argus were dealing with Aetes, they proposed subduing the Sauromatae as payment but made it clear that they were open to pursuing other forms of payment per Aetes' desire (“as it is pleasing to you yourself, just in that way it will come to pass,” 3.350). Similarly, within the first eight lines of his first speech, Jason twice tells Medea that she should feel free to ask for and speak whatever she desires (3.979, 982). As with Aetes, Jason is willing to parley.

With that stipulation in place, we go on to see Medea and Jason go back and forth until a satisfactory compromise is established. In his first speech, Jason gives his leading offer: “I will render payment to you for your help, as is customary and fitting for people who live in separate locations, by making your name and *kleos* famous” (σοὶ δ' ἄν ἐγὼ τίσαιμι χάριν μετόπισθεν ἀρωγῆς / ἢ θέμις, ὡς ἐπέοικε διάνδιχα ναιετάοντας, 3.990-91). He goes on to explain that the Argonauts, their wives, and their mothers will also spread her fame (3.992-96), and he subtly implies when he mentions how the gods turned Ariadne into a constellation that the gods

themselves might show their gratitude to Medea for saving the Argonauts in a similarly public way (3.1001-1006). While this may appear to be a shallow leading offer, reputation is, indeed, something Medea is very interested in. When she earlier deliberated on whether she should kill herself or not, her greatest concern was the reputation she would leave behind, that after her death the city—and here she singles out the Colchian women—would spread her shame and their censure of her actions far and wide (3.791-97). The prospect, therefore, of having a whole nation—Greek women and maybe even gods included—sing her praises may indeed have been appealing to Medea.

Regardless, after Jason's first speech, Medea willingly hands over the drug and gives him the information he needs to be successful. But that is not the conclusion to their conversation. Rather, as Medea makes clear, she wants something more from Jason, something more intimate. She requests that he remember her once he returns to Greece (3.1069-71) which Jason readily agrees to do (3.1079-82). Pushing one step further, Medea describes how she wishes the winds would deliver her to Jason's home should he ever end up forgetting her (3.111-1117) and Jason obliges her by promising to marry her if she did indeed end up in Greece (3.1120-30).<sup>44</sup> From speech to speech, Jason has followed Medea's lead by making more personal and momentous guarantees. When Jason ends with a veritable proposal of marriage—the very kind of outcome

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<sup>44</sup> There has been much scholarship written about Jason's sincerity in this scene. Does he really intend on marrying Medea or is this only a ploy to get her support? Does he really begin to fall in love with Medea in this episode as Apollonius suggests (esp. 3.1015-24, 3.1077-78)? And is Jason's use of the Ariadne story harmless stretching of the truth or complete fraudulence? On one end of the spectrum is Jackson (1992) who attributes to Jason very little sincerity and no affection in his relationship with Medea: "for [Jason] the one true god is *Anagke* (Necessity)" (158). Cf. Beye (1982) esp. 120-42. On the other end of the spectrum is Mori (2008b) esp. 121-24 and (2007) who argues that Jason's concern and care for Medea are genuine, and his words to her lacking of any deceit. His promise to marry Medea is "innocent, if spectacularly ill-fated" (122).

Medea had dreamed of two nights previously (3.616-32)—she finally becomes silent. The negotiations, in effect, have concluded. The cost of doing business has been established. As Mori puts it, “the interview at the temple of Hecate is not simply a lovers’ tryst but also a formal negotiation, much like the meeting with Hypsipyle. Jason and Medea have not only agreed to marry but have also embarked on a political alliance” ([2008b] 122). The two lovebirds’ tentative forays into establishing a romantic relationship are carried on the wavelengths of political collaboration and intrigue.

Jason, therefore, has indeed bested Aetes. When negotiations between Jason and the Colchian autocrat failed, Argus—the Argonauts’ “diplomat”—took measures to initiate a back-door resolution with a member of the royal household who *would* be willing to talk, the kind of circumventive diplomacy that appears to have been common at Alexandria.<sup>45</sup> And it is through Jason’s diplomatic tact and sexual allure that he earns Medea’s assistance and thereby finds the means of accomplishing Aetes’ impossible tasks and, eventually, win the fleece as well. When all else failed, when Iliadic and Odyssean approaches miscarried, it is the credible Jason with his credible skills who succeeds. To quote Clauss, “Two modes of action collide, and in this case it is not strength versus cunning but strength versus Eros, and Eros will have the upper hand. As it turns out, Jason’s ability to arouse passion will prove to be as successful as Achillean strength or Odyssean cunning” ([1997] 160). Jason has demonstrated, therefore, to great effect, the potency of his Hellenistic values at Colchis.

*Woodcutters, Carpenters, and Wind: The Tree Similes of the Argonautica*

When Medea and Jason stand staring at each other, before either has spoken, Apollonius

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<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Mori (2012) on how the women of the court, such as Arsinoe II, very likely wielded substantial power behind the scenes in local and international politics.

uses a tree simile that visually depicts Jason’s blend of eroticism and collaboration: “like oaks or lofty pines (ἢ δρυσὶν ἢ μακρῆσιν ἐλάτησιν) that stand rooted quietly side by side in the mountains when there is no wind, but then, when shaken by a gust of wind, they rustle ceaselessly—thus were these two about to speak a great deal under the force of Love’s breezes (ὕπὸ πνοιῆσιν Ἔρωτος)” (3.967-72).<sup>46</sup> As Beck and other scholars have demonstrated, this simile draws from both erotic and epic sources. In terms of the former, wind rustling through trees is an image used in love poetry, e.g., Sappho frag. 47: “Love shook my heart, like wind falling upon the oaks on a mountain” (Ἔρος δ’ ἐτίναξέ μοι / φρένας, ὡς ἄνεμος κατ ὄρος δρῦσιν ἔμπέτων). In terms of the epic genre, warriors are frequently compared to trees. This simile is most analogous to a passage in the *Iliad* where two Greek soldiers, Polypoetes and Leonteus, defend a gate against a Trojan onslaught and are compared to oak trees with deep roots that stand up against winds and rains (12.131-34). This is depicted as a truly heroic moment, as these two soldiers work together to stop the Trojans from breaching the Greeks’ last line of defense. Represented in Apollonius’ simile, therefore, are the two primary features of Jason’s heroism demonstrated at Colchis: seducing and collaborating with Medea.<sup>47</sup>

But this is not the first time we have seen a tree simile in the *Argonautica*. Far from it. As I discuss in Chapter 2, Apollonius uses tree similes as a means of distinguishing between Iliadic *biē* (“just like when woodcutters throw large logs that have been recently felled with axes in a row by the edge of the sea, so that, having been soaked, they might withstand the strong

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<sup>46</sup> Translation Race (2008) 293.

<sup>47</sup> For analysis of this simile, see esp. Hunter (1989a) 204, Hunter (2015) 305, Beck (2014) 42-45. At the conclusion of her article on the three similes of this episode (Jason and Sirius star: 3.957-60; Jason-Medea and trees: 3.968-71; Medea and dew: 3.1020-21), Beck says, “Each simile, in different ways, evokes both epic and erotic motifs, depicting the love affair at the center of the *Argonautica* as a heroic exploit.”

bolts,” 1.1003-1005) and Odyssean *mētis* (“just like when carpenters, fitting together ship timber which is averse to the sharp bolts, strike the wood with their hammers, and blow after blow unceasingly resounds,” 2.79-82). The activities described in each simile define the Homeric heroics in Books 1 and 2: Heracles is like the woodcutters who must use great strength to throw the large logs, and Polydeuces is like the carpenters who (while also using strength) are skilled professionals. Thus, before Book 3 even begins, Apollonius has already established a pattern of using tree similes as a means of reflecting on the different heroic models of the *Argonautica*.

When we take all three similes together, therefore, we see in simile form Apollonius’ masterful and creative engagement with different heroic models in the epic tradition. The Iliadic Book 1 gives us *biē*, the Odyssean Book 2 presents professional skill (a type of *mētis*), and the Hellenistic Book 3 mirrors Jason’s collaborative and sexual heroic values. Furthermore, where the similes for Books 1 and 2 are linked as if in a narrative (the woodcutters must prepare the wood before the carpenters can use it), the simile for Book 3 stands separate (the trees are still rooted in the ground and are not being considered for ship lumber). Such a division reflects how the Iliadic and the Odyssean are joined under the umbrella of the Homeric, while the Hellenistic is a counter to both of them. The tree similes of the *Argonautica*, therefore, have powerful metapoetic potential.

### **Conclusion: Old and New at Alexandria and Colchis**

Apollonius’ grand engagement with Homeric and Hellenistic heroism in the *Argonautica*, therefore, has reached a climax. In lines 1-575, he systematically disrupts Iliadic and Odyssean heroic models, nullifying their efficacy and viability to make way for Jason’s Hellenistic heroic apparatus. And, indeed, once those Homeric heroics have become defunct, Apollonius stages Jason’s highest and greatest heroic moment in the epic: wielding his diplomacy and sexuality

like an Iliadic warrior brandishes shield and sword, Jason is able to secure Medea's aid and harness her fantastical magic. He—a credible hero—is able to find the means of interacting with Aeetes' incredible task.

But Book 3 stages more than simply Jason's heroic elevation: it also performs the tension at Alexandria between old and new. As I discuss in the Introduction, although poets like Callimachus and Theocritus still engaged with mythology and fantasy, they anchored their poetry to reality through aetiological, domestic, and other realistic impulses. Theocritus' *Idylls* keep the meter of heroic epic but celebrate the lowly and idyllic lifestyle of shepherds instead of the warriors of high epic. The *Hecale* immortalizes not the heroic feats of Theseus but the old woman offering to him *xenia*. And the *Victory of Berenice* uses Heracles' defeat of the Nemean Lion as a frame story for Molochus' mock-epic battle with mice. These authors took the epic and transformed it into the domestic. In contrast, Apollonius in the *Argonautica* keeps an epic subject (i.e. the quest for the golden fleece) and writes in the epic genre, but—like his Alexandrian colleagues—still infuses realism into the poem *through Jason*. Apollonius' hero is not molded from the stuff of the great epics of old but from contemporary reality, a *credible* character thrown into an *incredible* story about quests, dragons, magic, and demigods. He acts, therefore, as an anchor from the unreal epic plane to the real Hellenistic world. This is, perhaps, the most fundamental and fascinating difference between the ways in which Callimachus and Apollonius addressed the problem of how to write epic in an unepic age: where Callimachus chooses to epicize an inherently unheroic figure in the *Hecale* and the *Victory of Berenice*, Apollonius picks a hero of old, leaves him in an epic situation, but binds to that protagonist a human, not superhuman, persona. Jason, therefore, is a portal through whom Apollonius' Hellenistic audience, so invested in realism, can participate in an epic, unreal world.

## Chapter 4: The *Biē* and *Mētis* of Many: Heroism in Book 4

The chief objective of the third book of the *Argonautica* is to neutralize Homeric heroism, and to elevate Hellenistic collaborative values in its place. It is rather surprising, therefore, that Medea's magic at the end of Book 3 *resurrects* Iliadic and Odyssean heroics when Jason is transformed into an über-Homeric warrior. The two stages of the contest—the bulls and the Earthborn men—fall into two very familiar categories: *biē* (mastering the bulls and plowing the field take a remarkable amount of strength, see esp. 3.1314) and *mētis* (Jason—at Medea's direction [3.1052-60]—uses strategy to defeat the Earthborn men, such as when he tricks them by throwing the stone, 3.1363-70).<sup>1</sup> Medea provides Jason the strength and *mētis* necessary to be able to compete on Aetes' Homeric terms.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Jason is no longer a human hero who has to depend on human resources like diplomacy and cooperation. He is, instead, a temporary superhero.

As soon as Jason starts using Medea's magic, however, initiating his transition from credible to incredible heroics, his collaborative values come under threat. The night before the contest, when Jason sacrifices to Hecate, Apollonius repeatedly stresses Jason's isolation: Medea tells him to perform the ritual “alone, away from the others” (οἷος ἄνευθ' ἄλλων, 3.1031), and, following her instructions, “he went to a desolate location, like some furtive thief” (3.1197) and found a place that was “far away from the path of men” (3.1201-1202). This seclusion comes

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<sup>1</sup> See Hunter (1993b) 16 and (1988) 450 who, in particular, highlights the word λάθρη (3.1057 and 1369).

<sup>2</sup> See esp. Fantuzzi-Hunter (2004) 270-82, Knight (1995) 99-114, and Thiel (1996) for the numerous Homeric allusions in the final two hundred lines of Book 3.

into particular focus considering how Apollonius stresses Jason's *inclusion* amongst the group both before (3.1163-72: esp. "he mingled [ἔμικτο] once more with his companions," "he rushed to return to the group of heroes," "together," "they warmly greeted him") and after the sacrifice to Hecate (3.1222-23: "he went and mingled [μίκτο] with his companions"). Preparing for the contest cuts Jason off from the group. Later, after Jason sprinkles Medea's drug over his shield and sword, the Argonauts even engage in something of a mock skirmish against each other. Jason's companions use all the strength they possess to test the limits of the equipment, and the disgruntled Idas, in particular, strikes the butt-end of the spear with his sword (3.1246-55).<sup>3</sup> While this is not a conflict per se, and the Argonauts are only trying to help Jason, it is still noteworthy that directly after Jason begins the process of becoming superheroic, the crew breaks out into fighting. Indeed, with Medea's magic, Jason no longer needs the Argonauts' collective strength. He is mighty enough to fight and conquer alone. Accordingly, his dependence on the crew is fracturing.

What does this mean for the epic, that Jason—who has been a staunch champion of realistic Hellenistic heroism up to this point—becomes, at the end of Book 3, an Iliadic and Odyssean superhero? Are his collaborative values at threat of further disintegration, and if so, what does that say about Apollonius' grand narrative about different heroic models in the *Argonautica*? These are the questions that Book 4 seeks to both magnify and address.

The first half of the book stages the continued dissolution of Jason's collaborative and diplomatic values as a response to the disruption of his realism. As I have discussed previously, at the core of Jason's heroic identity is his realism. Thus, when he supersedes his mortal limits and becomes superheroic, his Hellenistic values *also* come under threat. After he acquires the

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<sup>3</sup> For Idas in the *Argonautica*, see especially Fränkel (1960).

fleece, he becomes possessive and distrustful. Later, when the Argonauts are surrounded by Colchians demanding Medea's return, Jason betrays his diplomatic values when he treacherously kills Apsyrtus. Jason's behavior is not aligning with his Hellenistic values anymore, representing not only a crisis of plot (i.e. how will Zeus react to the *doloktasia*?) but also a setback in Apollonius' poetic agenda to celebrate and elevate a new heroic type. Jason's very heroic center is in conflict and at risk.

But Book 4 does not end on that pessimistic note. Rather, we witness the renewal of collaborative and diplomatic Hellenistic values at two locations that are reminiscent of Apollonius' own world: Drepane (the twin of Alexandria with its own Ptolemaic-inspired royal couple) and Libya (a proto-Alexandria). Indeed, at Drepane, Alcinous will reestablish diplomatic integrity when he mediates between the Colchians and Argonauts, and at Libya, the crew will experience their first group *aristeia* when they learn the potency of *collective* Iiadic and Odyssean values. Their experience at Libya will be the final confirmation that in a modern, realistic world such as that in which Apollonius and his audience live, superheroes are obsolete and effectively dead. In their place are credible humans with credible skills, working together to accomplish great feats. Book 4 of the *Argonautica*, therefore, elevates the modern man.

### **Dissolution of Jason's Heroic Values: The Fleece and Apsyrtus**

At the end of Book 3, Jason's realism is completely disrupted and there is a hint that his Hellenistic values are under threat as well. In the first roughly 500 lines of Book 4, that threat becomes a reality. When Jason acquires the fleece—an item of fantastical *kleos*—his behavior stands in stark contrast to his Hellenistic collaborative ideals: instead of promoting a spirit of commonality, he becomes dominant, selfish, and distrustful. When he later treacherously kills Apsyrtus, he betrays the very diplomatic process that was so instrumental in his success at

Colchis. Jason's Hellenistic values—so triumphant in Book 3—are coming apart, replaced by behavior that is more appropriate for archaic epic heroes.

*Acquiring the Fleece and the Dissolution of Group-Oriented Values (4.99-211)*

In the epic thus far, Jason has been dedicated to nurturing the collective identity and consensus of the crew. That changes after he gets his hands on the fleece. In this episode, Apollonius subtly but clearly shows how Jason goes from a deferential to a dominant pose, taking active control of Medea, the crew, and the ship like never before, and staking sole claim to the fleece in his rights as chief of the expedition.

When the Argonauts set off to steal the fleece before leaving Colchis, at first it is Medea who holds the dominant position over Jason and the crew, emphasizing that it is only because of her powerful magic that the unpowerful Jason is even able to accomplish this fantastical mission. She gives the crew orders at 4.100 (“she ordered [ἀνώγει, in line-end position] them to sail to the holy grove”), and it is at her command that Jason grabs the fleece (“he took the golden fleece from the oak tree when/because the maiden ordered him to [κούρης κεκλομένης],” 4.162-63). She is also the one wholly in charge of subduing the snake (4.145-61) while Jason's involvement is passive and apprehensive: “the son of Aison followed [her into the grove], seized with fear” (εἶπετο δ' Αἰσονίδης πεφοβημένος, 4.149).<sup>4</sup> This is a rather pathetic image. But his reaction is not at all surprising. Indeed, when Jason participated in Aeetes' contest, made impervious to fire through Medea's magic, he was the one to boldly face the fire-breathing bulls—fantastical, supernatural threats like the dragon—while his companions were the ones to be “frightened” (ἔδδεισαν, 3.1293-95). That magic only lasted for the day, however; here in the grove, Apollonius is making it very clear that Jason is as human and liable to be set ablaze as ever.

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<sup>4</sup> See Dyck (1989) 459 for other traditions where Jason is the one to kill the snake.

Things are back to the status quo.

Or, at least, things are mostly back to normal. While he is once again a credible human being, by acquiring the fleece Jason is winning a fantastical treasure that normally only fantastical heroes could ever lay claim to. Aeetes assigned the contest because he thought it would kill Jason (e.g. 3.576-83), and Pelias came up with the quest itself for the exact same reason (1.15-18). They did not expect our human Jason to be able to achieve superhuman aims. Yet—with Medea’s help—he has done just that. He is, in effect, an unepic character who has unexpectedly earned an epic prize. In turn, he has been welcomed to the ranks of the likes of Heracles, Perseus, and Theseus.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the second Jason touches the fleece, we see an immediate shift in authority as he begins to assert dominance as if he were, truly, an epic hero of old. Once he acquires the fleece, he is the one to give Medea instructions: “Jason *himself* ordered her to return to his ship” (μιν / αὐτός ἐὴν ἐπὶ νῆα παλιντροπάασθαι Ἰήσων / ἤνωγεν, 4.164-66). The words “himself...Jason...ordered” (αὐτός...Ἰήσων...ἤνωγεν) come at line-initial or line-end positions, accentuating Jason’s agency, and the addition of the intensive pronoun (αὐτός) is especially forceful. The word itself is not necessary in this sentence in terms of making the context clear; rather, it is added simply for emphasis. It is also significant that the verb “ordered” (ἤνωγεν) is the same verb used for Medea at 4.100 (ἀνώγει) when she is ordering people around. In short, after acquiring the fleece, Jason begins asserting some of his own dominance, and his new-found confidence is perhaps best captured visually when he manfully lifts Medea onto the stern before addressing the crew (4.188-89). Apollonius is not explicit over whether or not Jason first sought Medea’s permission before treating her such, but either way, the image conveyed is of an

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Beye (1969) 54 who argues that the fleece is a symbol of Medea’s virginity.

individual willing and able to intrude upon another's physical space and personal agency. Medea may have paved the road for Jason to ascend to epic heroic stature, but he is nevertheless enjoying its rewards.

In his speech to the crew, Jason's newfound authority finds even greater traction as he hands out orders to the men without—as he had done previously—soliciting their opinions. In Books 1 through 3, Jason delivers very few speeches where he directly commands the Argonauts to do something, and in each situation, he ensures, first, that the crew accepts his authority and/or is united about what the best course of action is. Back at Iolchus, Jason does not automatically assume leadership. Rather, his first speech requests that everyone choose for themselves a leader, and it is only after he has been elected (albeit with Heracles' assistance) that he proceeds to hand out orders in a second speech. He pointedly begins by saying, "If in fact you entrust this honor (κῆδος) to my care..." (1.351),<sup>6</sup> and follows this protasis clause with a series of orders to the Argonauts to prepare the ship (1.351-62). For Jason, the crew's sponsorship is the prerequisite for leadership. Later in the epic, when Jason is addressing the men at the beginning of Book 3, he is even more explicit about the value he places on consensus, stating upfront that he will propose what he thinks is best but that it is the responsibility of every crewmember to offer their own opinion if they disagree (3.171-75). He does not readily assume that his is the only or even best option. Instead, he respects the opinions of his comrades.<sup>7</sup>

This collaborative temperament disappears once the fleece is in Jason's possession. In his

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<sup>6</sup> Translation Race (2008) 32.

<sup>7</sup> The final speech wherein Jason gives an explicit order to the crew is 3.568-71 where, significantly, he disregards Idas' dissension. While this may seem to undercut Jason's high-minded words about valuing everyone's opinion, Apollonius makes it clear that the Argonauts as a whole are not pleased with Idas' response (3.564-67). By not engaging with the inflammatory Idas, Jason is thereby able to maintain the peace. Cf. Mori (2007) 464.

speech to the crew after returning to the ship, he orders the men to protect Medea and for half of the heroes to row the boat as the other half prepares to shield the crew from arrows (4.190-205). At no point does he solicit anyone's opinion about the best course of action, nor does he intimate at any point that he will accept any plan other than his own. And there is cause, I believe, to question his proposal: if there is, indeed, fear that Aeetes will block the river heading out to the sea as Jason suggests (4.197-98), is it wise to dedicate fully half of the rowing force to standing guard when there is no immediate threat in view but time? If they do not make it out of the narrow river before Aeetes blocks it, surely their chances of survival will plummet. Regardless of the wisdom of Jason's plan, it is clear that his previous insistence on confirming group consensus is gone. While he does still display strong emotions regarding the shared goals of the crew (see, e.g., the end of the speech where he stirringly announces "we now hold in our hands our children and dear fatherland and elderly parents," 4.202-4), his collaborative impulses have fallen by the wayside.

And that is not all. When Jason jealously guards the fleece and refuses to let the Argonauts share with him its attractions, we can see that his prior insistence on the commonality of the crew's experiences has also vanished. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, the adjective "belonging to all in common" (*ξυνός*) is something of a buzzword for the young Hellenistic leader (1.335, 1.336, twice in 3.173; cf. Argus at 3.483), and he proactively avoids and condemns the kind of contention that arises out of jealousy or greed, whether caused by sexual rivalry as in the case of Atalanta (1.772-73) or possessions in general (1.1337-43). But once he has the fleece in hand, he develops a jealous paranoia worthy of Aeetes. As Jason is walking back to the ship with Medea, Apollonius says that "he went, sometimes wearing the fleece on his left shoulder, where it reached down to the ground from the top of his neck, and other times he

rolled it up tight, fondling it; for he was very afraid (περὶ γὰρ δίεν) that some man or god would attack and rob him” (4.179-82). Jason is a pious observer of all things divine, yet here he is distrustful even of the gods, and the implication is present that if a god did indeed swoop down to steal the fleece, the devout Jason would not give it up without a fight. What is, perhaps, even more telling is the next scene when Jason and Medea arrive back at the ship. The Argonauts are, understandably, enamored by the magnificent, fantastical fleece, but when “each one” (ἕκαστος) rushes forward to touch it, Jason keeps it away from them and hides it under a woven robe (4.184-89). After all his talk of commonality (ξυνός) and the need to avoid all dissension caused by jealousy, he has taken the fleece as his own, his “precious” (to borrow a Tolkien reference).

It could be argued that Jason is, as ever, trying to stave off potential conflict. That is, he may have recognized the way in which the fleece was triggering paranoia and desire within himself, and he feared what would happen if he let the crew approach *en masse*. But considering that Apollonius goes straight from Jason’s fear that someone will steal the fleece (4.181-82) to his decision to keep it away from the crew (4.187-88), with no other description of Jason’s thoughts or emotions, strongly suggests that his only impulse is his new-found covetousness. Thus, while up to this point, the crew has been united in their successes and challenges, now Jason is refusing to let them share in the profit of the venture. Only he can personally experience the beauty and allure of the fleece, a situation rather indicative of Agamemnon and his lion’s share of the *gera* in the *Iliad*.

In short, Jason has changed. His Hellenistic group-oriented values of cohesion and commonality have been replaced by a more strictly enforced hierarchy where he personally receives the benefits and makes the rules. He is, here at the beginning of Book 4, the most like his archaic forebears that he has ever been. When he wraps the fleece around his shoulders

(4.179-80), his pose may call to mind Heracles with his lion skin,<sup>8</sup> and Jason expresses an investment in winning “great fame” (μέγα κῦδος, 4.205) like never before.<sup>9</sup> One of his first instincts upon returning to the ship is to arm the men (4.199-202) and himself (4.206 and 4.209, κεκορυθμένος) which is different from the Jason of Books 1 through 3 who tended to avoid martial conflict if at all possible.<sup>10</sup> And, on top of all of this, the very relationship he has with the *Argo* itself appears to have changed as well. Back at the grove, Jason orders Medea to return to “his” ship (ἔην, 3.165; full line quoted above). There are a few times in the epic where this adjective is used for the Argonauts’ collective possession of the ship—e.g. “the heroes [sat] on the deck of their ship” (ἔηζ ἐπὶ σέλμασι νηός, 3.167; cf. 3.326, 4.483)—but this is the only time that the *Argo* has been explicitly identified as Jason’s. And when the ship sails away from Colchis, Jason stands next to Ancaeus near the helm (4.209-10). Where in Book 1 Apollonius was very insistent that everyone’s place on the ship was determined by lot except for a special few who were assigned specific locations by the unanimous support of the crew (namely Heracles, Ancaeus, and Tiphys, 1.394-401), Jason has decided for himself that he should be in a place of unmistakable, visible authority separate from the rest of the crew. Starkly different from Book 1, Jason is clearly the boss in name *and* reality.

It appears, therefore, that Jason is finally worthy of the adjective “warlike” (ἀρήιος). In

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<sup>8</sup> See Hunter (2015) 106, Rose (1985) 39. Valerius Flaccus makes the comparison explicit (8.125-26); Hunter himself believes the association is not necessarily present in Apollonius.

<sup>9</sup> The word κῦδος only shows up seven times prior to this scene, all—significantly—in Book 1 (206, 287, 345, 351, 467, 511, 1292). Most notable of these is Idas’ boastful *kudos* (1.467), Telamon’s insistence that Jason left Heracles on purpose because he was scared that Heracles’ *kudos* would overshadow his own (1.1292), and lines 345 and 351 where Heracles and Jason refer to the *kudos* of leading the group.

<sup>10</sup> Note, also, how Jason cuts off the ship’s cables instead of untying them (4.207-208), an image that surely captures his haste to leave (cf. *Od.* 10.126-30; Hunter [2015] 110) but also his haste to depend on weapons rather than other less destructive (if *slightly* longer) means of getting the boat free.

Chapter 1, I discussed the irony of how this adjective is used for Jason directly after Heracles pushes the Argonauts to elect the young hero as leader: “the warlike (ἀρήϊος) Jason himself joyfully rose” (1.349-50). In this scene at Pagasae, it is a word that poorly defines the collaborative, Hellenistic Jason and excellently defines the mighty, Iliadic Heracles. Here in Book 4, the association is subtly made again when Apollonius puts “Jason” (Ἰήσων) at line-end position at 4.165 and “Ares” (Ἄρης) also at line-end position at 4.166.<sup>11</sup> Since the *Argonautica* was clearly made to be read (even though it was surely also recited), having the two words so close together visually draws the eye to connect the two. And, while the association in Book 1 was incongruous, now it is rather appropriate. Jason has, at least for the moment, become a relatively typical, martial, archaic, self-serving hero.

*Apsyrtus and the Dissolution of Diplomatic Values (4.323-491)*

The Argonauts escape Colchis without further incident, but when they reach the sea of Cronus, they are surrounded by Apsyrtus’ forces. When Jason—with Medea’s help—chooses to abuse the process of diplomacy to trick Apsyrtus and kill him, Jason steps further away from the Hellenistic collaborative values he demonstrated in Books 1-3, and comes closer to the heroic figures of Odysseus and Achilles.<sup>12</sup>

The central issue—or, better yet, crisis<sup>13</sup>—of this episode is the making and breaking of *sunthesias*, and how the results of this episode speak directly to Jason’s core values. Prior to this

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<sup>11</sup> Lines 4.165-66:

αὐτὸς ἔην ἐπὶ νῆα παλιντροπάασθαι Ἰήσων  
ἦνωγεν· λείπεν δὲ πολύσκιον ἄλσος Ἄρης.

<sup>12</sup> The Apsyrtus episode has attracted much scholarly attention. See esp. Mori (2008b) ch. 6, Byre (1996), and Hunter (1987a). Also Byre (1991) 224-25 for how the audience is beguiled by the fleece and thereby find themselves in Apsyrtus’ position, Byre (1996) 11-13 for how Apsyrtus mirrors Jason (much like Cyzicus did), and Dyck (1989) 459-61 for other versions of the murder.

<sup>13</sup> Mori (2008b) 187: “The murder of Apsyrtus is the central crisis of the voyage of the Argo.”

episode, the word *sunthesia* only shows up twice in the *Argonautica*: in Jason’s first speech to the men when he calls for a leader who can take care of “quarrels and agreements with strangers” (νείκεα συνθεσίας τε μετὰ ξείνοισι, 1.340), and in reference to the agreement between Jason and Medea in Book 3 (3.821). As discussed above, Jason’s successful negotiation with Medea is one of the highlights of Jason’s heroic career; his diplomatic savvy, along with group-oriented values, is a crucial component of his heroic makeup.

Thus, when Apollonius uses *sunthesia* a startling six times in the Apsyrtus episode (4.340, 378, 390, 404, 437, 453), it is clear that he wants us to consider this crisis and its resolution as further commentary on Jason’s diplomatic and, in turn, heroic values. The Argonauts are surrounded by Apsyrtus’ massive forces, and Apollonius clearly states that a battle between the two groups would surely result in the Argonauts’ demise (4.338-39; also 4.401-3). As a result, they “concluded a solemn agreement to stave off a great conflict” (συνθεσίην, μέγα νεῖκος ἀλευάμενοι, ἐτάμοντο, 4.340)<sup>14</sup> where the Argonauts would keep the fleece but Medea would be handed over to await the jurisdiction of a local king (4.341-49). This language clearly recalls Jason’s speech in Book 1 where he asked for a leader who could resolve quarrels (νείκεα) and agreements (συνθεσίας) with strangers (1.340, quoted in full above). According to Jason’s conception of the ideal leader communicated in Book 1, therefore, he has successfully carried out his responsibility by negotiating a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

But there is a problem: this *sunthesia* is at odds with the *sunthesia* he formed with Medea.<sup>15</sup> And instead of trying to find a resolution where he can satisfy the terms of both agreements (which, in all fairness, may not even be possible), Jason doubles down and, with the

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<sup>14</sup> Translation Hunter (2015) 130. The modern phrase “cut a deal” fits rather well.

<sup>15</sup> Mori (2008b) esp. 171 and 215-16.

help and encouragement of Medea, perverts the process of *sunthesia* in order to kill Apsyrtus. When Medea hears about the Argonauts' treaty with the Colchians and accuses Jason of breaking his promises to her, Jason claims the treaty is merely a delaying tactic (4.395-98) and states, "This agreement will be the means of a ruse whereby we will lead him to his ruin" (ἦδε δὲ συνθεσίη κρανέει δόλον, ᾧ μιν ἐς ἄτην / βήσομεν, 4.404-5). There has been a lot of scholarly debate about whether or not Jason truly did plan to betray Apsyrtus all along or whether he was scared into saying so because of Medea's threats.<sup>16</sup> Regardless, what is readily apparent is that Jason is willing and ready to abuse his *sunthesia* with Apsyrtus. Jason and Medea prepare "many guest gifts" (πολλὰ ξεινήια δῶρα, 4.422; cf. 4.416) for him, one of which is a robe given to Jason by Hypsipyle as a "well-made guest gift" (εὐεργέξ ξεινήιον, 4.428). Such an item recalls an episode in the epic when the Argonauts had *successfully* associated with a foreign people. Jason and Medea then send a false message to Apsyrtus with heralds to induce him to come to the island of Artemis (4.435-41), making "the most terrible promises" (αινοτάτησιν ὑποσχέσιησι, 4.456), and it is as Apsyrtus and Medea—deceitfully on her part—"were agreeing with each other regarding each detail" (τὰ ἕκαστα συνήνεον ἀλλήλοισιν, 4.463) that Jason jumps out from his ambush point and stabs Apsyrtus (4.464-69).<sup>17</sup> If the treachery were taken out of this encounter, we would be witnessing the creation of a successful treaty between two parties: gifts and messengers as the first forays, an in-person meeting at a neutral location, and discussion

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<sup>16</sup> For discussion, see esp. Byre (1996) who suggests that Apollonius "[d]eliberately" gives ample support for both options in order to emphasize the impossibility of fully identifying characters' motivations. Also Hunter (1987a) 131 and 138 who notes that the audience's uncertainty regarding Jason's motivations mirror Medea's uncertainty, thereby linking the reader's experience with Medea's.

<sup>17</sup> Notably, Jason is called a "hero" in this scene (ἥρωξ, 4.477), specifically during Jason's ritualistic purifying (*maschalismos*). As Thiel (1996) 10-14 observes, the word is frequently used for Jason in less than positive situations, suggesting that ἥρωξ, when applied to Jason, is to be read subversively.

leading to agreement.<sup>18</sup> Instead, we end up with a *doloktasia* (4.479), wreathed in the fraudulent accoutrements of diplomatic relations. As Hunter says, this episode represents “a sinister and perverted reprise of the meeting of Jason and Medea at the temple of Hecate” ([1993] 61). The diplomacy of Book 3 has been corrupted.<sup>19</sup>

And the Argonauts appear to go right along with this treachery.<sup>20</sup> They seem to have no compunction about attacking the ship carrying Apsyrtus’ men during what should have been a cease-fire and slaughtering every last one of the Colchian sailors (4.482-91). In the midst of the carnage, the Argonauts are likened to wild lions leaping into a pen and throwing sheep into confusion (4.486-87)—or, in other words, a lawless force (i.e. the Argonauts breaking the *sunthesia*) attacking animals lacking their shepherd (i.e. the Colchians without Apsyrtus) when they should have been safe and off-limits in the pen (i.e. the terms of the cease-fire). This is not such a positive image.<sup>21</sup>

Directly before this image, there is another simile where the Argonauts are likened to hawks that throw doves into confusion (4.485-87), a comparison that starkly thrusts the Greeks back into an Iliadic world and far away from the Hellenistic world of Book 3. In Book 1, a

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Rose (1985) 39: “Jason flagrantly abuses the diplomatic approach when he sends guest-gifts...with malicious intent.”

<sup>19</sup> Note also how the Colchians purposefully avoided landing on Artemis’ island because of their respect for the goddess (4.334), while Jason and Medea plan the assault in the vestibule of the temple itself. Dyck (1989) 461 thinks it is “fairly likely” that placing the murder in a temple of Artemis was an Apollonian innovation.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Byre (1996) 8 who notes the plural verbs in Jason’s response to Medea (4.395-409), suggesting that the Argonauts agree with his scheme.

<sup>21</sup> I do, however, hold reservations of pushing the negativity too far. Images of lions attacking domesticated animals are very common in epic battle scenes: e.g. *Iliad* 5.161-62 (Diomedes) and 15.323-25 (Achilles); Hunter (2015) 150. Also see Rose (1984) 134-35 who discusses how the Argonauts in this scene are “adopting methods more ruthless than those of their most menacing enemies [the Bebrycians]” and that Jason reveals himself to be worse than both Amycus and Aetes.

comparable simile was used to describe the Argonauts attacking the Doliones (1.1049-50). As I discuss in Chapter 1, this is an event that reveals the dangers of Iliadic impulsivity. Neither side tried to communicate or determine the exact details of what was going on; they simply started killing one another. The potential for a similar massacre was completely avoided at Lemnos when proper diplomatic conventions *were* pursued. Thus, the return of this simile for the treacherous murder of the Colchian sailors strongly suggests that the Argonauts have returned to their impulsive, non-diplomatic, Iliadic roots. In Book 3, there is yet another example of hawks assaulting doves, but in this case, the avian assault happens in real life and in the reverse: when Argus announces to the gathered Argonauts his plan to seek Medea's help, the gods confirm their approval by sending a sign where a frightened dove (notably Aphrodite's bird, 3.550-51) flees from a hawk and falls into Jason's lap, while the hawk impales itself on a part of the ship (3.540-44). This divine sign is the impetus the crew needed to proceed with Argus' plan, and it is only the combative Idas who still stands opposed (3.555-66). Thus, in the Iliadic Book 1, the Argonauts are hawks; in the Hellenistic Book 3, they are allied with the doves; and in the resurrection of Homeric heroism in Book 4, they are again allied with hawks. The Argonauts have returned to the rejected heroics of the first half of the *Argonautica*. And Apollonius implies that such a decision will be to their detriment: the hawk at Colchis, after all, *impaled* itself in its fervor to catch the dove. Similarly, the Argonauts' decision to kill Apsyrtus and the other Colchians in Book 4 leads not only to further Colchian aggression at Drepane, but also to Zeus' wrath. The Argonauts have, in effect, shot themselves in the foot.

Once again, therefore, Jason's behavior is in direct conflict with the Hellenistic values he has represented since Iolcus. His commitment to group solidarity and commonality have given way to dominance, jealousy, and selfishness, and his diplomatic tactics—so powerful at

Colchis—are now perverted. Moreover, his fallacious activity on the island of Artemis, far from being un-heroic, has only served to bring Jason even closer to Homer’s two greatest heroes: Achilles, too, ambushed and slaughtered a young man in a temple, and where Jason uses diplomacy as a ploy, Odysseus’ Trojan horse hid under the guise of a religious dedication. Jason is in “good” company indeed.<sup>22</sup>

### *Causes of the Dissolution of Values*

But what has caused this drastic shift in Jason’s personality? Scholars have largely found his treachery in the Apsyrtus episode troubling and have attempted to unravel the motivations for his behavior. For example, some attribute the murder to Apollonius’ agenda to foreshadow the perfidious Jason of Euripides’ *Medea*.<sup>23</sup> Hunter compares Jason to Orestes, and discusses how both enact initiation rituals of young men moving to adulthood ([1988] esp. 450-51). Stephens argues that Jason’s treachery is motivated by his contact with Medea, that as he begins to use her magical assistance, he “quickly becomes the ‘other’” ([2003] 193): stronger, more violent, and more foreign.<sup>24</sup> She also suggests that the murder and dismemberment of Apsyrtus imitates the Egyptian practice where enemies were similarly mutilated as an “apotropaic reenactment” of

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<sup>22</sup> Mori (2008b) esp. 201-208 surveys heroes who use treachery and/or ambush against their enemy, focusing on the story of Troilus and Achilles which “offers a heroic precedent for Jason’s actions in the Apsyrtus episode” (206). Also see pp. 209-215 for heroes who kill family members through stealthy means.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., Dyck (1989) and Barkhuizen (1979) esp. 47-48. Medea, too, is transformed from the vulnerable maiden of Book 3 to the kin-killing, scary, murderous witch of Book 4 to also reflect her Euripidean persona. Cf. Mori (2008b) esp. 187-93 who cautions against transplanting wholesale the complex ethical motives of Euripides’ tragedy into Apollonius’ epic world.

<sup>24</sup> In the contest, Jason performs remarkable feats that Aeetes can accomplish but Jason himself would otherwise have had no hopes of completing, and when Jason kills Apsyrtus and afterwards cuts off the corpse’s limbs, he is further associating himself with the foreign king (who had previously threatened to cut out the tongue and sever the hands of Jason and his entourage, 3.377-81). See pp. 191-94 for Stephens’ larger discussion of how the distinction between “Greek” and “other” begins to blur once Jason and Medea associate. Cf. Beye (1969) esp. 53 about how Jason is “in a sense...a victim of Medea in this unnatural world.”

Horus' confrontation with Apophis in the sun boat ([2003] 226-29). Taking a different tack on relating the events to contemporary affairs, Mori convincingly and effectively compares the killing of Apsyrtus to contemporary politics where the monarchical systems of both the Macedonians and Ptolemaic Egypt inspired similar *doloktasia*. She says, "the impious elements of Apsyrtus' ambush translate the strategic tactics of the day into a mythical past, firmly locating the event within a realistic and fairly widespread pattern of political intrigue."<sup>25</sup> It is an intrinsic part of the political system, so it makes sense that Jason, who demonstrates many of the positive aspects of Ptolemaic rulership, represents its darker and more destructive aspects as well. And some scholars have found that the ambiguity and revulsion of the scene cannot and should not be resolved, that the episode intentionally communicates a pessimistic message about the uncertainty of human motivation more generally.<sup>26</sup> As is clear, this episode has attracted a significant amount of attention with a variety of legitimate interpretations.

From a strictly heroic standpoint, however, Jason's *doloktasia* is only one symptom of a larger problem, that is, his values have eroded in tandem with the erosion of his realism as a character. As I have discussed many times in this dissertation, the key aspect of Jason's Hellenistic heroism is his human realism; from that point emerges the many different credible, collaborative values Jason practices. Thus, when that realism is threatened, his other Hellenistic values are threatened as well. Using Medea's magic at the end of Book 3 comes hand-in-hand

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<sup>25</sup> Mori (2008b) 199. She goes on to discuss how Apollonius focuses more on the aetiological dimensions of Apsyrtus' death than the killing itself, concluding that "Apsyrtus' death points to the divine allowances made in the course of colonial expansion" (222-23).

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Byre (1996): "What Apollonius has shown us and told us in this episode is that such acts of treachery, and such transgressions, are part of the inevitable and inscrutable scheme of things. We cannot unravel the complex web of inner desires and external compulsions that draw people into these acts" (14). And Hunter (1987a) 138: "The poet thus exposes the frailty and relativity of explanation for human action, particularly when that action occurs within epic narrative."

with Jason's segregation from the crew and an outbreak of (mock) conflict amidst the men. Later, in the grove, when he gets his hands on a fantastical reward that only fantastical heroes are traditionally expected to acquire, we again see an immediate disruption to Jason's group-centric values as he establishes a stark hierarchy that he had previously avoided. And on the island of Artemis, we witness the full collapse of Jason's Hellenistic heroism when he betrays his diplomatic values as well. Jason may no longer have any of the superheroic abilities Medea's drug gave him in Book 3, but he is still acting the role of a superheroic hero.

Thus, by line 491 of Book 4, the *Argonautica* is in crisis. On the level of plot, the *doloktasia* provokes Zeus' wrath: adverse winds send the Argonauts off course (4.576-80), and they are forced to stop at Circe's island so that Jason and Medea can be purified (4.659-752). It appears, as well, that killing Apsyrtus accomplishes nothing more than to buy them time: when they make it to Drepane, yet another Colchian contingent is breathing down their necks. And on a metapoetic level, Jason's behavior in Book 4 thus far represents a threat to the Hellenistic heroic apparatus Apollonius celebrated in the third book. With such a twist in the epic, it is unclear what will happen next. Will Jason further reject Hellenistic heroism and become a Homeric-styled hero? Or will he somehow renew his diplomatic and collaborative values, and thereby reclaim his Hellenistic identification? As we will see, the latter is correct. In fact, the renewal of Jason and the Argonauts' Hellenistic identity will take place at two places that are stand-ins for Alexandria itself: Drepane and Libya. For the epic to return to its Hellenistic path, the Argonauts must effectively travel through Apollonius' own backyard.

### **Renewal of Hellenistic Heroic Values, Part 1: Drepane and Diplomacy**

At Drepane, the Ptolemaic-inspired Alcinous will help bring about a renewal to social order and diplomatic integrity. He resolves the crisis with the Colchians and Medea's ambiguous

status by reversing the Argonauts' actions on the island of Artemis: where the heroes abused the instruments of diplomacy, Alcinous insists upon maintaining its sacrosanctity; and where the Greeks launched a full offensive ambush, the Phaeacian king employs his military superiority as a deterrent not an opening volley. And once Alcinous has restored diplomatic standards, we begin to see Jason's own behavior realign with his former collaborative values. Our Hellenistic hero is returning.

*The Hellenistic Drepane: Diplomacy and Realism*

As many scholars have demonstrated, Alcinous and Arete are proxies for Ptolemaic royalty.<sup>27</sup> The brother-sister royal couple in Alexandria are frequently likened to Zeus and Hera, and we see a similar equation here at Drepane: Alcinous insists on carrying out the “straight justice of Zeus” (Διὸς δίκην ἰθεῖαν, 4.1100; cf. 4.1179, 4.1201-1202), and Arete—consciously or not—is acting under the inspiration of Hera (4.1197-1200). Like Arsinoe II and other women of the Alexandrian court, Arete also exercises her influence behind the scenes,<sup>28</sup> and Alcinous' involvement as an arbitrator in the conflict between the Argonauts and the Colchians is consonant with Alexandrian politics. As Mori explains, third-party mediation increased during the Hellenistic period both on a local (e.g. arbitrators from other cities would come to assist on matters of property disputes, debt, and so forth) and international level (e.g. Ptolemy

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<sup>27</sup> Hunter (1993b) 161-62, (1995) 22-25; and several items by Mori: (2008a) [Alcinous and Ptolemaic politics]; (2008b) 127-39 [Drepane]; (2008b) 167-79 [Alcinous and Ptolemaic politics]; (2012) [Arete and Arsinoe]. Also see Knight (1995) 244-66 for a thorough comparison of the Phaeacian episode in Homer and Apollonius.

<sup>28</sup> Esp. Mori (2012). Also see Hunter (1993b) who believes that Alcinous knew Arete would go to the Argonauts and arrange for Medea to get married, thereby ensuring his impartiality while also achieving the desired results: “Alcinous both preserves the formalities and makes sure that ‘the right side’ wins.” Hunter adds that this “is perfectly in keeping with the tone of much Alexandrian ‘court poetry’” (161-62). Mori (2008b) 133 thinks it is likely but not certain that Alcinous knows Arete's plan.

Philadelphus offered to mediate between the Romans and Carthaginians during the First Punic War instead of supporting one nation over the other).<sup>29</sup> Alcinous' arbitration in this episode, therefore, reflects contemporary reality:

Alcinous' arbitration in this *neikos* is framed in idealistic terms, but it is also realistic insofar as it mirrors the practice of third-party mediation in international disputes. Alcinous' arbitration therefore fits into the pattern of mediation by Hellenistic rulers and other diplomatic emissaries who sought to preserve *homonoia* (or at least to look like they were preserving it) all over the ancient Mediterranean world. (Mori [2008a] 159)

Drepane, therefore, is something of a sister-state to Alexandria. As Hunter concludes, "it is hard to believe that any readers associated with the Ptolemaic court would not have been tempted to see some kind of analogue between the Phaeacian royal couple and their own ruling family" ([1993] 161). While there is not enough evidence to suggest that Alcinous and Arete are stand-ins specifically for Philadelphus and Arsinoe, it is clear that the Phaeacian royals evoke Alexandrian monarchy and political realities.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, Alcinous—a figure whom scholars have seen as alluding to the Ptolemaic kings—is able to restore the integrity and efficacy of Hellenistic diplomatic values in the poem. Arete, moved by Medea's plight, pleads with her husband late at night to defy Aeetes and assist the Argonauts. The king's response aligns with Hellenistic sensibilities. He explains that while he is confident that he could successfully expel the Colchians through force (4.1098-99), he will not do so because if he did, his own people would be at threat of Aeetes' retribution and he would forfeit his neutrality, keeping him from being able to deliver a fair verdict that preserves the

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<sup>29</sup> Mori (2008a) discusses how Philadelphus was especially connected with mediation: "All things considered, Philadelphus' true talents appear to have been less martial than managerial with respect to both the domestic economy and international relations. Indeed, a significant component of his public image lay in the area of international mediation" (154). Also see Hunter (1996) 21-22 for mediation in the Hellenistic period.

<sup>30</sup> See Mori (2008a) 163, 165-66 for how Alcinous and Drepane are foils for Aeetes and Colchis.

“straight justice of Zeus” (Διὸς δίκην ἰθεῖαν, 4.1100). His people and his objectivity as a mediator are of utmost importance to him. Later when he delivers his decision to the Colchians that Medea will be allowed to stay with the Argonauts if she has married Jason, Apollonius again repeatedly emphasizes Alcinous’ insistence on being a fair and trustworthy adjudicator: twice more we hear about his “straight” judgments (ἰθείας θέμιστας, 4.1179; δίκης ἰθείης, 4.1201-1202), the all-important word *sunthesia* is used to describe the agreements he is brokering (συνθεσίησιν, 4.1176), and he makes both parties swear to abide by the agreement and that their “oaths will be unbroken” (ἀρρήκτοισι ὄρκοις, 4.1205). Thus far, Alcinous has been a model arbitrator. And this time, starkly unlike Jason’s experience with Apsyrtus, Alcinous follows through. After it is found out that Medea is indeed Jason’s wife, Alcinous sticks to the terms of the agreement “firmly” (ἔμπεδον) and “without hesitation” (διαμπερές, 4.1203). There are no last-minute betrayals here, no abuses of *sunthesia*.

There is also no bloodshed. While the Argonauts used their military strength to bypass and *pervert* negotiation in order to massacre the Colchians unawares, Alcinous’ army is backup, not the opening volley. When Alcinous delivers his decision, Apollonius notes how “the best of the Phaeacians” (Φαιήκων οἱ ἄριστοι) followed behind the king, fully armed (4.1180-81). This show of military force suggests that Alcinous is not unwilling to use violence. Indeed, it is implied that he will defend the results of the agreement with the sword if need be. But his martial strength is not the means whereby he imposes his will; rather, it serves to *legitimize* his authority as an arbitrator. Both sides must know that he can enforce the results of the treaty for it to have any lasting power. Thus, Alcinous mends the diplomatic and social rifts that entered the poem at

the beginning of Book 4: he has settled the question of Medea's status,<sup>31</sup> ended the conflict between the Colchians and Argonauts, and reestablished the importance of diplomatic integrity. He has, in effect, temporarily assumed Jason's role in the epic as the representative of Hellenistic values.

It is also remarkably fitting, therefore, in terms of Hellenistic realism, that Drepane stands out as one of the most credible locations the Argonauts visit in the second half of the *Argonautica*. Once the Argonauts pass through the Clashing Rocks in Book 2, they enter a world that is increasingly more alien and fantastical. Book 4 in particular is a strange and wild realm: Medea opens doors with magic (4.41-42), a dragon guards the fleece (4.109-82), the beam of the *Argo* speaks (4.580-91), Phaethon's body is still smoking (4.595-626), Hera shouts at them from a mountain peak (4.640-42), Empedoclean animal-like creatures live on Circe's island (4.672-84), and the Nereids toss the ship like a ball through the Planctae (4.920-67). Amidst such impossible sights, Drepane is conspicuous for its lack of fantasy. Unlike Homer's Phaeacia that includes several implausible details like Hephaestus' guard-dogs made of gold and silver (*Od.* 7.91-94; see Knight [1995] 247), nothing occurs at Apollonius' Drepane that is outside the realm of the possible (excluding mythological background like the history of Cronus' sickle, 4.983-86). The closest example is the nymphs who attend the wedding, but with the way they are described, they could easily be replaced by normal human women (4.1143-55). Instead of fantasy, therefore, we are in the realm of the domestic (e.g. Alcinous and Arete chatting in bed like any married couple, 4.1068-1110) and the political (e.g. Alcinous' mediation). In such an

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<sup>31</sup> On this, see esp. Mori (2008b) 137-39. Also Dyck (1989) 464 who discusses other sources for the marriage and observes that Apollonius and Philitas are the only extant sources who locate the marriage at Drepane. Other locations: Iolcus, Colchis, and Corcyra. Dyck goes on to suggest that Apollonius chose to have the wedding at Drepane so that he could include the Phaeacian episode from the *Odyssey* in his poem.

environment, it is notable that Medea pleads for Arete's mercy on the grounds that all humans make mistakes (esp. 4.1015-17) and Arete in turn makes Medea's case to Alcinous in the same terms (esp. 4.1081-83). Drepane represents a return to realism, and considering that it was the destabilization of Jason's own realism that caused him to start losing his grasp on Hellenistic values in the first place, this is a powerful signal that the crisis of Jason's heroic identity is coming to an end.

### *The Fleece Unveiled*

Jason's behavior is beginning to line up with his heroic code once more. It is no surprise, therefore, that his collaborative values begin to heal as well. As discussed above, Jason becomes domineering and possessive the second he acquires the fleece. He fears that someone will try to steal it from him, and he refuses to let anyone touch or even *look* at the cherished prize. Hiding the fleece under a robe, he reserves the right to enjoy its unique and powerful allure solely for himself—conduct remarkably atypical for the Jason who strenuously and repeatedly advocated for the commonality (ξυνός) and *homonoia* of the crew in Books 1-3.

At Drepane, while Apollonius does not explicitly say that Jason releases his jealous hold, it is clear from the description of the wedding scene that he has. The fleece is, as it should have been from the beginning, common property. After Arete announces Alcinous' decision that Medea can stay with Jason if she is his wife, the crew immediately begins to prepare the wedding, gathering wine and sacrificial animals. They also prepare a bridal bed in the cave: “Here then they made up (ἔστόρεσαν) the great bed, and on top of it they threw (βάλον) the dazzling golden fleece, so that the wedding might win admiration (τιμήεις) and become famous in song (ᾠοίδιμος)” (4.1141-43). Note the third plural verbs: “*they* made up” and “*they* threw,” not Jason. He has apparently decided to finally share the treasure not only with his comrades but

with the world at large. Poets will celebrate the fleece, not as an item placed under a cloak but as the centerpiece of a public wedding where all who attend can feast their eyes on its splendor. When the nymphs arrive, Apollonius describes how “a gleam, as of fire, was cast on all (πάσαα) [of the nymphs], so great did the light from the golden tufts sparkle; and it kindled sweet desire in their eyes, and reverence (αἰδώς) restrained each one although they desired to throw their hand on it” (4.1145-48). The first word in this passage is “all” (πάσαα), indicating how the fleece is now out in the open to be appreciated. Apollonius also makes it clear that the nymphs restrain *themselves* from touching the fleece out of reverence (αἰδώς), not needing a Jason to imperiously make the choice for them by locking it away. The paranoia he experienced, expecting mortal and immortal robbers to come from every side to steal the fleece from him, has given way to mutual trust. Thus, Jason is no longer an Agamemnon at the top of a strict hierarchy of *geras*-distribution. He has allowed for the fleece to be enjoyed by comrades and allies, and by poets and readers for ages to come.

One final detail in this episode may further point to the reintegration of the crew as a unified whole. Back during the encounter with Apsyrtus when Medea hears about the agreement the Argonauts made with the Colchians, her first reaction is to draw Jason away from his comrades: “straightaway she called Jason and led him elsewhere (ἄλλυδις), away from his companions (νόσφιν ἐταίρων), all alone (μῶνον), until they had withdrawn very far away (πολλὸν ἐκάς)” (4.352-56). Jason’s separation from the crew is emphatically, repetitively established and well reflects the disintegration of his group-oriented values at that time.<sup>32</sup> In her speech, she focused on how Jason, specifically, was successful with her help: “I turned my back on my country...because of your (singular) troubles so that, because of me, you (singular) could

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<sup>32</sup> For this significant moment where Medea separates Jason from the crew, see Byre (1996) 6.

safely accomplish the contests with the cattle and the earthborn men” (4.360-65). The contest was Jason’s and his alone.

In contrast, at Drepane, when the Colchians are again demanding her return, Medea appeals to the *entire* crew and couches her aid in terms of having helped all of them, not only Jason. Instead of the lone warrior, it is now the entire group who participated in Aetes’ contest: “on account of you (plural) and because of your (plural) trials I am distraught; with my help you (plural) yoked the bulls and you (plural) cut down the deadly crop of earthborn men; because of me you (plural) will return home and bring the golden fleece back to Haemonia” (4.1031-35; n.b. the first word of the speech is ὑμέων). It is now their collective oaths that she brings up, not Jason’s alone (3.1042-44), and the entire contest is now a victory won by all of them. This speech, as Vian says, is an “antithesis” to the first.<sup>33</sup> On the one hand, this is a masterful example of Medea’s rhetorical skill and survival instincts, guiltily turning the entire crew into saving her. On the other hand, it may be no coincidence that this shift from the one to the whole comes at Drepane, the place where Jason finally shares the fleece—the precious prize of his contest—with the rest of the Argonauts. In a nutshell, Medea’s grammatical shift makes Jason’s solitary victory in the contest a victory by all now; ξυνός has returned to the crew.

Thus, Drepane marks the first step in renewing the Argonauts’ heroic values founded on group cohesion and diplomatic ties. They are beginning to conceive of themselves as a united

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<sup>33</sup> Vian (1981) 183. Hunter (2015) 223 also notes the difference between the two speeches and states that it emphasizes her “increasing desperation.” Green (1997) 333 thinks Medea excludes Jason because she does not want “to lay any stress on her relationship with Jason, especially in view of their joint complicity in the murder of Apsyrtos.” Vian (1978) 1036 argues that Apollonius’ intention in having Medea address the entire crew at Drepane instead of only Jason as she did previously is to highlight that “le comportement de Jason n’est pas différent de celui des autres Argonautes.” For her to address Jason alone or the men altogether is the same thing. While that may be true, it is still significant that Apollonius reserves the collective version for Drepane, the place where Jason’s collective values are being refreshed.

front once more, equal participants and equal victors in the struggles placed before them. But the renewal process is not fully complete yet. There is a final pitstop along their itinerary where their heroic values will be challenged—and renewed—once more: Libya.

### **Renewal of Hellenistic Heroic Values, Part 2: Libya and Collaborative Heroism**

The Argonauts' stop at Libya surely attracted special attention from Apollonius' audience. The episode is, in fact, a veritable *ktisis* for Greek colonization of North Africa and—by extension—for Alexandria itself. Without the events at Libya, it is implied, so much would never have come into being: the Ptolemaic empire, our poet, this poem, and, indeed, the audience themselves. Success or failure here holds in the balance the very existence we and they know.

Thus, it is of critical importance that this “proto-Alexandria” is the stage whereon the renewal of the Argonauts' Hellenistic values comes to a close. Stuck in Libya and near death, the heroes experience their first joint *aristeia* when they learn how to harness the potency of *collaborative* Iiadic *biē* and *collaborative* Odyssean *mētis*. This is, in effect, an expansion of Jason's own group-centric ideals: where previously the impulses toward collaboration and *homonoia* were localized in Jason, now the entire crew is identifying with these Hellenistic values. When these values are challenged with Heracles' reemergence into the text for a brief cameo, Apollonius further establishes that the self-reliant superheroics of the past are no longer feasible for a modern, realistic world. It is a final statement on the death of superheroes, and the elevation of more contemporary, more credible heroes. Libya represents the final and celebratory triumph of Alexandrian literary sensibilities.

#### *Libya: Death, Kleos, and Separation (4.1232-1307)*

While the Argonauts encounter many challenges in their journey that throw them into hopelessness, none is as overpoweringly demoralizing for the crew as being stranded at Libya.

The Argonauts are within sight of Greece when a storm blows them off course for nine days. They end up in Libya, the ship beached, with no signs of life or habitation in the surrounding desert (4.1231-49). For the next fifty or so lines, Apollonius describes in great detail the absolute depths of despair and “helplessness” (ἀμηχανία, 4.1259, 1308, 1318) to which the heroes, Medea, and her handmaidens descend (4.1250-1307). Ancaeus, the trusty helmsman of Book 2 who helped the crew get over their similarly grievous despondency after Tiphys’ death (2.851-898), has given up all hope of getting the ship to open waters and tearfully expects that the Argonauts have only “a most terrible death” (αἰνότατον μόνον) and “the most dog-like/shameless sufferings” (τὰ κύντατα) to look forward to (4.1261-76). Well have several scholars described Libya as a kind of Underworld: the men’s hearts freeze over, their skin is pale, and they wander aimlessly “like lifeless phantoms” (ἀψύχοισιν εἰκότεες εἰδώλοισιν, 4.1278-1289).<sup>34</sup>

While the men are, indeed, concerned about dying, they are even more afraid that if they die here alone in the deserts of Libya, they will lose their chance at *kleos*. As observed above, one of the reasons the Argonauts laid the fleece over the bridal bed was so that the event could win acclaim (τιμήεις) and become “famous in song” (ἀοίδιμος, 4.1141-43). Sex is, of course, a messy business, especially with a virgin involved. But the risk of staining Greece’s newest national treasure was worth taking because by doing so, the wedding would stand out as unique, extraordinary, and *better* than other weddings. Such distinctiveness would help ensure the poetic

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<sup>34</sup> For the common interpretation of Libya as an Underworld environment, see e.g. Kyriakou (1995), Hunter (1993b) 30-31 and 182-88. Cf. Stephens (2003) 218-37 who argues that the events of Book 4 are modeled on Egyptian notions of the journey of Sun/Re through death and rebirth.

immortality of the marriage and, in turn, the Argonauts as well.<sup>35</sup>

Yet here in Libya, the Argonauts' eternal fame is suddenly thrown into uncertainty. The narrator notes that if the heroines had not come and saved the Argonauts, “everyone would have retired from life nameless and forgotten, unknown to mortals, the best of heroes, with their quest left unfinished” (πάντες ἀπὸ ζωῆς ἐλίασθεν / νόνημοι καὶ ἄφαντοι ἐπιχθονίοισι δαῖναι / ἥρώων οἱ ἄριστοι ἀνηνύστω ἐπ' ἀέθλω, 4.1305-7). The asyndeton in the last verse and a half (“nameless and forgotten / unknown to mortals / the best of heroes / with their quest left unfinished”) is forceful in its insistence that all of the Argonauts risk obliteration from history. And it is at this moment when their *kleos* is threatened that they are called *aristoi*. As I discuss in Chapter 1, the adjective “best” (ἄριστος) is of crucial significance in the epic genre in terms of establishing heroic merit. Only one other time is it applied to the entire group of Argonauts in the *Argonautica*: when the *Argo* leaves Iolchus, all of the gods look down upon the crew, “the best of men” (ἄριστοι, 1.547-49). They set off on their journey as *aristoi*, ready to prove their heroic worth and win *kleos*, and the events that occur here will determine if they will indeed return as *aristoi* or die “nameless and forgotten.” It is no wonder, then, that the men, speaking “one to the other” (ἄλλος δ' αὐτ' ἄλλον, 4.1250), wish that they had returned to Greece through the Clashing Rocks in defiance of Zeus' designs since “it would be better to die doing something great” (βέλτερον ἦν μέγα δὴ τι μενοινώντας ὀλέσθαι, 4.1255).<sup>36</sup> Death is not the chief concern; their heroic legacy is.

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<sup>35</sup> To underscore this episode's equal parts absurdity and monumentality, I offer this rough modern approximation: consider if George Washington had had sex with Charlotte (King George III's daughter) on the Declaration of Independence. The event would indeed be remembered for centuries to come. It would be a story that would never die, granting both the object and the people immortal fame.

<sup>36</sup> The Argonauts are, of course, ignorant of the fact that the Clashing Rocks stopped moving after the *Argo* passed through it.

Faced with such oblivion, the men make an unusual choice: they decide to split up so they can die alone “apart from the others” (ἄνδιχα, 4.1291). This should immediately ring alarm bells since separation has not typically gone well for the Argonauts: Heracles and the youngest of the crew are attacked by Earthborn men, Hylas is kidnapped, Heracles and Polyphemus are left behind, and Canthus (as I will discuss) dies. The Argonauts are a group; they work together. But when night comes, the men say their goodbyes to each other, tearfully embracing and caressing one another, and, as Apollonius says, “they went to go, one here, another there, further apart” (βὰν δ' ἴμεν ἄλλυδις ἄλλος ἕκαστέρω, 4.1293). Similar to the way in which Apollonius underscores how Medea drew Jason away from his comrades by piling on words describing the separation and the distance (n.b. ἄλλυδις at both 4.353 and here), the dissolution of the group is firmly established. The use of the comparative adjective ἕκαστέρω is especially poignant: the men are not just far apart, they are further than far.<sup>37</sup> As Hunter puts it, “that communal solidarity which has always differentiated the ethos of the Argonauts from that of Odysseus’ adventures dissolves” ([2015] 255).

But why do they separate? We would expect the Argonauts to embrace each other and stay that way, not embrace then break up. There may be one clue: “apart [from the men], the women, together, lamented at the side of Aetes’ daughter” (νόσφι δὲ κοῦραι / ἄθροαι Αἰήταο παρεστενάχοντο θυγατρί, 4.1296-97). The women stay together (ἄθροαι, in line-initial position)

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<sup>37</sup> Significantly, when Apollonius says that the Argonauts would have died if the heroines had not saved them (a sentence I quote in the preceding paragraph), he uses an unusual verb to describe their death: ἀπὸ ζωῆς ἐλίασθεν (4.1305). As Hunter observes, this phrase is not used for death anywhere before Apollonius ([2015] 257). The verb λιάζομαι, at its most basic level, means “to bend” or “incline,” but it can also have the sense of “to bend away,” or “to go aside, recoil, shrink” (LSJ). In Apollonius, the verb is exclusively used to describe the action of people dividing and drawing away from one another: 1.94, 1.316, 3.827, 3.966, 3.1164, 4.306, 4.353, 4.1653. Their death, therefore, is explicitly connected with their decision to die alone.

while the men disperse. The implication is perhaps that dying alone is more manly, more heroic—more *Iliadic*, even, like the one-on-one glorious battles at Troy. Regardless of the cause, the most significant thing is that they *have* divided, especially since their inevitable reincorporation in the next scene is made that much more pronounced.

As a result, Libya thus far represents a grave danger to the Argonauts' lives, their very identity as heroes, and their integrity as a group—not to mention the future of Alexandria itself (as I will discuss later). It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that this is *the* most critical moment in the entire *Argonautica* for the group as a whole *and* for the audience. Even the Clashing Rocks pale in comparison, the event which, previously, had been the Argonauts' greatest achievement (see Chapter 2). Success or defeat here at Libya will mean the difference between achieving a heroic *aristeia* or sinking into utter oblivion.

*Victory of Collective Iliadic and Odyssean Heroics (4.1308-92)*

Thanks to the heroines' assistance, the Argonauts rise. And the key to their eventual *aristeia* is when they learn to translate solitary Iliadic and Odyssean values into collective demonstrations of strength and *mētis*. The heroines, pitying the Argonauts' sorry plight, appear to Jason and, rather than freely giving him the answer to the predicament, tell him a riddle (4.1325-29).<sup>38</sup> He is unable to figure it out by himself (classic Jason), but his failure is the catalyst for the crew's reintegration. Speaking out loud, he praises the heroines, announces his ignorance, and states that he will bring the matter up with his comrades “after gathering them together into a single whole” (εἰς ἓν ἀγειράμενος, 4.1335; note the emphatic addition of εἰς ἓν). His reasoning? “The *mētis* of many is better” (πολέων δέ τε μῆτις ἀρείων, 4.1336). While

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<sup>38</sup> See Thiel (1996) esp. 12 who notes that this is the only example of the feminine version of ἥρωος, and thereby emphasizes women's vital importance for the successful completion of the Argonauts' quest from beginning to end.

Odysseus would surely agree that *mētis* is the key to figuring the problem out, he would never say or admit that the *mētis* of the masses is better than his own superior grasp of strategy and wit. His *mētis* has always been fiercely individualistic. But Jason, while so Odyssean in so many ways, has never thrived in isolation. His greatest strength is in understanding how to marshal forces and keep them united in the pursuit of a shared goal. He is, indeed, the kind of man associated with assembly (*ἀγορά*; cf. *ἀγειράμενος*), not segregation.

And his decision to turn the problem over to the whole works. After Jason gathers the men *and* women together (Apollonius is rather emphatic about the inclusion of the women, 4.1344-46), and after the horse leaps out of the sea and onto the land, Peleus immediately untangles the riddle of the prophecy. When he proposes the solution of needing to carry the ship over land, Apollonius notes that “his suitable *mētis* was pleasing to them all” (*πάντεσσι δ' ἐπήβολος ἦνδανε μήτις*, 4.1380).<sup>39</sup> Thus, while the heroines are the impetus for the reintegration of the crew and they are the ones to obliquely provide the answer regarding the Argonauts’ survival, Jason could have tried to solve their riddle himself. Instead, his first, instinctual reaction is to gather his companions, remembering the strength that can come from collective strategizing. And so, similar to the way in which Book 3 repainted Odyssean *mētis* in the guise of female *mētis*, now we are seeing the merit of cooperative *mētis*. Jason’s Hellenistic values have spread to the crew at large.

Moreover, the strategy that Peleus proposes is to convert solitary Iliadic *biē* to cooperative *biē*: the Argonauts, pooling their collective strength, will carry the ship over the desert. This remarkable event triggers an intrusion by the narrator that is one of the most effusive

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<sup>39</sup> This language is very similar to the crew’s reaction to Amphidamas’ proposal in Book 2 concerning the Stymphalian birds (*πάντεσσι δ' ἐπίρροθος ἦνδανε μήτις*, 2.1068) and Medea’s false words to her handmaidens in Book 3 (*πάσησι δ' ἐπικλοπος ἦνδανε μήτις*, 3.912).

asides and definitely the most triumphant in tone. This event, the narrator is eager to show, is a magnificent and—above all—*true* accomplishment. I will reproduce the entire passage to preserve its full emotional impact (4.1381-1392):

Μουσάων ὄδε μῦθος, ἐγὼ δ' ὑπακουὸς αἰίδω  
Περίδων, καὶ τήνδε πανατρεκὲς ἔκλυον ὀμφήν,  
ὑμέας, ὧ περὶ δὴ μέγα φέρτατοι υἴες ἀνάκτων,  
ἢ βίη, ἢ ἀρετῇ Λιβύης ἀνὰ θίνας ἐρήμους  
νῆα μεταχρονίην, ὅσα τ' ἐνδοθὶ νηὸς ἄγεσθε, 1385  
ἀνθεμένους ὄμοισι φέρειν δυοκαίδεκα πάντα  
ἦμαθ' ὀμοῦ νύκτας τε. δύην γε μὲν ἦ καὶ οἰζὺν  
τίς κ' ἐνέποι, τὴν κεῖνοι ἀνέπλησαν μογέοντες;  
ἔμπεδον ἀθανάτων ἔσαν αἵματος, οἷον ὑπέσταν  
ἔργον ἀναγκαίη βεβημένοι. αὐτὰρ ἐπιπρό 1390  
τῆλε μάλ' ἀσπασίως Τριτωνίδος ὕδασι λίμνης  
ὡς φέρον, ὡς εἰσβάντες ἀπὸ στιβαρῶν θέσαν ὤμων.

This story is from the Muses, and I, obedient to the Pierides, sing it. This story I heard, imparted by a divine voice,<sup>40</sup> is entirely accurate: that **you**, the unparalleled very best sons of kings indeed, with strength, with valor, above the deserted sand-banks of Libya, carried the ship high in the air along with all the things carried within the ship, laying it upon your shoulders for twelve whole days and nights. And indeed, who could tell of the pain and the hardship which those men experienced in full measure as they toiled? Of a surety, they were of the blood of the gods, so great was the task they undertook when they were constrained by necessity. But as excessively gladly they carried the ship far off toward the waters of lake Triton, just that gladly they went inside the water and let the ship down from their strong shoulders.

The artfulness of this passage is evident. The asyndeton, especially of lines 1384-86, describes the various elements of the Argonauts' deed in fast bursts: “with strength / with valor / above the deserted sand-banks of Libya / the ship high in the air / along with all the things carried within the ship / laying it on your shoulders / you carried.” It gives a stuttering quality, as if the narrator is barely able to contain his excitement. Apollonius also prolongs the suspense and intensity of the moment by withholding the direct object and verb: the subject (ὑμέας) comes in line 1383,

<sup>40</sup> Translation Hunter (2015) 268.

the direct object (**νήα**) in 1385, and the verb (**φέρειν**) at practically the end of the sentence in line 1386. And the narrator is absolutely insistent that his marvelous account is true: n.b. the intensive prefix in “entirely accurate” (**παν/ατρεκῆς**), and how “Muses” (**Μουσάων**) and “Pierides” (**Πιερίδων**, an alternate name for the Muses) come in line-initial position in the first two lines. The narrator has endowed this moment with special, astonishing consequence; it is a true demonstration of true heroic worth.

And this is not the superhuman Heracles rowing the boat singlehandedly through a storm with his superhuman might; nor is it Tiphys navigating through a fantastically mountain-high wave. It is fifty-odd men combining their shared strength and working in tandem. While the narrator views their accomplishments as proof of the divine heritage of the heroes (4.1389), therefore, he also focuses in his direct address to the Argonauts on their mortal origins: “the unparalleled very best sons of kings” (ὄ περὶ δὴ μέγα φέρτατοι υἱεὶς ἀνάκτων, 4.1383). The word “king” (ἄναξ) can be used for gods, but here it is most likely referring to mortal leaders and kings since only a few of the Argonauts are direct children of deities while most—if not all—are the children of aristocratic families. While Apollonius has frequently highlighted the heroes’ semi-divine status (e.g. the gods looking down on the crew as they disembark, 1.547-49, and Argus’ description of the Argonauts to Aetes, 3.365-66), nowhere else does Apollonius emphasize to this degree the Argonauts’ *mortal* upbringing. What makes this event so momentous, therefore, is that these are mortal men completing a feat worthy of demigods because they have grouped their strength together and are acting in united effort. The superheroics of the nearly divine Heracles and the magicked-up Jason in Book 3 are being

matched by concerted—yet still *human*—effort.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, while their accomplishment here is critical for the establishment of their collective heroic identity, Apollonius also indicates that it is a critical feature of the Greeks' claim upon North Africa. As both Mori and Stephens have demonstrated, this episode strongly calls to mind an Egyptian ritual where priests would carry the god Amon-Re in a solar boat over land as a symbol of the “divine rejuvenation of the pharaoh...[who was] renewed and symbolically reborn with Amon-Re.”<sup>42</sup> This was a ritual, therefore, that was central to the establishment and legitimization of Egyptian monarchy. But here in the *Argonautica*, the origin of this key political and religious event is being reimagined as having Greek, not Egyptian, roots. Such aetiological theft is a common impulse in Hellenistic (and other Greek) literature as a means of legitimizing one's claim to territory. To quote Stephens: “the logic of the *aition* is to connect the new place with Greek myth, in a way that serves to efface the native and give the intruding Greek population (or colonizers) continuous claim to the place, to create the illusion in other words not of intrusion, but of return” ([2003] 188).<sup>43</sup> Thus, as the Argonauts themselves are undergoing “rejuvenation” and “rebirth,” demonstrating their heroic merit through collaborative

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<sup>41</sup> Admittedly, I do not actually know if it would be possible for fifty strong men to carry a boat the size of the *Argo* and, unfortunately, I do not believe it is possible to ascertain the likelihood. The narrator, at any rate, is insistent that what we are reading is real and true, but that admittedly says little about the actual, real-world likelihood. At the very least, this feat is not blatantly unrealistic or ridiculous and accommodates a more realistic tone than Heracles rowing the boat alone in Book 1.

<sup>42</sup> Mori (2008b) esp. 13-18 (quote = pg. 14) and Stephens (2003) 218-37 [who discusses how the entire arc of Book 4 resonates with this Egyptian ritual]. See also Stephens (2003) more generally about how Alexandrian literature includes both Greek and Egyptian material as a reflection of Alexandria's mixed population and as a program of legitimizing Greek presence in Africa.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Mori (2008b) 16: “In effect, the portage of the *Argo* is a colonizing *aition*, an explanatory account that recasts a traditional Egyptian ritual as the analogue for a labor that was originally performed by Greek heroes.”

labor, Apollonius is also foreshadowing the Greeks' eventual dominance of Egypt. This is just one of many ways that he is shaping the Libya episode to directly correlate with his contemporary world.

The Argonauts, therefore, in this "proto-Alexandria," have transformed superheroic Iliadic and Odyssean values into credible, collaborative endeavors. Together, their *mētis* is powerful. Together, their *biē* is formidable. Together, the Argonauts enjoy a collective *aristeia* that inspires the narrator's greatest outpouring of admiration. When they first arrived at Libya and effectively gave up, they divided when they should have united.

*Canthus and Heracles: Heroes and Superheroes (4.1393-1536)*

But they are not out of the desert yet. Directly after Apollonius celebrates their success, he releases Heracles back into the poem to replay in miniature form the conflict of Book 1 between Iliadic self-sufficiency and collaborative ideals. It is the final battle between Heracles' superheroics and Jason's realism. When one Argonaut falls to the lure of Heracles' older forms of extreme heroism, his death is the final confirmation in the poem that old heroics is no longer possible in a new, modern, realistic world.

At Libya, Heracles is at his most destructive, dangerous, and bestial, and he appears to have no scruples about the negative results of his actions as he single-mindedly pursues his glorious labors.<sup>44</sup> When the Argonauts reach lake Triton, they come to a sacred place which previously housed the golden apples, guarded by the great snake Ladon and accompanied by the beautiful, singing Hesperides. The day before the Argonauts arrive, however, as the narrator informs us, Heracles killed Ladon and stole the apples, much to the dismay of the local Hesperides. While Medea was able to subdue the snake guarding the golden fleece at Colchis

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<sup>44</sup> For Heracles' depiction at Libya, see Clauss (2000) 22.

without any permanent harm, Heracles ravages the place. Ladon lies dead at the trunk of the tree, the very tip of his tail still pathetically twitching, and the poison left behind in the snake's blood by Heracles' arrows continues to bring death to the biome: flies dry up when they land on the "rotting" wounds (4.1400-1405). Moreover, while it is not made explicit, the word "stump" (στόπος, 4.1401) to describe the tree implies that Heracles not only stole the apples but also cut the special tree down for no apparent reason, taking away its ability to produce any more fruit. He has brought ecological disaster to the area.

The Hesperides themselves have also been greatly affected, and it appears that they have been traumatized—in the true, medical sense of that word—by Heracles' invasion. Their idyllic life, along with their great protector, has been taken away. Instead of singing pleasant songs all the day long like they used to (4.1399), they now "lament shrilly" (λίγ' ἔστενον, 4.1407; cf. 4.1298-99). Aegle, one of the Hesperides, powerfully summarizes their experience with Heracles: "he left, taking the golden apples of the goddesses, and abominable pain remained behind for us" (παγχρύσεια μήλα θεάων / οἴχεται ἀειράμενος· στυγερὸν δ' ἄχος ἄμμι λέλειπται, 4.1334-35). Her words evoke those of assault victims (sexual or otherwise) everywhere: "he took what he wanted and then continued with his life unaffected while we have to live with what he did every day." Conspicuously, the first word of line 1335 is "[Heracles] left" (οἴχεται) while the last word is "[pain] remained behind" (λέλειπται)—the two actions are both opposing and intertwined. Heracles leaves devastation wherever he goes. It is no wonder, then, that when the male heroes approach the Hesperides, "all of the sudden, all together" (ἄφνω ὁμοῦ, 4.1408), the women immediately transform into dust. While Apollonius does not give us any insight into their emotions and thoughts at that very moment, one can imagine that—so shortly after Heracles' devastating visit—they are terrified.

In sum, it is as if Heracles' worst traits from Book 1 have been amplified. He is, to quote Aegle, "the most destructive man in respect to wanton violence and bodily might" (ἄνθρωπος ὀλοώτατος ὕβριν / καὶ δέμας, 4.1436-37). He is "pitiless" (νηλῆς, 4.1438) and "remarkably shameless/dog-like" (κύντατος, 4.1433; cf. 4.1262) in his actions. Aegle thinks he is little more than an uncivilized beast himself: she focuses on how his lion skin is "untreated, untanned" (ὠμόν, ἀδέψητον, 4.1439, an excellent example of asyndeton),<sup>45</sup> and after he creates the spring, her disgust is evident when she describes him gulping down tons of water, down on the ground "like a grazing animal" (4.1449), filling his "bottomless pit of a stomach" (4.1448-49). In fact, the attention Aegle pays to Heracles' voraciousness is more akin to the comedic Heracles with his limitless appetite than Book 1's Heracles. This Heracles is rougher and more attuned to his physical needs, suggesting, perhaps, that once Heracles left the taming influence of the crew, his more negative attributes were given free rein to grow and thrive.

In revisiting Heracles, therefore, we are also revisiting the complexity of the Strongman archetype: he saves people just as often as he destroys them. In Book 1, Heracles repeatedly saves the Argonauts from disaster. But he also constitutes a threat to the crew. When we left him at the end of the first book, Apollonius flooded the poem with multiple images of his propensity to harm and disrupt: he threatens the integrity of the ship (1.1161-71), he uproots the tree (1.1196-1205), he killed Theiodamas "pitilessly" (νηλειῶς, 1.1214; cf. νηλῆς, 4.1438), he will kill the Boreads (1.1302-1309), and he upsets the familial, social, and civic future and well-being of the Mysians (1.1347-1357). Here in Book 4, he is, again, bringing both great aid and great danger to the Argonauts: he saves the Argonauts because of the spring he created (even Aegle admits that he has provided the men "very great succor," μέγα πάμπαν ὄνειαρ, 4.1432), but the

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<sup>45</sup> Translation Hunter (2015) 274.

entomological simile used to describe the Argonauts drinking the life-giving water provided by Heracles (i.e. they drink like flies lapping up honey, 4.1452-1457) recalls the flies swarming over Ladon's body and withering away as they drink the death-bringing blood that has been poisoned by Heracles' arrows (4.1403-1405). One cannot help but wonder if Heracles' rescue, too, will sour.

And, indeed, it does when his sudden reemergence into the epic is accompanied by a threat to the unity of the crew. After listening to Aegle's brutal sketch of their erstwhile companion, the Argonauts never once stop to think about Heracles' controversial actions.<sup>46</sup> Rather, their first impulse is to try to reunite with him (4.1458-60). Five Argonauts take upon themselves the task of effecting a reunion, leaving the group and hurrying off in different directions to try to find Heracles. To describe their dispersal, Apollonius uses some of the same language that he used earlier in the scene when the men wandered off alone to die: "they separated, one here, one there" (ἔκριθεν ἄλλυδις ἄλλος, 4.1462; cf. ἄλλυδις ἄλλος, 4.1293). Taking into account the number of times that the group's diffusion has led to disaster, the audience should already be wondering if something bad is going to happen.

For four of the searchers, everything is fine. But these four men are also *the* most overtly supernatural of the crew: the Boreads "relying on their wings" (4.1465; cf. Catalogue at 1.211-23 where they are described as having wings on their temples and feet), Euphemus "depending on his quick feet" (4.1465-66; cf. 1.179-84 where it is said he can even run on water), and Lynceus

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<sup>46</sup> Stephens (2003) 187 discusses Apollonius' masterful engagement with point of view in this episode: "what from the perspective of the literate Greek audience was another example of the laboring Heracles performing necessary and admirable tasks, from the viewpoint of the indigenous nymphs was wanton robbery and destruction. Thus a narrative trajectory that appeared to convey the conventional Greek message of civilization triumphing over barbarism is deflected by an attack of cultural relativism."

who can see “far away” with his “sharp eyes” (4.1466-67; cf. 1.151-55 where it is said that he can even see through the ground). Of the Argonauts (discounting Heracles himself), these men are the most inhuman and spectacular. They do not represent Hellenistic realism all that well.

For the fifth and final searcher, Canthus, he is only all too human. And when he attempts to be a phenomenal hero like Heracles, he dies. Unlike the other four heroes, Canthus receives no superheroic descriptor. Apollonius introduces him as simply “Canthus, the fifth man to rush off with them” (4.1467). As Hunter says, “the different style in which he is introduced here marks him as the one searcher without supernatural powers, and also the one who will not return.”<sup>47</sup> Indeed, as he is out searching for Heracles, he comes across the “mighty” (κρατερόν, 4.1496) Caphaurus, grandson of Apollo, and attempts to steal the man’s flocks in order to provide food for the hungry Argonauts. In effect, he tries to be a Heracles. The son of Zeus provided water for the Argonauts in Libya; Canthus will provide food (or so he desires). But where Heracles is successful, Canthus is not. He dies. As such, Canthus sets out to find Heracles, but instead of finding the man, he tries to find a Heracles within himself. The problem is that there is no Heracles within him. He is Canthus, the mortal son of the mortal Canethus.<sup>48</sup> His fate, therefore, is a final statement that in the world of epic, a normal human cannot survive independently. The likes of Heracles, the Boreads, Euphemus, and Lynceus can, but not Canthus.

It is also clear from this passage that Canthus approaches Caphaurus in an Iliadic—not Hellenistic—fashion. Apollonius says, “You happened upon pasturing flocks, and a shepherd was tending them, who, fighting in defense of his own sheep (ἐῶν μίλων) while you wanted to

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<sup>47</sup> Hunter (2015) 278. We learn in the Catalogue that Canthus is fated to die at Libya (1.77-85).

<sup>48</sup> While Canthus does have divine heritage (Poseidon is his great-grandfather), that is never emphasized in the *Argonautica*.

take them to your famished comrades, struck you with a stone and killed you” (4.1486-1689).<sup>49</sup> Shortly thereafter, Apollonius again stresses that Caphaurus only killed Canthus “on behalf of his own sheep” (ἐπὶ ῥήνεσσι ἑοῖσι, 4.1497). Twice, the possessive adjective is used to stress Canthus’ attempted theft, and there is no sense here that Canthus attempted to make an arrangement with the man. Rather, his first contact with the stranger was aggressive and predatory, much like Heracles when he attacked Ladon. It is no wonder that Caphaurus responded in kind. Regardless, once the Argonauts realize what has happened, they themselves kill Caphaurus in retribution (4.1498-1501). Thus, similar to the situation with Apsyrtus, Canthus has initiated something of a diplomatic disaster: the Greeks’ first interaction with humans in this foreign territory is theft, not negotiation and communication, and death is the result. The question remains whether Canthus would have lived if he had either attempted a more peaceful approach instead of immediately leaping into the fray, or if the Argonauts would have responded differently if he had returned to camp and informed everyone of what he had found rather than dealing with it on his own. The truth of the matter, however, is that Canthus did not depend upon Hellenistic collaborative or diplomatic skills. Instead, he tried to play superhero and failed.

Thus, immediately after the crew’s *aristeia* where they demonstrated the effectiveness of collective Iliadic and Odyssean values, Heracles reenters the epic to challenge—as he did in Book 1—those Hellenistic impulses. And when some of the Greeks scatter, falling prey to Heracles’ lure, the superhero figures are able to survive alone but the very human Canthus does not. It is a stark reminder to the crew that they cannot engage with epic successfully alone. They do not have the extreme spark of the Homeric heroes of old. Rather, to be successful, they must form relationships, both amongst themselves and outsiders. But it is a difficult message to learn,

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<sup>49</sup> Translation Race (2008) 448-49.

apparently. The appeal of Heracleian might and *kleos* is strong: it draws the heroes toward him, toward emulating him, time and time again, and the Argonauts have to learn the lesson that his way only brings *neikea* and strife and destruction. Pursuing such a path may have worked for the epic heroes of the past, but it does not work any longer for our human, Hellenistic-minded heroes. Their strength comes from contemporary, accessible values. Heracles' version of heroic merit is as distant and ephemeral as the moon (cf. 4.1477-82). As Clare says, "The Argonauts are free to observe and wonder at the progress of Heracles, but not to emulate him" ([2002] 104). This represents the obsolescence and figurative death of superheroes in Alexandrian epic poetry.

*Escaping Libya and Creating Alexandria (4.1537-1622 1731-64)*

To put it succinctly, Heracles' reentry into the poem throws a wrench into the Argonauts' heroic renewal. As soon as he dips a toe back into their lives, the solidarity of the group is threatened, and Canthus initiates yet another diplomatic disaster that ends both his own life and a native Libyan's. As a result, the Argonauts once more need to demonstrate the efficacy of their heroic values in order to escape Libya.

This final renewal comes in the form of a diplomatic exchange between the Greek heroes and the indigenous Triton that leads to a lasting bond between the two nations, resulting, even, in the future colonization of northern Africa by Greece. After burying Canthus and Mopsus (who dies of snakebite),<sup>50</sup> the Argonauts board the ship and sail around lake Triton, trying to find a way out. Orpheus is the one to come up with a solution, proposing that the Argonauts dedicate

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<sup>50</sup> There is one more death at Libya: Mopsus (4.1502-1536). It is not immediately clear what the effect of this death is. Is it an unexpressed punishment for killing Apollo's grandson Cephauros (n.b. how Apollonius observes that not even Apollo could save Mopsus with his healing, 4.1511-12)? Is it to further emphasize that Heracles' presence leads to danger and death? Does Apollonius give us a second death in order to complement the two back-to-back deaths of Idmon (another prophet) and Tiphys in Book 2? It is uncertain.

one of Apollo's tripods to the local deities in hopes of receiving aid (4.1547-49). Triton is the one to respond to the offering. He accepts the gracious gift and, in turn, gives the Argonauts aid and offers to Euphemus a clod of earth as a "guest gift" (4.1553).<sup>51</sup>

Both of these gifts have momentous consequence for the future of Libya. As we learn earlier in the epic, Apollo gave the Argonauts two tripods before they left Iolcus. Whoever receives one and manages to hold on to it will find their land protected from being ravaged by "invading enemies" (ἄλλοισιν ἰούσιν, 4.532-33).<sup>52</sup> The image of Triton diving into the lake with it, therefore, must have been a comforting image to Apollonius' readers. As Mori puts it, "The positive political implication of this detail is that Libya (and by extension Ptolemaic Egypt) cannot be taken by force" ([2008b] 154). She is, indeed, correct to emphasize the significance it may have held for Apollonius' audience. But more importantly, I argue, is what it suggests about the very existence of Ptolemaic Egypt, namely, that if it is true that the tripod has been there since the days of the Argonautic journey, Greece's own incursion into northern Africa cannot have constituted a takeover by "invading enemies." It implies that Greek presence in Northern Africa was destined and embraced by the land itself.

The clod of earth provides a similar propagandistic message. It will become, as we learn later in the epic, the very instrument of Greek expansion into North Africa. Inspired by a prophetic dream after the Argonauts escape Libya, Euphemus throws the clod into the sea where, as Apollonius tells us, it will eventually become the island of Calliste. Euphemus' Lemnian descendants will settle on the island far in the future, and will rename it Thera (4.1759-64). What Apollonius conspicuously leaves out of the story is that the inhabitants of Thera will eventually

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<sup>51</sup> See Hunter (1993b) 145-55 who discusses how the giving of guest-gifts and the sacrifices in this scene with Triton are "crucial markers of Greek 'civilisation' in the epic tradition."

<sup>52</sup> Translation Hunter (2015) 371.

be the ones to colonize Cyrene.<sup>53</sup> Thus, this event is a nexus point of significance for Apollonius' Alexandrian audience that has been in the works since Book 1: Greek dominance in northern Africa (and, by extension, the existence of Alexandria) only come about because—first—Jason and the Argonauts decided to have sex with the women at Lemnos, much to Heracles' vexation, and—second—because the men had the foresight to enter into a reciprocal relationship with the Libyan deity Triton.<sup>54</sup> Without these two vital moments where the Argonauts interacted with and built lasting relationships with foreign people instead of attacking them, Alexandria—the center of Greek and Egyptian fusion—may never have risen into the great city it became. As Stephens says, Triton giving the clod and Euphemus throwing it into the sea “activate the chain of events that guaranteed the subsequent Greek return to North Africa” ([2003] 180). Apollonius' readers are witnessing the *ktisis* of their very lives. And the fact that it is an indigenous god of Libya who grants the clod in the first place legitimizes Greek colonization: in effect, Africa *herself* wants the Greeks to return one day and claim her for their own. Greek dominance in Libya is both welcomed and fated from the earliest days of mythology.<sup>55</sup>

Libya, therefore, is one of the most crucial episodes of the entire *Argonautica*—if not *the* most crucial. Disruption of Jason's realism is accompanied by disruption of his Hellenistic collaborative and diplomatic values, and it is at two different “Alexandria's” that these Hellenistic tenets are restored. At the Ptolemaic, realistic Drepane, Alcinous brings about a renewal of social order, where Medea's ambiguous status is resolved, Colchian aggression is

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<sup>53</sup> Pind. *Pyth.* 4.256-62, Herodotus 4.145-61. See Mori (2008b) 111-13, Hunter (1993b) 167-68, Jackson (1987).

<sup>54</sup> For Triton as a symbol of the fusion of Greek and north African culture, see Stephens (2003) esp. 194.

<sup>55</sup> Mori (2008b) 16 also notes how the heroines' support of the Argonauts is further proof that the Greeks are welcome to this land.

ended, and—most significantly in terms of heroism—diplomatic integrity is returned. And at the Libyan “proto-Alexandria,” Hellenistic collaboration finds its most emphatic and heroic expression when the Argonauts embrace collective *biē* and *mētis*. This is the apex of Apollonius’ engagement with heroic models in the *Argonautica*, the moment where all three—the Iliadic, the Odyssean, and the Hellenistic—merge in a triumphant collective *aristeia*, celebrating what humans can do when they join together. That is, after all, what life is about: working toward collective goals. It is how government, society, and family function. And in the world of the Hellenistic period, blown open by Alexander’s extensive incursions, national and international cooperation and diplomacy were all the more possible and necessary.

### **Conclusion: Medea and Orpheus**

I started this chapter looking at Jason’s contest at the end of Book 3 and how Medea used her magic to turn—or *rewrite*—him into a Homeric superhero. Indeed, Medea acts as a kind of poet in the epic. The verb “to enchant” (θέλω) and its derivatives are commonly used to describe the effect of song or poetry in Greek literature (e.g., *Od.* 12.40, *Pind. Nem.* 4.3), and of the twenty-one uses of this root in the *Argonautica*, eight are connected with Medea: her songs have the power to enchant (the snake: 4.147, 4.150; the Kēres: 4.1665<sup>56</sup>), and her drugs hold magical charm (θελεκτήρια φάρμακα = for Jason: 3.738, 3.766, 3.820, 4.1080; for Apsyrtus: 4.442). Several scholars have examined how this connection between the verb “enchant” (θέλω) and Medea relates her power to that of a poet.<sup>57</sup> As Albis notes, such a relationship is made explicit, even, in the grove: when Medea sings “to enchant” (θέλω 4.148) the snake guarding

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<sup>56</sup> Our manuscripts disagree between μέλπε and θέλω. See Albis (1996) 87 n. 31 for why θέλω makes better sense.

<sup>57</sup> Albis (1996) 81-89, Duncan (2001) esp. 48ff, Clare (2002) 231-60. Cf. Spentzou (2002) who argues that Jason is the poet and Medea is his Muse in Book 3.

the fleece, Apollonius describes how the dragon has been “charmed by her song” (οἶμῆ θελγόμενος 4.150). The word “song” (οἶμῆ) is often used as a word for poetry in epic which thereby “underscores the poetic aspect of Medea’s magic” ([1996] 87).

To further associate Medea with poetic power, nearly every simile in Book 3—a poetic device which draws attention to authorial hand—is in some way connected with Medea. Before she is introduced, there are three similes in Book 3 which do not concern Medea (Eros’ ball, 3.141; Hephaestus’ magical spring, 3.225-27; the turmoil in Aeetes’ courtyard, 3.275-77), but after her entrance into the poem, the next seven similes in the poem directly relate to her or her experience of love (3.287, 291-95, 446, 656-63, 756-59, 876-84). No simile, therefore, is used in the first 900 lines or so of Book 3 to describe any of the Argonauts, and Carspecken has suggested that this gives the heroes “greater psychological realism” ([1952] 90). But this ends the moment Jason meets Medea. As soon as she sees him, he is compared to the Sirius star (957-59), they are both compared to trees (3.968-71), and Jason is likened to a thief when he prepares to supplicate Hecate (3.1197). Thus, it is clear that Medea is a magnet for similes. And as soon as she meets Jason, he begins receiving similes too. His realism, in effect, begins to waver in her presence.

And it gets worse. During the contest (the event which, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, disrupts Jason’s core realism), Apollonius *floods* the scene with similes. Between lines 1259-1407, there are over twenty, ten of which are packed into the last fifty lines of Book 3. Sometimes, in fact, the similes are stacked one on top of another. For example, between lines 1370-80, Apollonius inserts four separate similes: lines 1370-71 compare the sound of the earthborn men to the roaring sea, 1373 compares them to dogs, 1374-76 compare their falling to trees, and 1377-80 compare Jason to a star. With the last two, there is not even a break between

the tree simile and the star; one flows directly into the next, bridging the first simile with the second without surfacing back into reality. Such a high concentration of similes is unusual for Apollonius. In fact, as Knight notes, this passage has the most highly concentrated number of similes in the entire epic.<sup>58</sup> As a result, the crushing barrage of similes to describe Jason's contest draws blatant attention to authorial hand—or, more accurately, it draws blatant attention to *Medea's* hand. It is because of her magic, because of her ability to transform Jason into an epic hero of extraordinary competence, that he succeeds. She is the power behind those similes, the source of the fabrication. She has, in effect, *rewritten* Jason to become a Homeric hero.<sup>59</sup>

It would follow, then, that if a “poet” changed the Hellenistic Jason into a Homeric version of himself, we would need a “poet” to change him back. And that is exactly what happens. As discussed above, Jason's return to Hellenistic realism occurs at two places that reflect Alexandria: the Ptolemaic Drepane and the proto-Alexandrian Libya. Thus, in effect, Jason reclaims his Hellenistic identity by going to Apollonius' home, by approaching his creator, the very master who gave him poetic life.

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<sup>58</sup> Knight (1995) 107. Compared to previous battle scenes, there are only two similes in Heracles' encounter with the earthborn men (1.985-1011), two with the Doliones (1.1026-52), and six in the Argonauts' encounter with the Bebrycians (2.67-142). While the last comes closest, it is still a far cry from the concentration of ten similes in fifty lines we find in Book 3. See, also, Carspecken (1952) 62 who includes a chart that lists the distribution of extended similes in each of the four books: Book 1 (1 simile out of every 24 lines), Book 2 (1:23), Book 3 (1:17), and Book 4 (1:20). Book 3 has the highest ratio of similes per line, and this is made even more impressive since, as Carspecken notes (90), there are no extended similes between 3.299-655.

<sup>59</sup> Carspecken (1952) 91-95 also discusses the higher concentration of similes in this episode but comes to a different conclusion: Apollonius adds more similes when he wants to mark a greater passage of time. When the Argonauts fight the Doliones, there are very few similes because Apollonius wants the sense of time to be quick and sudden. With Jason's contest, however, Apollonius draws it out and thus reflects the day-long length of the activity. While this is an engaging argument, it does not explain why Apollonius includes *far* fewer similes in Book 3 prior to the contest and why the inclusion of similes are nearly always connected to Medea.

And at Libya, Apollonius even has a metaphorical cameo in the poem through the figure of Orpheus, a character whom scholars have identified as a reflection of Apollonius.<sup>60</sup> Like Medea, Orpheus, too, is associated with the poetic word “enchant” (θέλω): 1.27, 1.31, 1.515. In fact, his power of enchantment is strongly emphasized by Apollonius in the Catalogue when he puts both “to enchant” (θέλω, 1.27) and “enchanted” (θελόμενος, 1.31) in line-initial positions in close succession. As Clare says, Apollonius “initially, immediately and unambiguously associate[s] the theme of *thelxis* with the figure of Orpheus” ([2002] 240). Orpheus is also straightaway associated with Apollo and the Muses in the epic: the proemium begins with Apollo (1.1) just as the Catalogue starts with Orpheus (1.23), and by placing Orpheus first, he is the closest Argonaut to the Muses described in line 22 (cf. Kohnken [2003] 24).

Orpheus also expresses several of Jason’s Hellenistic qualities. He is strongly associated with the virtue *homonoia* throughout the *Argonautica*,<sup>61</sup> and, as several scholars have observed, he is a rather realistic figure: while the Catalogue describes his miraculous power to make trees move with his music (1.23-34), at no time in the epic do we see Orpheus explicitly perform an impossible deed.<sup>62</sup> When he subdues the Sirens, for example, he does not—as Medea does with Talos—employ fantastical magic to destroy them. Rather, he engages in a “battle of the bands,” drowning their dangerous songs out with his own music (4.891-920).<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Orpheus is associated with the rich experiments in genre that are typical of Hellenistic authors: in his songs, we have examples of the didactic, hymnic, epinician, and epithalamion (Bauer [2017] esp. 72-73). Orpheus, therefore, is represented as a specifically *Hellenistic* poet.

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<sup>60</sup> Bauer (2017) 68ff., Albis (1996) 29-30, Goldhill (1991a) 297-99. Cf. Busch (1993) 322-24.

<sup>61</sup> Bauer (2017), Billault (2008), Kohnken (2003), Clare (2002) 231-40, Busch (1993).

<sup>62</sup> Busch (1993) 322, Clare (2002) 234.

<sup>63</sup> For a discussion of the Sirens episode, see Albis (1996) 115ff., Goldhill (1991a) 198-300, André (2014). For Sirens in literature more generally, see the collection of essays in Vial (2014).

It is significant, therefore, that Apollonius gives Orpheus a central role—and a *voice*—at Libya. While Orpheus is mentioned on several occasions throughout the poem, usually in the form of playing the lyre for the Argonauts, he is always quoted in indirect speech except for two occasions: right after Apollo’s surprise epiphany in Book 2 where Orpheus suggests to the Argonauts how they should memorialize the sacred occasion (2.686-93), and at Libya when, after the Hesperides vanish upon the Argonauts’ arrival, Orpheus prays to the goddesses and entreats them to assist the Argonauts (4.1411-21). The significance of the first occasion is clear: Orpheus is granted a voice in the presence of the god of poetry. The significance of the second is effectively the same: at proto-Alexandrian Libya, Orpheus is in the symbolic presence of Apollonius, the very poet giving him life in this poem and thus something of a god as well.<sup>64</sup>

Orpheus also plays a vital role in the colonizing *aetia* of Libya. He is the one to speak with the Hesperides and win their trust, and, later, when the Argonauts cannot find a way out of lake Triton, he is the one to advise dedicating the tripod to the local deities of the land (4.1547-49). That decision leads to Triton’s assistance and—as discussed above—the future colonization of Cyrene via the clod of earth given to Euphemus. Orpheus is, to quote Karanika, “the bridge to the indigenous people and their gods.”<sup>65</sup> ([2010] 406). He is central in the story of Alexandria’s earliest origins.

Thus, to conclude, both the dissolution and renewal of Jason’s Hellenistic values are

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<sup>64</sup> Note also the similarities between “Apollo” and “Apollonius.” Albis (1996) 23: “By composing an epic in which he can make Apollo figure so prominently, Apollonius creates a close bond between his poetry and the poet’s identity, symbolized by his name. Apollonius thus establishes himself as heir to the semi-mythical poetic personalities of the distant past whose names indicated their association with a divine inspirer (e.g., Musaeus) or reflected their activity as poets (e.g., Stesichorus).”

<sup>65</sup> Karanika (2010) 406. See the entire article for how Orpheus is cast in the role of “oikist” in the *Argonautica*.

triggered by poet figures in the *Argonautica*. At Colchis, Medea rewrites Jason into a Homeric superhero, destabilizing his realism, and casting him into the world of simile and fiction. In turn, Jason has to go to Alexandria to renew his Hellenistic identity: first, he enters the realistic, Ptolemaic-inspired Drepane, and, second, he passes through Libya, the very future home of Apollonius. And it is here at proto-Alexandria that Orpheus—Apollonius' proxy in the text—finds his voice and helps to ensure the future colonization of Libya. In other words, it is because of the poet Orpheus' actions at Libya our poet even exists.

## Conclusion: Journeys through Fiction

In Greek literature, the act of sailing is a metaphor for poetry (e.g. Bacchylides 12.1-4, Pindar *Pyth.* 11.38-40).<sup>1</sup> This is only too true especially for the *Argonautica*. As the heroes progress from Iolcus to the Clashing Rocks, from Colchis to Drepane, and from Libya to Greece, their journey is as much a geographical experience as it is a metapoetic experiment. Apollonius does indeed—just as the first word of his epic implied—begin at the beginning (ἀρχόμενος, 1.1). Books 1 and 2 stage Homeric conceptions of heroism, opening with the Iliadic Heracles and progressing to the Odyssean figures. Together, these two books are a foil for the Hellenistic second half of the poem where old and new continually clash. When Jason's realism becomes threatened and his Hellenistic values begin to fray, he finds rejuvenation at two symbolic Alexandria's, and the climax of the heroes' journey comes when all three heroic models come together: *biē*, *mētis*, and collaboration. Superheroes may no longer exist in the third century BCE, but humans are no less capable of the heroic. The *Argonautica*, therefore, is a journey through epic itself, looking through the lens of heroic models. Apollonius establishes himself and his Alexandrian poetic sensibilities directly beside the Homeric, illustrating in vivid form how literature has evolved since the legendary blind bard first sang of the famous deeds of men born long ago. When we read the *Argonautica*, we experience in hours the transformations that took centuries to come into being.

To conclude this dissertation, I would like to return one last time to Medea's magic at the

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<sup>1</sup> See esp. Albis (1996) Ch. 3 for this metaphor both in Greek literature generally and in Apollonius more specifically.

end of Book 3. It is, as I discuss, a metaphor for the act of writing poetry: Medea *revises* Jason to become a fantastical superhero. But there is another aspect of this scene, a secondary metaphor: it dramatizes the experience of *reading* literature as well. When Jason comes to Colchis, he is, in effect, a modern man trying to connect with the epic past, and it is Medea's power that allows him to reach that past. Similarly, Apollonius and his audience are normal human beings living in a realistic world, but they—and *we*—can still connect with Homer and with the archaic age of heroes through literature. Both Medea and Apollonius, therefore, can create bridges from the real to the unreal. They demonstrate the power of poets and authors to rise above reality and enter the world of illusion and wonders, bringing their audience with them.

The power of the poet is, indeed, practically limitless as well. When Jason enters the contest, Medea does not only make him Iliadic and Odyssean; she makes him an *über*-Homeric figure. When Jason is compared to a shooting star (3.1377-80), the only parallel in Homer is a description of Athena shooting through the sky (*Il.* 4.75-78), therefore figuratively elevating Jason to the level of the divine. And when Jason throws the stone in 3.1366-67, Apollonius says that not even *four* men would be able to lift it, while in Homer, he always sets the bar at only *two* (e.g., *Il.* 5.303-34 and 20.286-87). Medea makes Jason far stronger, better, and even more superheroic than any of the warriors at Troy, so much so that he begins to appear more godlike than human.<sup>2</sup> Apollonius thereby captures the infinite possibilities that exist in literature. Boundaries literally do not exist when an author sits down to write: he or she can create or kill gods, imagine whole new worlds and universes, and give life to characters that are as spectacularly mundane or epically fantastic as the author so desires. The page is blank and open to possibility.

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<sup>2</sup> See esp. Fantuzzi-Hunter (2004) 270-82 and Knight (1995) 99-114.

The question, therefore, is not if writers, poets, and authors *can* help us experience the fantastical. The question is if they *should*. The question is if there *should* be boundaries, like the kinds that Callimachus was proposing when he called for a new poetics free from the wagon ruts of the old and overused. And the suggestion does seem to be in favor. After Medea throws Jason into a fiction even more impossible than Homer, bad things start to happen. And Medea herself is seen repeatedly using her magic—her poetic power—for scary and destructive purposes, like when she charms her brother and the mighty Talos to death. In that way, she is very much like Heracles: with the same power that she can use to save, she can destroy. As Albis says, “[Medea’s] powers reflect on the *Argonautica* itself. Since she destroys Talos with songs, the tools of the poet, Talos’ death creates a sense of uneasiness about poetry’s effect...Medea’s sometimes disturbing actions invite the audience to consider the implications of the effect that the φάρμακον they are presently experiencing, that is, the *Argonautica*, has on them” ([1996] 89). In contrast, Orpheus appears to not abuse his poetic power. He certainly has it (or so the Catalogue suggests), but he chooses, instead, to stay within the realm of the realistic.

Thus, Apollonius elevates the literary program of third-century Alexandria in two ways: (1) the culminating and most glorious episode of the poem—when the Argonauts use their collective *biē* and *mētis* to perform a remarkable event—is a celebration of the realism and realities of Alexandria in the third century BCE, and (2) the Hellenistic Orpheus is a positive figure while the excessive Medea is not. Celebrating the realistic instead of indulging in the impossible is the kind of literature a modern world needs. The *Argonautica*, therefore, is a masterful, complex, and creative performance of the author’s engagement with the past, the present, and the future.

## Appendix: Heracles Through the Ages

Heracles is a hero of the ages, a complex character whose *mythos* has been told and expanded upon for millennia. Silk appropriately calls him an “interstitial” figure<sup>1</sup>: he exists between the divides of man-god,<sup>2</sup> man-beast, civilization-nature,<sup>3</sup> savior-destroyer, sanity-insanity, and aristocrat-slave.<sup>4</sup> His origin is old, evident by the many references made to his life and labors in Homer,<sup>5</sup> and he was very popular in Greek literature, art, and cult. His fame has lingered even to modern times with a vivacity that only a handful of other Classical figures can boast of. There is something in his composition—the semi-divine, lonesome, ambiguous strongman living on the edge of civilization, fighting against hordes of terrifying beasts—that

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<sup>1</sup> Silk (1985) 6.

<sup>2</sup> Silk (1985) 6: “He is neither man nor god, so neither man nor god is ever entirely at peace with him.” N.b. also Pindar’s description of the hero as “hero god” (ἥρωος θεός, *Nem.* 3.22), and the fact that sacrifices to Heracles followed the practices of both hero cult and religious worship of gods; see e.g. Kirk (1974) 176-77.

<sup>3</sup> For man/beast and civilization/nature, see e.g. Segal (1981) 60-108 (focusing on the *Trachiniae*), and Kirk (1974) 203-12 who refers to the dichotomy as Culture (e.g. founding the Olympic games, presiding over initiation rituals) and Nature (e.g. his appearance, appetites, passions, and club). In the entirety of ch. 9, Kirk makes references to most of the dichotomies I list here. Several articles in the compilation *Le bestiaire d'Héraclès* (Bonnet, Jourdain-Annequin, Pirenne-Delforge [1998]) are relevant here as well.

<sup>4</sup> For this last, see Csapo (2005) 301-15. Heracles’ labors demonstrate qualities from several different social classes: e.g. he engages in athletic pursuits (an aristocratic leisure); he sometimes works for money, such as when he cleans the Augeian stables (a quality of the working-class); and he is subservient to Eurystheus, Omphale, and others (a slavish trait).

<sup>5</sup> See Andersen (2012) for a discussion about the possibilities for a Heracleian *mythos* existing prior to Homer. For a summary of scholarship debating the origin of the Heracleian *mythos*, see e.g. Philips (1978) [also discusses the origin of Heracles’ divinity]; Burkert (1979) 78-98; Fuqua (1980) 10-12; Padilla (1998) 1-2 and 35-38; Stafford (2012) 10-14.

attracts us to him, making us bring him back again and again to the popular stage.<sup>6</sup>

In ancient Greece, however, Heracles was not limited to the strongman-slayer archetype that is so popular today. Rather, by the time Apollonius was writing the *Argonautica* and choosing how to depict the legendary Heracles in his poem, Heracles had, in fact, become a remarkably polymorphous figure. At one end of the extreme, Heracles could appear as the brute: mighty, violent, dangerous, and lawless. At the other end, he could be far more evolved: pensive, philosophical, intellectual, and unfailingly just. Galinsky tracks the transformations undergone by the hero in his influential text *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in the Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century*, and discusses how the hero's adaptability led him to assume a "composite" form.<sup>7</sup> Authors could stretch him into whatever shape best suited their individual purposes, and, on the whole, such layered contortions did not bother the Greeks. To quote Flacelière, "Dans toute la mythologie grecque, il n'est pas de légende plus complexe que celle d'Héraclès."<sup>8</sup> Fuqua expands on the problem of Heracles' complex construction by saying,

the basic problem in attempting to form an assessment of Heracles resides not in an absence of data but in classifying, correlating, and interpreting the vast bulk of evidence that we do possess. The problem is further complicated by the fact that not only did the figure of Heracles develop in its own right but it also served as a *locus* about which there were numerous accretions in every period. He was, in short, one of the most flexible figures in Greek mythology, and the Greeks were never hesitant about employing his paradigm in a broad variety of ways.<sup>9</sup>

Heracles was the plaything of Greek writers. To put it one way, they had *permission* to re-shape

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<sup>6</sup> In 2014 alone, three movies came out with Hercules as its protagonist: *The Legend of Hercules* (directed by Renny Harlin and starring Kellan Lutz), *Hercules* (directed by Brett Ratner, starring Dwayne Johnson), and *Hercules Reborn* (directed by Nick Lyon, starring John Morrison).

<sup>7</sup> See Galinsky (1972) esp. 1-8 (the Introduction).

<sup>8</sup> Flacelière and Devambez (1966) 7.

<sup>9</sup> Fuqua (1980) 9-10.

and re-present him in a variety of ways, even more so than for other mythological figures, resulting in an end product that was, indeed, “composite” or, to borrow Liapis’ adjective, “kaleidoscopic.”<sup>10</sup>

Understanding the complexity and variability of this hero’s *mythos* is vital when studying the Heracles of the *Argonautica*, if only because Apollonius gives us a version of the hero that is remarkably un-complex and unevolved. There were any number of guises that had accumulated in the character’s inventory by the time Apollonius picked him up, and of all those options, Apollonius chose a rather overtly archaic representation. To illustrate this, I will now summarize the most notable shifts and transformations in the hero’s *mythos* from Homer to Apollonius. There will be five sections: (1) Heracles in pre-Hellenistic epic, (2) Heracles outside of epic from archaic to Classical times, (3) Heracles in the Hellenistic period, (4) Heracles in Apollonius, and (5) Heracles and Achilles. This is not a comprehensive survey, nor do I offer systematic interpretative or analytical comments throughout. Other scholars, such as Galinsky, Padilla, and Stanford, have already completed thorough studies of the character.<sup>11</sup> My intention here is to situate Apollonius’ Heracles in the Greek literary corpus to better understand what canonical baggage his audience would have had in their heads as they read the *Argonautica*. For how

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<sup>10</sup> Liapis (2006) 48.

<sup>11</sup> Galinsky (1972) is the early, seminal voice on this subject. Padilla (1998) offers a brief though excellent and somewhat more recent summary both of the ancient sources for Heracles, and of modern interpretations and analyses of the hero. For the latter, he is far more helpful than Galinsky (1972). Even more recent is Stafford’s *Herakles* (2012), published as part of Routledge’s *Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World* series. Her synopsis of the hero’s life and the themes comprising his *mythos* is an invaluable, in-depth resource. Other helpful summaries include esp. Fowler (2013) 260-333, Gantz (1993) 374-466, Fuqua (1980) 8-28. In his discussion on Heracles’ apotheosis, Holt (1992) includes a succinct summary of texts on the hero. For artistic representations, see esp. Uhlenbrock (1986) [a book published alongside an exhibition on Heracles at the Edith C. Blum Art Institute]. For his cult and worship, see e.g. Padilla (1998) 3, 40-41 and Stafford (2012) 171-97. For his labors, see Brommer (1986). For a relatively recent collection of articles on various facets of Heracles, see Rawlings and Bowden (2005).

colorful Heracles had become, Apollonius' version of this most famous Greek hero is remarkably simple.

### **Heracles: Pre-Hellenistic Epic/Hexameter**

As I discuss in this dissertation, Apollonius uses the character of Heracles to communicate ideas about heroic behavior in the epic genre. Accordingly, it is especially important to understand, to the best of our ability, how epic treated Heracles prior to the Hellenistic period. As far as we can tell, Heracles was a figure commonly seen in the Greek epic tradition. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle lambasts the technique of poets who write episodic epics on Heracles (i.e. *Heracleid's* or *Heraclea's*), suggesting that such poems about Heracles' life and labors were widespread.<sup>12</sup> The frequency of Homer's references to the hero and his life also alludes to a rich mythology that existed prior to the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, our extant sources only give us a glimpse into this tradition. They are few and fragmented, but there is enough present, especially in the archaic period, to paint a picture of a hero evolving from brute strength and violence to championing the cause of justice and order.

#### *Homer*

The Heracles of the *Iliad* is violent and bold, a hero who, by the time of the Trojan War, already enjoys legendary status as a superhuman warrior. He is mentioned thirteen separate times in the epic. He is father to the mighty Greek warrior Tlepolemus (2.257-60, 5.627-51), and grandfather to Pheidippus and Antiphus (2.679), placing Heracles in the mythic past but not by

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<sup>12</sup> Aristotle *Poet.* 1451a. See Holt (1992) 44-45 who discusses, in light of this passage in the *Poetics*, the evidence for and against the existence of a large number of *Heracleid's* in the literary corpus.

<sup>13</sup> Huxley (1969) 99: "The elaborate character of the Herakles story in Homer testifies to the high antiquity of the epics about the son of Alkmene."

more than a generation or two.<sup>14</sup> Retrieving Cerberus from the Underworld is the only labor explicitly referenced (8.366-69), but his wearisome servitude to Eurystheus is mentioned several times (8.362-65, 15.638-40, 19.95-133), as is Athena’s aid (8.362-69, 20.144-48), and Hera’s hatred and meddlesome interference in his life (14.249-61, 15.24-33, 18.119, 19.95-138). It is clear, therefore, that the Heracleian *mythos* of the labors was already established well before the composition of the *Iliad*.

The remaining passages referring to the hero emphasize his great potential for destruction: this Heracles is a killer and aggressor, throwing his might indiscriminately against beast, god, and man. Homer briefly touches upon Heracles’ fight with the sea monster that Poseidon sent against Laomedon (20.144-48), reminding us both of Troy’s first sack and of Heracles’ prodigious skill in slaying fearsome beasts. In greater detail, the goddess Dione attempts to soothe Aphrodite’s agony after Diomedes hurts her by referring to the assaults Heracles made on Hera and Hades in the past (5.392-404). Dione wraps up her summary of the man with these strong descriptors: “cruel, a perpetrator of violent deeds, who has no scruples over performing evil deeds and who has distressed the gods who live on Olympus with his arrows” (σχέτλιος, ὀβριμοεργός, ὅς οὐκ ὄθετ' αἴσυλα ῥέζων, / ὅς τόξοισιν ἔκηδε θεούς, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσι, 403-404).<sup>15</sup> Heracles has both the prowess and—more importantly—the sheer audacity to threaten the almighty gods. He is even more deadly around humans: he killed all the “best men” (ἄριστοι) of Nestor’s city Pylus (11.690-93), and he is the destroyer of “many cities of Zeus-nourished warriors” (ἄστεα πολλὰ διοτρεφῶν αἰζηῶν, 2.660). His body count, these

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<sup>14</sup> See Barker and Christensen (2014) for an extended discussion about how the *Iliad* repeatedly and explicitly sets up Heracles as a figure from a very different heroic age, contrasting the more human world the Greeks and Trojans currently inhabit in the epic.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Homeric Hymn* 15 to Heracles where he is said to “complete many reckless/wicked deeds” (πολλὰ μὲν αὐτὸς ἔρεξεν ἀτάσθαλα, 6).

passages suggest, is innumerable. He also, importantly, invaded Troy prior to the events in the *Iliad*, and, unlike Agamemnon with his expedition of ships numbering in excess of a thousand, Heracles only needed six supporting ships to sack the city (5.638-51; also, 14.249-51). It is no wonder, then, that Homer frequently uses the periphrasis βίη Ἡρακληεΐη to refer to the hero (2.657, 2.666, 5.638, 11.690, 15.640, 19.98; cf. 18.117):<sup>16</sup> he is the embodiment of might, a typical Strongman archetype.

Homer gives us a similar—albeit more vivid and fiercer—portrait of Heracles in the *Odyssey*. The hero acts impetuously and, even, impiously: he is one of the “men of former days” (ἀνδράσι προτέροισιν, 8.223) who dares compete with the gods in his skill with the bow (8.223-25), and he violated the law of *xenia* when he killed his guest Iphitus with no regard for the “wrath” (ὄργην) of the gods (21.24-30).<sup>17</sup> In a poem where *xenia* is so important and pervasive, this violation is especially egregious and cannot escape association with the likes of Polyphemus (see, e.g., 9.273-80). Unlike the *Iliad* where only Heracles’ memory is evoked, we also see the hero in person—or, at least, an εἶδωλον (11.602) of him—when Odysseus goes to the Underworld. Referred to with the familiar periphrasis βίη Ἡρακληεΐη (11.601) and ominously

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<sup>16</sup> See Nagy (1999) 318 for a discussion of the common phrase βίη Ἡρακληεΐη and how the name indicates that “the Heracles figure and βίη are traditionally linked on the level of theme.” Also see Schein (2016) who notes that periphrases for names in Homer based on the word *strength* “ten[d] to be used mainly in connection with heroes of an earlier mythological generation, such as Herakles, Eteokles, and Iphikles” (44). The use of this periphrasis can, at times, portray “Herakles as a cruder kind of hero from an earlier age” in contrast to, for example, Odysseus (45).

<sup>17</sup> A different version of Heracles killing Iphitus is given in Lichas’ speech in Soph. *Trach.* (262-85). There, Zeus is said to excuse the murder itself due to the ὕβρις of Eurytus and his sons, but to be angry at his son for carrying out the deed “by stealth” (δόλω, 277). Heracles is punished by being sold to Omphale. We learn later in the play that Lichas told many lies in his speech, however, so it is unclear if this is a version of the myth present in the fifth century or if it is a fabrication invented by Sophocles intended to make Heracles look better in the matter of Iphitus’ death. For the different versions describing Heracles’ involvement with Eurytus, Iphitus, and Iole, see Gantz (1993) 434-39.

likened to “black night” (ἐρεμνῆ νυκτί, 11.606), Heracles appears with awesome force. He frightens the other ghosts (11.605-606) as he looks around with a terrible glare (δεινὸν παπταίνων, 11.608) and with an arrow notched, ready to shoot. Just as terrifying (σμερδαλέος, 11.609) is his belt which is decorated with wild animals along with “fights and battles and murders and slaughters” (ὕσμῖναί τε μάχαι τε φόνοι τ’ ἀνδροκτασίαι τε, 11.612). None of the civilizing aspects we see on Achilles’ shield are present here to balance the presentation; rather, Heracles’ belt communicates only ferocity and carnage.<sup>18</sup> In his speech to Odysseus, he laments his former servitude to Eurystheus and the “hard labors” (χαλεπούς ἀέθλους, 11.622) he had to undertake, singling out Cerberus and mentioning that Athena and Hermes assisted him with that task (11.617-26; cf. *Iliad* 8.362-69). In sum, the Heracles of the *Odyssey* is raw, untamed, and, in a sense, primeval: he freely disregards *themis*; he is associated with beasts and violence; and he is unable to set aside his weapons or cease searching for threats even in death. He is, effectively, stock of a pre-civilized world.

*(Pseudo-)Hesiod*

We begin to see a slight shift in the portraiture of Heracles starting with Hesiod where he appears in the *Theogony* as a civilizing agent. His name is still directly linked with “strength” (βίη Ἡρακληεΐη: 289, 315, 943, 982; ἴς βίης Ἡρακληεΐης: 332; ἴς Ἡρακλῆος: 951), and his might is still a noted attribute (e.g. ἄλκιμος, 526, 950), but instead of fighting against gods and murdering guest-friends, he is helping to cleanse the world of the monsters threatening Zeus’ new order. He disposes of the three-headed Geryon (287-94, 979-83), the two-headed dog Orthus (293), the Lernaean hydra (313-18), and the murderous Nemean lion who was a “bane for

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<sup>18</sup> Liapis (2006) 56: “Heracles ‘himself’ (αὐτός) may well be in Olympus partaking of the gods’ civilized feasts, but his ‘likeness’ (εἶδωλον) remains eternally associated with images of utmost savagery.”

humans” (πῆμ’ ἀνθρώποις, 326-32). Zeus even allows Heracles to kill the eagle tormenting Prometheus so that his son might win even greater κλέος in the world (526-34). And at the completion of all these tasks, Heracles wins immortality: “Having accomplished his groan-inducing tasks (τελέσας στονόεντας ἀέθλους), the strong son of beautiful-ankled Alcmene, the strength of Heracles (ἰς Ἡρακλῆος), made Hebe, the daughter of great Zeus and golden-sandalled Hera, his venerable wife on snowy Olympus; happily, Heracles, having accomplished a great work (μέγα ἔργον ἀνύσσας), dwells with the gods” (950-55). Hesiod makes it doubly clear here that Heracles only received this blessed retirement “after” or “because” (if one translates the participles τελέσας and ἀνύσσας as causal) he has completed all his labors to make earth a safer, more orderly world. It is his reward for services rendered.<sup>19</sup>

An even more explicit statement of Heracles’ divine, predestined role as Protector appears in the *Catalogue of Women*.<sup>20</sup> In fragment 195 MW, which introduces Alcmene and describes the events surrounding Heracles’ birth, Zeus “weaves a plan in his mind (μητὴν ὕφαινε μετὰ φρεσίν) to give birth to a protector from ruin (ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα) for both gods and bread-eating men” (28-29).<sup>21</sup> The “all-wise” (μητίετα, 33) Zeus hurries down from Olympus, “brooding over the stratagem in his mind” (δόλον φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεύων, 30), and makes his way to Mount Phicion in Thebes where he sits and “plans wondrous deeds in his mind” (φρεσὶ μήδετο θέσκελα ἔργα, 34) before seducing Alcmene. While there is mention of Zeus’ desire for sex (31, 36), the

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Pind. Nem. 1.62-72 where Heracles receives immortality and lives forever more in peace, “receiving remarkable recompense for his great labors” (καμάτων μεγάλων...ποινὰν λαχόντ’ ἐξάϊρετον).

<sup>20</sup> The date and authorship of the *Catalogue of Women* (and, indeed, Hesiod in general) are debated by scholars. For these issues, see e.g. three helpful (at times opposing) articles in Andersen and Haug’s collection *Relative Chronology in Early Greek Epic Poetry*: Janko (2012), Rutherford (2012), and West (2012). See, also, Haubold (2005) for a helpful summary and compelling discussion of Heracles’ role in the *Catalogue*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ibycus, PMG 17, where Heracles is said to be the πρόμαχον, “champion,” of Zeus.

predominant image here is of a man letting his mind, not his lust, guide his actions. Note, especially, the many words denoting φρήν (“mind, the seat of thought”) and μῆτις (“cunning, wisdom”). Heracles’ birth was a carefully premeditated affair, not one of Zeus’ impulsive, whirlwind rapes. The hero was *foreordained* to be the world’s champion against evil, the kind of hero who can dispose of such monsters as the “overweening” (ὑπερφιάλους) Giants in Phlegra (43a MW, ln. 65).<sup>22</sup>

Yet, as is true for many of literature’s and cinema’s civilizing archetypes, the very violence which Heracles must possess to combat disorder and crime in the world becomes, itself, a hazard to society. Elsewhere in the *Catalogue*, Heracles destroys just as much as—or more than—he saves, lending a murky undercurrent to the hero’s activities that harmonizes with the Homeric Heracles.<sup>23</sup> He marches against Troy to acquire the horses of Laomedon and slaughters the Dardanians (165 MW, ll. 3-17). He sacks the “lovely city” (ἰμερόεντα πόλιν) of Eurypylus “from a minor beginning/cause” (ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὀλίγης) and “ravages” (κε[ρ]αῖξε) their villages (43a MW, ll. 55-67). It is unclear exactly to what ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὀλίγης refers, but the implication is that Heracles responded to a trivial event with excessive force, and the added detail that the city he destroyed was “lovely, charming” further suggests Heracles’ role as an aggressor against an innocuous people.<sup>24</sup> At Pylus, he kills all twelve of Neleus’ sons except for Nestor who was absent, and destroys the city (fragments 33-35 MW; cf. *Iliad* 11.690-93). And, finally, fragment 26 MW is very broken up, but it appears to reference the sack of Oichalia (ll. 32-33). Heracles—

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<sup>22</sup> In some versions of this story, Zeus disguises himself as Amphitryon; see. e.g. Pindar *Nem.* 10.13-18. Gantz (1993) 375 suggests that the *dolos* in line 30 is, in fact, Zeus tricking Alcmena by appearing as her husband.

<sup>23</sup> See Haubold (2005) esp. 89-92.

<sup>24</sup> See Haubold (2005) 89-90. Cf. Soph. *Trach.* 361 (ἔγκλημα μικρὸν αἰτίαν θ').

or βίη Ἡρακληεΐη<sup>25</sup>—is, first and foremost, a destroyer. Sometimes he disposes of evil; other times, of good.

Regardless of whether Heracles is more a force for evil or for good, he is frequently associated with the adjective ἄριστος in the *Catalogue*, much like Achilles and Odysseus in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.<sup>26</sup> The first part of 25 MW is very fragmentary, but it appears to say that Meleager is by far the “best” at fighting with the spear “except for Heracles” (πλή<v> γ’ Ἡρακλῆ[ος, ll. 1-3).<sup>27</sup> At Pylos, Athena “stopped [Periclymenus] from being the best” ([πα]ῦσεν ἄριστεύοντα) by helping Heracles to kill him (33a MW, ll. 23-36). In the narration of Heracles’ birth, Heracles is said to be “a greater (ἄμείνονα) man by far” than his step-brother Iphicles (195 MW, ln. 51), and fragments 248-49 MW give us two quotes from a speech given by Alcmene where she twice calls her son “the most oppressed by toils and the best” (πονηρότατον καὶ ἄριστον) of Zeus’ children. Elsewhere in our fragments, the adjective is only used for living beings four other times, two of whom—Amphitryon and the horses of Laomedon—are indirectly linked to Heracles.<sup>28</sup> As such, while no firm conclusions can be made with a text as fragmentary as the *Catalogue*, it does appear that Heracles, more than any other hero, has won the right to be associated with this exclusive adjective. This fact, along with Heracles’ seemingly pervasive presence in the *Catalogue*, has led Haubold to assert that “Heracles is the single most prominent

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<sup>25</sup> 25 MW line 18; 33a MW lines 23, 25, 30; 165 MW line 9.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 1 for ἄριστος in Homer.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Odyssey* 8.219-25 where Odysseus says that he is “by far more excellent” (πολὺ προφερέστερον) than all mortals at archery, excepting Philoctetes and “men of former days” like Heracles and Eurytus.

<sup>28</sup> Amphitryon (ἀνέρι πολλὸν ἀρίστω / Θήβῃ ἐν ἑπταπύλῳ, 195 MW 48-49), the horses of Laomedon (ἄριστοι, 165 MW line 11), Podarces and Protesilaus, suitors of Helen (ἔξοχ’ ἄριστοι, 199 MW line 4), and the “best women” which is the stated topic of the *Catalogue* in the invocation (ἄρισταί, 1 MW line 3).

man in this text about women.”<sup>29</sup> It is unfortunate we do not have more of the poem to see how else the hero is represented.<sup>30</sup>

The (pseudo-)Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles* is something of an amalgamation of all the versions of Heracles mentioned thus far, a hero noted for his martial excellence but also for his civilizing force.<sup>31</sup> The description of Heracles’ shield features, among other things, the same kind of bestial and violent images as Heracles’ belt in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*: there is a scene of boars and lions fighting each other (168-177; cf. *Od.* 11.611-612), and a large portion of the ekphrasis with its preponderance of savagery and carnage can be said to be an elaboration of Homer’s ὑσμῖναί τε μάχαι τε φόνοι τ’ ἀνδροκτασῖαι τε (*Od.* 11.612).<sup>32</sup> Outside of the ekphrasis, Heracles is described as a bold, fearless warrior (see, e.g., 95-100). He is “terrible” (δεινός, 52, 129), the “best of men by far” (μέγα φέρτατε λαῶν, 330), “experienced in dealing suffering and hardship” (τε πόνου καὶ οὐζύου ἰδριές, 351), and he is identified by his strength several times (βίη Ἡρακληείη: 52, 69, 115, 349, 416, 452). The frame-story of Heracles’ fight with Cycnus and his father Ares showcases the hero’s martial prowess: he kills the mighty Cycnus (368-23) and even

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<sup>29</sup> Haubold (2005) 87. Haubold, however, only notes fragment 25 MW, lines 1-3, in his discussion about Heracles and ἄριστος.

<sup>30</sup> I will not go into detail regarding the other fragments in the *Catalogue* that concern Heracles, but a brief summation of the most notable topics is as follows: Heracles’ death (25 MW, ll. 17-33), his apotheosis (229 MW, ll. 6-13), his blessing Telamon to be invulnerable (250 MW), the Wedding of Ceyx (263-68 MW), and a very fragmentary reference to the labors (190 MW, ll. 11-12). For the authorship of the Wedding of Ceyx, the presence of an independent version, and what details it might have included on Heracles, including the hero’s gluttony, see Merkelbach and West (1965), Huxley (1969) 106.

<sup>31</sup> While determining the text’s authorship has been a source of disagreement since antiquity (a problem compounded by the fact that its first fifty-six lines are copied from the *Catalogue*, frag. 195 MW), the date of its composition is not likely to be later than the sixth century. See e.g. Janko (1986) and n.22.

<sup>32</sup> The *Shield* also draws heavily from the description of Achilles’ shield in Book 18 of the *Iliad*, using the same images of both violence (e.g. 156-59 = *Iliad* 18.535-58) and prosperity/peace (e.g. 270-85 = *Iliad* 18.491-96). See Martin (2005) for a compelling defense of the *Shield*’s elaborate, overworked descriptions and its borrowing of other sources like Homer.

wounds Ares who is hurried off the field to Olympus by Φόβος and Δεῖμος (424-66). In fact, we learn that this is not even the first time Heracles has fought with Ares: he bested the god previously at Pylos, too (331-67).<sup>33</sup> So, again, we have a Heracles who has no scruples over fighting with the gods, and who is singled out for his spectacular strength and combat. He is so great he can even beat the god of war.

Yet we are also reminded of Heracles' role as Zeus' champion against evil. As mentioned previously, the first fifty-six lines of the *Shield* are taken from the *Catalogue*'s description of Heracles' birth where Zeus plans the birth of Heracles in order to provide the world a "protector from ruin" (ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα, 195 MW, line 29). And that is, in fact, the role Heracles is fulfilling in his victory over Cycnus. We learn from a scholiast on Pindar that Stesichorus wrote a poem called the "Cycnus" which narrates how the son of Ares beheaded passers-by (τοὺς παριόντας ξένου)<sup>34</sup> and—in truly gruesome, creepy fashion—used their skulls to build a temple to Φόβος (Schol. A Pind. *Ol.* 10.19).<sup>35</sup> While such a detail is not included in the *Shield*, it does give Heracles cause for his slaying Cycnus. The *Shield* also gives reason to excuse Heracles' assault on Ares. After Cycnus' death, Ares, infuriated, rushes Heracles but is warned by Athena to stand down since it is not right (cf. θέμις, 447) for the mortal to die. Ares, however, disregards

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<sup>33</sup> In the *Iliad*, Heracles' wounding of Hades also occurs at Pylos (5.392-404). It is unclear if the *Shield* is giving an alternate version of the myth or, as Janko (1986) 49 suggests, if this is an "invention by the poet to suit the context." See, also, Clement *Protrepticus* 2.36.2 and Arnobius *Adv. nationes* 4.25 who state that Heracles shot Hades and Hera at Pylos (without mention of Ares) in Panyassis' *Heraclea*. Cf. Pind. *Olymp.* 9.28-35 where Heracles fights Poseidon, Apollo, and Hades at Pylos. Gantz (1993) esp. 454-56 for a discussion of the different possibilities.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Eur. *Her.* 389-93 where Cycnus is called a "guest-murderer" (ξεινοδαΐκταν) and the killing of him is referred to as one of the labors.

<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, the scholiast goes on to say that Heracles was routed the first time he attacked Cycnus because Ares was helping his son, and it was not until Cycnus was alone that he was able to kill him. Cf. Pindar *Olymp.* 10.15-16 which briefly notes, as well, that Heracles had difficulties beating Cycnus. See Janko (1986) 48-59 who surveys the extant versions of this story in literature and art. Also Gantz (1993) 421-23.

Athena's warning and attacks, "eagerly wishing to kill" (κακτάμενοι μεμαώς, 453). The one more at fault, therefore, would be Ares, the *themis*-breaker, not Heracles who is defending himself. The Heracles in the *Shield*, therefore, is a rough but noble figure, a man bathed in righteous blood.<sup>36</sup>

*Creophylus, Pisander, Panyassis*

There are only three other pre-Hellenistic epics dealing with Heracles that we know of, and none have survived well:

1) *The Capture of Oichalia*, traditionally ascribed to Creophylus or Homer,<sup>37</sup> deals with Heracles' desire for and claim to Iole and his subsequent conquest of the eponymous city, but we have only one line extant and little information about the specifics of the plot.<sup>38</sup>

2) Pisander of Rhodes was, ostensibly, the first poet to write a full account of Heracles' deeds in the two-book *Heraclea* (see Theocritus *Epigram* 22; T2), and the first to give Heracles the lion skin to wear and a club to hold as his iconic image (see Strabo 15.1.8-9; F1).<sup>39</sup> Our fragments explicitly mention several of the canonical labors (Nemean lion, Lernaean hydra, Cerynian hind, and the Stymphalian birds), including others of Heracles' activities such as his

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<sup>36</sup> There is one more text by (pseudo-)Hesiod, the *Aigimios*, which includes Heracles, but its exact contents are unsure, and the fragments that remain (Davies [1988] pp. 210-12) mostly deal with a wide range of unrelated events. See e.g. Huxley (1969) 107-10, Most (2018) lix.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Strabo 14.1.18.

<sup>38</sup> Fragments reserved in Davies (1988) pp. 149-53. For a discussion of the poem and what might have been included, see e.g. Huxley (1969) 105-106, Davies (1991) xxii-xxvii, and Holt (1992) 42-44. Also Padilla (1998) 7 who proposes that Creophylus may have "develop[ed] the theme that Herakles' heroism is motivated by sexual motivation" over Iole.

<sup>39</sup> Elsewhere we are told that it was Stesichorus who first gave Heracles his lionskin, club, and bow; see Athen. 12.512f-513a. Clement of Alexandria also claims that Pisander stole his material from another Rhodian poet named Peisinous (*Strom.* 6.2.25), but we know very little about this other figure and cannot determine its veracity.

campaign against Troy (see Ath. 783c; F8), but there is little of real substance to be gleaned.<sup>40</sup> Pausanias claims that the Hydra originally had only one head but that Pisander gave her many heads “so that she might seem more wild and scarier and his poem could be more notable” (ἵνα τὸ θηρίον τε δοκοίη φοβερώτερον καὶ αὐτῷ γίνηται ἡ ποίησις ἀξιόχρεως μᾶλλον, 2.37.4; F3). If this is true,<sup>41</sup> it is possible that Pisander’s Heracles was also exaggerated, that is, the hero was made even more powerful and impressive in order to combat these more terrifying monsters, a magnification that other authors, such as Herodotus and Hekataios, would reverse in their attempts to make Heracles seem more human and believable.<sup>42</sup> But as our fragments currently stand, no firm statement can be made to this effect.

3) Our third and final epic is the *Heraclea* of Panyassis, composed in the first half of the fifth century BCE and consisting of 14 books equaling 9000 verses (*Suda* π 248).<sup>43</sup> The fragments are fullest for this text (though still hopelessly meager) and narrate a number of stories about Heracles’ life and labors. We also get several hints of Heracles’ fierce personality in the fragments. We learn that a crab—later immortalized as the constellation Cancer—attacked Heracles as he was killing the Lernaean hydra, and he, in anger (θυμωθεὶς), crushed it underfoot (Pseudo-Eratosthenes, *Catasterisms* 11; F3). Similar violence is brought up elsewhere when Heracles kills the serpent guarding the golden apples with his club (e.g. Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.6.1,

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<sup>40</sup> Fragments in Davies (1988) pp. 129-35. For more on Pisander, see e.g. Huxley (1969) 100-105, Padilla (1998) 7.

<sup>41</sup> See Gantz (1993) 384-86 for artistic and literary depictions of the Lernaian Hydra having multiple heads, some of which pre-date Pisander.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. Herodotus 2.45 where he questions the reliability of a story where Heracles defeated a large group of warriors by himself, and Hekataios fr. 27aF who claims that Cerberus was a snake nicknamed the “Hound of Hades,” not the mythical three-headed dog himself; Fowler (2013) 305-306. Rationalizing Heracles’ accomplishments was part of these and author authors’ agenda to rationalize mythology as a whole. Regarding this last example, Holt (1992) 54 says, “The point was not to belittle Herakles’ exploits...but to keep them on a credible human scale.”

<sup>43</sup> For the fragments, see Davies (1988) pp. 113-29.

F10c; Avienius *Phaen.* 172-87, F10e), and there are brief references to Heracles' attack on Hades and Hera (Clement *Protrepticus* 2.36.2, F6a; Arnobius *Adv. nationes* 4.25, F6c). It is also likely that Panyassis included other stories of Heracles' law-breaking, such as when he unjustly killed Iphitus then plundered Apollo's temple when the priestess would not cleanse him from the murder.<sup>44</sup> There are several fragments about drinking (F12-14) and exercising moderation in respect to alcohol (F13), but scholars are divided about their context: some have proposed that Heracles gets super drunk, to the disapproval of Eurytus,<sup>45</sup> while others argue that he, not Eurytus, is the one who is promoting moderation.<sup>46</sup> In sum, while it is impossible to paint a full picture of Panyassis' Heracles, it does seem like this version is noted for his violence and, perhaps, for drunken behavior as well.<sup>47</sup>

And that is, for the most part, it. In none of these epics do we get a full picture of how Heracles was presented and certainly not at the level of Homer or Hesiod. We know only of a character noted for his strength, force, violence, and labors. Whatever other attributes were developed is uncertain.

To sum up Heracles' presence in the epic tradition, he is a character best interpreted in the vein of the monster-slayer archetype, especially in the archaic period with Homer and Hesiod.<sup>48</sup> He kills and destroys, both securing the world from threats and, at times, himself becoming the threat. This is Heracles in his earliest, simplest, and—for lack of a better word—*purest* form: the strongman and slayer.

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<sup>44</sup> Huxley (1969) 180.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Huxley (1969) 178-79.

<sup>46</sup> E.g. West (2003) 297 n. 21.

<sup>47</sup> For more on Panyassis, see e.g. Huxley (1969) 177-88. Holt (1992) 45-46 suggests that there may have been several comic themes/tones included in the epic as well.

<sup>48</sup> For an apt summary of Heracles as a “monster-slayer” archetype, see Stafford (2012) 23-79.

## Heracles: Between Epic and the Hellenistic Period

After Hesiod, and especially in the Classical period, Heracles' character underwent many transformations in a variety of genres. While still noted for strength, he gained other attributes as well: gluttony, morality, philosophy, and a keen sense of justness and righteousness, to name the most predominate. The focus, to quote Stafford, was “not on Herakles' famous monster-slaying exploits but rather on internal qualities, of the intellect, appetites and emotions.”<sup>49</sup> Authors turned inward, looking beyond the strongman archetype to expand upon the hero's personality and human qualities.

Considering the significant number of non-epic sources that discuss Heracles from the archaic period to the classical, I will only be discussing a fraction of what is available.<sup>50</sup> I will also deal with these texts thematically instead of dividing them by genre or chronology.

### *Strength, Gluttony, and Romance*

The archaic depiction of Heracles as a strong, violent, and dangerous hero who straddles the divide between savior and destroyer continues through this period. He is the “best” (ἄριστος) of mortals,<sup>51</sup> a “destroyer of gates” (ἐρειψιπύλας),<sup>52</sup> the “champion” (πρόμαχος, ἄθλητος) and “benefactor” (εὐεργέτης) of gods and men.<sup>53</sup> His superhuman might and violence are evident even from a very young age when he famously strangles the snakes sent by Hera as a baby<sup>54</sup> and

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<sup>49</sup> Stafford (2012) 104. See pp. 104-36 (ch. 4) more generally. Also Papadopoulou (2005) 5-7 for the “gradual ‘internalization’” of Heracles in representations.

<sup>50</sup> For the full spectrum of texts mentioning Heracles, see e.g. Des Essarts (1871). Also n. 15.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. *Homeric Hymn* 15 1-2, Arist. *Clouds* 1047-50, Soph. *Trach.* 177 and 811, Eur. *Alc.* 559-60, Eur. *Her.* 150 and 183 and 208. Cf. ἀριστομάχου, Pind. *Pyth.* 10.1-3; and ἀριστεύων, Soph. *Trach.* 488-89.

<sup>52</sup> Bacch. *Ode* 5.56.

<sup>53</sup> Πρόμαχος: Ibycus frag. 17 (Page); ἄθλητος: Isocrates *Helen* 23; εὐεργέτης: Isocrates 5.76 (cf. Isocrates *Panegyricus* 56, εὐεργέτησεν), Eur. *Her.* 1252.

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Pind. *Nem.* 1.33-59 (our first extant source for this story, though very unlikely to be a Pindaric innovation; Gantz [1993] 377). Pherekydes (3F69) tells a version where it is

kills his lyre teacher Linos,<sup>55</sup> and he grows up to have “all-daring strength” (πάντολμον σθένος)<sup>56</sup> and “invincible hands” (χεῖρας ἀμάχους) as an adult.<sup>57</sup> The story of how he defeated the Nemean lion using his bare hands is especially popular in literature and art. It is typically identified as one of his earliest labors (if not *the* earliest),<sup>58</sup> and is iconic for several reasons: as paradigm for his impressive, raw might and civilizing mission; as aetiology for Heracles’ most memorable attribute of wearing a lion’s skin; and as demonstration of his own semi-bestial nature.<sup>59</sup>

Sometimes, as in some of our epic sources, the innocent come afoul of this superhuman might: in the *Trachiniae*, for example, after the robe starts to burn him, Heracles attacks Lichas—“who was in no way guilty of [Heracles’] misfortune” (τὸν οὐδὲν αἴτιον τοῦ σοῦ κακοῦ, 773)—by grabbing the man by the ankle, throwing him at a rock in the sea, and bashing the man’s brains out (772-82). Moments of shocking violence such as this are so prevalent in Heracles’ biography, in fact, that Aeneas Tacticus uses the hero’s name as a code word for βίασμός, noting that it is important to choose a watchword that is “both easy to remember and as related as possible to the intended actions” (εὐμνημόνευτά τε καὶ ὡς μάλιστα ἀδελφὰ ταῖς μελλούσαις πράξεσι; 14.14-15). Violence is Heracles’ signature, and we are repeatedly reminded by our authors of the inherent conflict within Heracles’ character: his great ability which allows him to exact great violence is

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Amphitryon, not Hera, who sends the snakes because he wants to find out which of the twins is his child.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. Diodorus 3.67.2, Apollodorus 2.4.9.

<sup>56</sup> Pindar Frag. 29 ln. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Pindar *Isth.* 6.60.

<sup>58</sup> Theocritus’ *Idyll* 25 dramatizes how the labor took place at such an early period in Heracles’ life that the Greeks who hear about the event do not even know who Heracles is. See below for more discussion on this poem. See esp. Gantz (1993) 383-84 for a discussion of the different literary versions of this story.

<sup>59</sup> See Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1998) for a discussion of the Nemean lion and Heracles’ own semi-bestial state.

both a god-send for mortals and a curse. He is ever a boon for and a threat against civilization.<sup>60</sup>

In short, throughout our texts, Heracles is repeatedly associated with the qualities of strength and aggression, with all the ambiguity that comes with such extreme power, establishing these qualities as his most famous attributes.<sup>61</sup>

But after Homer and Hesiod, the figure of Heracles gained other attributes as well, including a rapacious appetite for food and sex. Athenaeus discusses how Megacleides censured the poets who came after Homer and Hesiod for fashioning a Heracles who led armies and sacked cities but also had a “zeal” (σπουδήν) for food and “married the most women and with the most maidens secretly beget children” (πλείστας μὲν γυναϊκας γήμας, ἐκ πλείστων δὲ λάθρα παρθένων παιδοποιησάμενος, 12.512e-513a). Heracles’ gluttony and seemingly bottomless stomach are a stock theme of comedy,<sup>62</sup> and we hear about his many, many romances—heterosexual and homosexual—in various sources.<sup>63</sup> There is, for example, the famous story of his sleeping with and impregnating Thestius’ fifty virgin daughters over the course of fifty nights, seven, or—incredibly—only one.<sup>64</sup> Obviously, this version of Heracles, so gluttonous and

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<sup>60</sup> A choice literary example of this dichotomy is Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*. See n. 91.

<sup>61</sup> See Stafford (2012) 23-78 for a good summary of the texts and art that portray Heracles as a strongman whose primary role is to fight monsters and humans.

<sup>62</sup> Arist. *Wasps* 60. For examples of Heracles’ gluttony in satyr plays and comedies, see esp. Eur. *Syleus* (F 691), Eur. *Alc.* (esp. 756-66), Arist. *Birds* (1565-1693), Arist. *Frogs* (60-65, 107, 503-18, 549-78), Arist. *Peace* (741-42). For other non-comedic examples of Heracles’ gluttony, see, e.g., the epigrams by Leonidas of Tarentum (316) and Antipater (72), and Callimachus *Hymn* 3.138-61. For an overview of Heracles in comedy and/or comic situations, see Stafford (2012) 105-17, Pike (1980).

<sup>63</sup> Pike (1977) offers a survey of Heracles’ relationships; also Stafford (2012) 130-36. See Woodford (1989) for some of the artistic representations of Eros stealing or wearing Heracles’ attributes (i.e. his clothes and/or weapons). Deianeira in the *Trachiniae* says it simply and well: οὐχὶ χάτέρας / πλείστας ἀνὴρ εἶς Ἡρακλῆς ἔγημε δῆ; (459-60).

<sup>64</sup> Fowler (2013) 307 and Gantz (1993) 379 list the various sources. See also HA IX(VII) 585b20-25 where Aristotle includes the detail that of the seventy-two children Heracles fathered throughout the course of his lifetime, only one was female, a number of offspring and a preponderance of boys which speak to the hero’s mythical virility.

so lustful, with such an unfathomable stamina, is not a hero wholly focused on his labors. He is willing to put work aside to enjoy life as well.<sup>65</sup> Pike, referring to Aristophanes' portrayal of the ever-hungry and sex-driven Heracles, notes the plays' "concentration on the excessive pre-occupation of the Strongman with physical matters; or, to be more precise, with non-heroic physical matters."<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Heracles is a hero whose power is derived from his body—from an extreme, superhuman strength. It is no stretch, therefore, to transfer such incredible bodily might to incredible bodily passions.

### *Morality, Philosophy, and Justness*

Next come Heracles' far more surprising and radical transformations, as various authors—beginning, especially, with Pindar and Bacchylides—turn the mighty, aggressive, dangerous, licentious hero into an exemplar of virtue, intellectualism, and justice. The body is ignored for his mind and spirit. Galinsky suggests these changes were stimulated by the Greeks' discomfort that one of their most prominent mythical heroes was known for wanton violence against men and gods.<sup>67</sup> For example, Pindar, labeled—perhaps over-generously—Heracles' "ardent prophet" by Galinsky,<sup>68</sup> begins to describe in *Olympian 9* how Heracles fought against the gods Poseidon, Apollo, and Hades (28-35), but abruptly stops himself (ἀπό μοι λόγοντοῦτον, στόμα, ῥῆψον), stating that it is bad to revile the gods and unwise to be boastful (35-39). As Galinsky says, "Pindar, true to his religious mission [to reinvent Heracles], condemns [the story]

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. the Heracles of the *Argonautica* who refuses to sleep with the Lemnian women, urging the Greeks to return to the ship and to their mission (1.861-74). I will discuss this passage in full later in the chapter.

<sup>66</sup> Pike (1980) 41.

<sup>67</sup> See Galinsky (1972) esp. 23-39. See also Stafford (2012) 121-24 for a summary of texts developing Heracles' status as an *exemplum virtutis*.

<sup>68</sup> Galinsky (1972) 30.

in terms of sacrilege and impiety.”<sup>69</sup> It was a facet of the Heracleian *mythos* that needed to be scrubbed clean.<sup>70</sup>

As part of this program of fixing Heracles’ reputation, he was also transformed into a student of virtue and introspection. The most famous and best example of this is Prodicus’ story, recounted by Xenophon, where Virtue and Vice speak with a young Heracles and try to entice him to their respective sides (*Mem.* 2.1.21-34). Notably, among Vice’s incentives is to eat and drink and romance whatever or whomever he should desire (24), a proposition that the comedic Heracles would gladly have taken up. But the Heracles we have here is not the impulsive, buffoonish sort we see in comedy. At the start of the story, he goes “to a sequestered place” (εἰς ἡσυχίαν) and “ponders” (ἀποροῦντα) how best to live (21), and it is only after this personal preparation that Virtue and Vice come for his “education” (παίδευσιν, 34). While Prodicus does not explicitly state which path Heracles chooses, it is heavily implied that Virtue wins the young hero’s heart. This is a Heracles who values self-examination and the pursuit of wisdom.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Galinsky (1972) 31. For more on Pindar’s representations of Heracles, see e.g. Mullen (1986) and Pike (1984). The latter explores how Pindar portrays both the positive *and* the negative attributes of the hero: “Pindar is almost obsessively eager to justify all the actions of Heracles in terms of high moral standards; thus, Pindar’s Heracles tends to be less of the primitive ‘Superman’ that he so often is elsewhere and more of the aristocratic champion, resplendent in the performance of his duty to Zeus and mankind, and in his noble and selfless valour. Nonetheless, the elemental dynamism of the hero frequently bursts forth in Pindar’s verse with considerable vigour; and one of the essential facts about the Superman-Heracles—that most of his adult life was spent in killing—escapes into the light despite Pindar’s vigilance” (15).

<sup>70</sup> Cf., also, how Pindar refers to Heracles’ eight deceased children by Megara as “bronze-armed” (χαλκοαρᾶν, *Isth.* 3/4.80-82), suggesting they were grown men who were killed in battle by someone other than a maddened Heracles; see Fowler (2013) 269: “Pious Theban that he is, Pindar has altered the usual story to preserve Herakles’ good name.”

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Fuqua (1980) 17: “Heracles is not seen as a doer of great deeds but as an Everyman who must make a conscious, intellectual decision to undertake a life of toil and hardship if he is to realize his potential.” Also see Kuntz (1993) for Prodicus’ choice of Heracles for this moral story, and how this story compares to other similar myths of heroes making decisions early in their career which decide their future heroic behavior.

This is not the only place where Heracles is associated with philosophy and morality during the fifth and fourth centuries, either.<sup>72</sup> Herodorus says that Heracles “philosophized until death” (φιλοσοφήσας μέχρι θανάτου, F 14), and while Moore is correct to caution against automatically assuming that this early application of φιλοσοφέω holds the same meaning of deep intellectual rigor that the verb eventually communicated, Herodorus is clearly endowing Heracles with wisdom or sound judgment of some kind, if not philosophical activity *per se*.<sup>73</sup> Clement records that Herodorus also named Heracles a “prophet and a natural philosopher” (μάντιν καὶ φυσικόν, F 13) after Atlas had passed on to him “knowledge of the heavens by educating him” (τὴν τῶν οὐρανίων ἐπιστήμην μαθήσει, F 13), and Herodorus is likely to have been the source for an allegorized account of the apples of the Hesperides where the dragon represents “desire” (ἐπιθυμία, F 14), Heracles’ club is an “enduring soul” (διὰ τὸ ῥόπαλον τῆς καρτερικῆς ψυχῆς) or “philosophy” (διὰ τοῦ ῥοπάλου τῆς φιλοσοφίας), his lion hide is “very bold, wise reasoning” (τοῦ θρασυτάτου σώφρονος λογισμοῦ) or “high thoughts” (φρόνημα), and the three apples are the virtues “to not get angry, to not love money, and to not pursue pleasure” (τὸ μὴ ὀργίζεσθαι, τὸ μὴ φιλαργυρεῖν, τὸ μὴ φιληδονεῖν).<sup>74</sup> Instead of defeating a mythological monster, Heracles is besting the internal monsters of wrath, greed, and self-gratification.<sup>75</sup> He is putting Virtue’s lessons to work. Heracles also shows up in the writing of the philosopher Antisthenes, who wrote at least one moral account of the hero’s life and labors, wherein Prometheus encourages Heracles to become a “complete man” by transcending earthly concerns and learning about matters

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<sup>72</sup> For a summary of texts involving Heracles with philosophy, see Stafford (2012) 124-130.

<sup>73</sup> Moore (2017).

<sup>74</sup> For defense of the attribution to Herodorus, see Moore (2017) 30-35.

<sup>75</sup> See also Herakleitos *Hom. Prob.* 33.3-10 which similarly allegorizes Heracles’ various labors.

“which are more exalted than humans,”<sup>76</sup> and in the works of Plato who associates Heracles with Socrates on several occasions.<sup>77</sup> Cynics, too, claimed the hero as their exemplar.<sup>78</sup> To quote Moore, “Heracles took a prime place in Classical Greek intellectual reflection.”<sup>79</sup> The menacing hero we saw in the *Odyssey* has been educated, tamed, and elevated.<sup>80</sup>

In his speech to Philip, Isocrates further develops Heracles’ intellectual and social side in direct opposition to his more physical abilities, claiming to be the first poet to praise Heracles not for his courage and labors but for the qualities of his spirit (περὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῆ ψυχῆ προσόντων ἀγαθῶν, 5.109). He says that Heracles “surpassed all who lived before him more because of his thoughtfulness and ambition and righteousness than because of the strength of his body” (τῆ φρονήσει καὶ τῆ φιλοτιμία καὶ τῆ δικαιοσύνη πλέον διενεγκόντα πάντων τῶν προγεγενημένων ἢ τῆ ῥώμῃ τῆ τοῦ σώματος, 5.110). He goes on to praise Heracles for healing Greece of its στάσις and bringing the cities together—a pan-Hellenic altruism similarly acclaimed by Lysias and other authors<sup>81</sup>—and for leaving an example to future generations when it is proper to go to war, such as when he attacked Laomedon at Troy (111-12). The message communicated is that Heracles has never sacked a city without good cause, and that his life—

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<sup>76</sup> See Luz (1994) for this fragment (only preserved in Syriac), and what it and other fragments suggest about Antisthenes’ portrayal of Heracles. For more on Antisthenes and Heracles, see Padilla (1998) 9-10, 46-47: “he does seem, along with Prodicus, to have been influential in reworking some of the hero’s prototypical warrior aspects into a more intellectual and ethical mold” (10).

<sup>77</sup> *Theaetetus* 169b, *Phaedo* 89c, *Euthydemus* 297c. See Moore (2017) 43-44.

<sup>78</sup> For the relationship between Heracles and Cynicism (and, later, Stoicism), see e.g. Stafford (2012) 125-29.

<sup>79</sup> Moore (2017) 44.

<sup>80</sup> For more on Heracles and Herodorus, see Feeney (1986b) 52-53.

<sup>81</sup> Lysias 33.1-3: Heracles established the Olympian games, bringing the Greeks together in “mutual friendship” (ἀλλήλους φιλίας), after he had “put an end to despotic rule and prevented men from maltreating others” (τοὺς τυρ’αννοὺς ἔπαυσε καὶ τοὺς ὑβρίζοντας ἐκόλυσεν). For more on the establishment of the pan-Hellenic Olympics, see also Pind. *Olymp.* 3.16-34 and 10.43-59.

specifically, “the disposition of his spirit and his benevolence and the good-will he has for Greece” (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ τὴν εὐνοίαν, ἣν εἶχεν εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, 114)—is worthy of emulation. Heracles is the “best” (cf. καλλίστας, 113) not because of his fighting prowess and strength but because of the virtue of his mind and soul.

Other authors were similarly invested in ensuring their audiences that Heracles’ various violent deeds were justified. Bacchylides’ fragmentary Ode 13 describes Heracles’ job on earth: “he shall make (the wrongdoer) desist from haughty violence by carrying out judgments on mortals” (ὕβριος ὑψινόου / παύσει δίκας θνατοῖσι κραίνων, 44-45).<sup>82</sup> He is judge, jury, and executioner, a hero with the divine obligation to make the lands and seas safe for mankind—a sentiment that showed up in Hesiod and continues to show up several times in other texts, sometimes as part of an agenda to whitewash Heracles’ more negative aspects.<sup>83</sup> For example, Pindar gives Heracles a nobler cause for attacking Troy: instead of Heracles waging war only on behalf of greed, namely, to retrieve the promised horses, Laomedon is now a “guest-killer” (ξενοδα[ί]κτα, 56) himself, and Heracles is fulfilling Apollo’s desires by putting a stop to the evil king’s “arrogance” (ἀτασθαλία, 57) and “shameless deeds” (ἔργ’ ἀναιδῆ, 59). And in the *Alcestis*, Heracles himself is not a guest-killer (as he was in the *Odyssey*), but instead has enormous respect for the laws of *xenia*;<sup>84</sup> he is, in fact, the “best” (ἀρίστος) host according to Admetus (559-60).<sup>85</sup> An anonymous epigram in the anthology of Planudes says it well: Heracles,

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<sup>82</sup> Translation by Campbell (1992).

<sup>83</sup> See, e.g., Pind. *Nem.* 1.60-72, Pind. *Isth.* 4.52-63, Lysias 2.16, Eur. *Her.* 170-235 and 849-54, Philo *The Embassy to Gaius* 81 and 90-92. For the controversial Pindaric fragment 169a (“*Nomos* justifies the most violent of actions”), which may or may not validate Heracles, see e.g. Pike (1984) 19-21, Kyriakou (2002) [with good bibliography].

<sup>84</sup> See, e.g., the exchange at 536-45.

<sup>85</sup> In some texts, in fact, Heracles’ killing of Iphitus is excused altogether by claiming that he was suffering from a bout of insanity at the time: Herodorus *FGrH* 32, Apollod. 2.6.2.

speaking to the audience, tells them not to fear him, though he has a bow unsheathed and carries the lion skin and club, because “I do not now know how to bring harm to all men, only evil-doers, and I am able to save good men from their distress” (πημαίνειν οὐ πάντα ἐπίσταμαι, ἀλλὰ κακούργους / καὶ σώζειν ἀγαθοὺς ἐξ ἀγέων δύναμαι, 124.5-6).<sup>86</sup> Only the evil should fear this version of Heracles whose hands are untouched by innocent blood—a very different picture from some previous accounts, especially the *Odyssey* where a similarly armed and dressed Heracles caused great fear amidst the ghosts of the Underworld. This is a hero whose strength is spent only for good.

### *Humanity*

At the core of many of these transformations is a single development: Heracles becomes more human, relatable, and believable in several of our sources between the archaic period and the Hellenistic. He is not the unapproachable, fear-inducing, solitary figure of Homer’s Underworld; he is a partier, a lover, a student, a proper guest, a man. He experiences everyday concerns about morality and the future, and enjoys everyday delights, a character far more accessible than any fantastical superhero.<sup>87</sup>

This desire to portray Heracles as one of us is especially evident in Euripidean tragedy where the hero is placed in domestic settings.<sup>88</sup> In the *Auge*, a fragmentary play by Euripides,

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Callimachus *Hymn* 3.153-61 where he advises Artemis to only hunt “evil beasts” (κακοὺς...θῆρας) like boars, not harmless animals like deer and rabbits, “so that mortals might call [her] a helper as they do [him]” (ἵνα θνητοὶ σε βοηθὸν / ὡς ἐμὲ κικλήσκωσιν).

<sup>87</sup> For some specific examples of authors rationalizing Heracles’ incredible deeds to make him seem more credible, see n. 44.

<sup>88</sup> For Heracles in tragedy, see e.g. Stafford (2012) 79-103 [good as an overview], Liapis (2006) [discusses Sophocles’ Heracles as an interstitial character between savagery and civilization], Silk (1985) [explores the contrasting portraits of Heracles in Sophocles and Euripides], Papadopoulou (2005) [focuses on Heracles in Euripides], Lee (1986) [mainly concentrates on Euripides].

Heracles had gotten drunk and raped Auge, a priestess of Athena, who, unknown to him, gave birth to Telephus. When he eventually finds out, he admits his guilt (F 272b = 270 N), giving us “a ‘human’ Heracles mending the consequences of his drunken crime,”<sup>89</sup> and there is a scene of him playing with the baby on stage, grateful to have a break from his labors (παίζω· μεταβολὰς γὰρ πόνων ἀεὶ φιλῶ, F 272a = 864 N). Family scenes appear in other tragedies involving Heracles as well, an excellent example being Euripides’ *Heracles*. There, he is completing the labors not as penance for some crime (as is normal) but primarily so that Amphitryon can return to Argos from which he is exiled (13-25).<sup>90</sup> Heracles is invested in his mortal family, even adamantly rejecting Zeus as his father and considering, instead, Amphitryon to be his dad (see esp. 1265). We also witness tender family tableaux: in Heracles’ absence the children jump every time a door creaks, hoping that their father has returned (73-79); when he does arrive, Megara and the children will not let go of him (622-36); Heracles notes that care for his family trumps any of his labors (574-82); and after their deaths, he laments his loss of them (1367-85).<sup>91</sup> This is

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<sup>89</sup> Collard and Cropp (2008) 262. See also Stafford (2012) 94-95 and Gantz (1993) 428-31.

<sup>90</sup> See Gantz (1993) 382 for the possibility that this is a Euripidean innovation, and for the other reasons proposed in Greek literature for why Heracles had to perform the labors (i.e. as atonement for killing his family and as a prerequisite for deification).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. (pseudo?)-Moschus’ *Megara* which describes with great emotional weight the misfortune of Alcmene and Megara after Heracles kills the children, and their concerns for their beloved husband/son. Also cf. *Trachiniae* where Deianeira laments how Heracles is never home, and his relationship with his children are like that of a farmer to his fields: he was there to sow and reap but otherwise is gone (27-35). For Heracles as a (bad) father and family man in the *Trach.* (and an altogether negative and/or ambiguous figure in the play), see e.g. Stafford (2012) 83-85, Liapis (2006), Silk (1985), Easterling (1982) esp. 1-12; also Fuqua (1980) on Heracles’ heroism. Silk identifies the difference between Sophocles’ Heracles and Euripides’ by saying, “In *Trachiniae* humanity is crushed: in *H.F.* all the movement is towards humanity” (12). Levett (2004) 60-67 discusses Heracles in the *Trach.*, identifying how he is presented as both protector of civilization and “a primitive force that *threatens* the works of civilisation” (61). Segal (1981) 60-108 also discusses the civilization-nature dichotomy in the play and in Heracles’ character.

Heracles as a family man.<sup>92</sup>

We see a similar outpouring of everyday, human emotions in other texts. In Bacchylides, Heracles chats with the ghost of Meleager in Hades and sheds tears for the young man's fate (5.155-58), revealing a keen ability to sympathize with others.<sup>93</sup> And then there is the delight he experiences in nature: in Pindar's *Olympian* 3, in the middle of his hunt for the golden hind of Artemis, Heracles "stands still, astonished at the trees there" (τόθι δένδρεα θάμβαινε σταθείς, 58) and later the "sweet desire" (γλυκὺς ἕμερος, 59) to plant some of them at the Olympics seizes him in order to provide "shade to share among men" (σκιαρόν τε φύτευμα ξυνὸν ἀνθρώποις, 31) and garlands for the victors. Even during his tiresome labors, this Heracles takes time to smell the roses and is thoughtful enough to share that joy with others as well. This Heracles is not a destroyer. He is a sensitive friend, public servant, and (dare I say) gardener. Thus, in some of our texts, the archaic Heracles was softened and domesticized, putting him more on our level of everyday concerns and enjoyment.<sup>94</sup>

To sum up, Heracles experienced multiple transformations after the archaic period. He

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<sup>92</sup> For the positive and/or negative examples of family values in the *Heracles*, see Griffiths (2006) esp. 65-80, Lee (1986). See also Papadopoulou (2005) esp. 9-57 for a discussion of some of the ways that Heracles is an ambiguous figure in the play, not wholly positive nor negative: "The tragedy problematizes the nature of Heracles' heroism and the ways in which this heroism can be accommodated in a civilized world after the performance of his labors" (56). The play, therefore, while presenting Heracles in a more domestic setting, does not completely ignore nor sterilize the dangerous elements of the hero.

<sup>93</sup> Lee (1986) 24-25 proposes that Bacchylides' Heracles was a key step toward presenting the hero on the tragic stage: "Bacchylides' characterization of Herakles is done within a moment, yet the deft touches...are sufficient to invest the hero with the humanity, even the frailty, which fitted him for development as a tragic figure" (25).

<sup>94</sup> Consider, also, for a more negative human emotion, the theme of suicide at the end of the *Heracles* and *Trachiniae*. Heracles is remarkably human at these moments, not the god and not the machine who endures, completing labor after labor and overcoming all obstacles with relative ease. See Papadopoulos (2005) 166-87 for an excellent discussion of the end of *Heracles* and a discussion of other scenes of suicide in Greek tragedy.

could be the violent, angry, mighty soldier; a murderer; a “megalomaniac and hubristic conqueror;”<sup>95</sup> a glutton for food and sex; the civilizing champion; a student and exemplar of Virtue; an intellectual, a philosopher, a judge, a father, a man—or a mix of any of these roles. He is the hero with a thousand faces, an adaptable figure who morphs to satisfy authors’ various needs. To the poets of Alexandria, therefore, the Heracles character must have been a gift: he was rooted in tradition, going back to Homer, but he had already undergone something of a Hellenistic transformation. It did not take a Theocritus to reshape Heracles as he did with Polyphemus, converting the lawless strongman into a more human and sympathetic personage. Rather, Heracles came pre-packaged with the trappings of Hellenistic poetic sensibilities already blossoming.

### **The Hellenistic Heracles: Callimachus, Theocritus, and Lycophron**

The figure of Heracles gained special political significance in the Hellenistic period. He was claimed by Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies as an ancestor, and that relationship was propagandized throughout their reign.<sup>96</sup> An apt literary example is Theocritus’ *Idyll* 17 where the deceased Ptolemy Soter is imagined living on Olympus with Alexander and Heracles in an intimate family scene. Heracles “exceedingly rejoices” (χαίρων...περιώσιον, 23) that his descendants have achieved immortality with him, and twice more it is stressed that Heracles is the ancestor of both men (26-27). As he leaves to join his wife, they accompany him, one holding his bow and the other his club (28-33). Heracles legitimizes the Ptolemies’ reign: he

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<sup>95</sup> Papadopoulou (2005) 9.

<sup>96</sup> See Koenen (1993) 44-46, Harder (1993) 102-103. See Stephens (2003) 123-46 for examples of how Theocritus uses Heracles in his court poetry, focusing on *Idyll* 24. Also Stafford (2012) 137-70 for how rulers used Heracles for political purposes throughout antiquity, not only in the Hellenistic period. For sixth- and fifth-century Athenian politics, see Padilla (1998) 10-13.

strengthens their Greek roots, gives them ancestral claim to godhood, and associates them with a figure known for his civilizing power and for bringing order to the more chaotic elements of the world, a responsibility Egyptian pharaohs had been tasked with for millennia.<sup>97</sup> It is thereby fitting that Heracles figures prominently—and, for the most part, positively—in the writings of two of the most prominent Alexandrian poets: Theocritus and Callimachus.

### *Theocritus*

Theocritus' portrayals of Heracles tend to emphasize the hero's more human and domestic roots. For example, *Idyll 13* highlights Heracles' human side in his love for Hylas whom he teaches "like a father teaches his dear son" (πατήρ ὡσεὶ φίλον υἰόν, 8) and with whom he stays ever near (10-15). When the boy goes missing, Heracles is undone and rages through thickets to try and find him (55-71), putting all thought of Jason's quest out of his mind (67). The scene of Heracles searching ends with the vivid description of Eros "tearing" or "mangling" (ἄμυσσεν, 71) the man's liver. As discussed above, Heracles is frequently associated with lust by Greek authors after Homer and Hesiod, but in many of those accounts, he is an aggressor, and famed for his sexual stamina and innumerable conquests. Here, Heracles is more of a sympathetic figure, a victim of love and loss who disregards his heroic responsibilities in his anxiety but is powerless to help his beloved.<sup>98</sup>

*Idyll 24*, frequently referred to as the *Heracliscus*, describes the childhood of Heracles, presenting him in a domestic light that makes him even more relatable to the common man. The

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<sup>97</sup> See, e.g., Koenen (1993) 38-39. Cf. Stephens (2003) 142-46.

<sup>98</sup> See Mastronarde (1968) for a discussion of this poem and how "Theocritus is questioning, even denying the possibility that the epic character may remain heroic when he is in love" (279). Also, Heerink (2015) 53-82, and Van Erp Taalman Kip (1994) esp. 159-69: "The confrontation with this other world gently mocks and undermines [Heracles'] heroism and, to some extent, epic poetry itself" (167).

poem begins with the famous story of the hero strangling the snakes as an infant, and as such, we do receive the familiar portrait of Heracles as a superhuman, fantastical person: we witness the boy's incredible strength (26-33), he is said to never cry, even though he is an infant (αἰὲν ἄδακρυον, 31), and Teiresias prophesies that "all beasts and men will be inferior to him" (οὐ καὶ θηρία πάντα καὶ ἄνδρες ἥσσονες ἄλλοι, 81). There are, therefore, reminders that he is extraordinary. But the focus of *Idyll* 24 is on the domestic side of his upbringing. Heracles sleeps in a shield, a detail that captures both Heracles' life as a warrior but also adds a humble spin. An item Amphitryon had stripped from his enemy (4-5), displaying his heroism, is now used for a simple, unheroic cradle.<sup>99</sup> Further, the poem opens with a tender description of Alcmene preparing her ten-month old sons, Heracles and Iphicles, for bed: she bathes them, feeds them until they are full of milk (ἐμπλήσασα γάλακτος), places her hand on their heads, and sings them a lullaby while rocking the shield (1-10). This is a nightly ritual that mothers have practiced for ages and continue to practice today. It is a familiar image, accessible to all. Later, after Amphitryon and Alcmene make it to the children's room in a panic and see the aftermath of the snakes' attack, Heracles responds like any child would who has found some new toy or accomplished some new feat: he shows his father the snakes "in his tender hands" (χείρεσσιν ἀπαλαῖσιν, 55—a detail which reminds us of Heracles' youthful innocence), leaps with joy, laughs, and lays the snakes down at Amphitryon's feet (56-69). He may have done a remarkable thing, but he reacted to it in an unremarkable way. Finally, the last section of the poem before it becomes too fragmentary to read discusses Heracles' education. From a variety of well-bred, famous men, he learns chariot racing, martial skills, music, and reading (103-34). Thus, while there is intermixed with all the domestic imagery reminders that Heracles is not a normal child,

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<sup>99</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 258, Stephens (2003) 136.

the emphasis here is on how he *is* a normal child—loved by his parents, reacting to situations like other infants would, and being educated like any other elite Hellenistic boy would be.<sup>100</sup>

Similarly, the pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll 25*—an unusual poem for its narrative innovations—presents to us a pre-*kleos*, pre-epic hero.<sup>101</sup> Heracles is pursuing his labor to clean the stables of Augeas and has therefore already completed several famous deeds (lines 162-64, in fact, imply that many years have passed since Heracles' first labor), but no one knows him. Even a Greek man who witnessed Heracles killing the Nemean lion did not know his name at the time (162-73). This gives Heracles the opportunity to show to the characters of the poem first-hand his incredible strength when he manfully wrangles a charging bull to the ground (142-52) and to narrate in his own words how he managed to kill the Nemean lion (193-281). This is a Heracles in the process of forging his identity. He is, at the start, just a man—an impressive-looking man to be sure (38-41, 62-67), but still a figure who does not yet enjoy far-ranged *kleos*.<sup>102</sup>

### *Callimachus*

In our extant fragments and poems of Callimachus, we only ever see a mature Heracles, and while Callimachus, like Theocritus, underscores Heracles' domestic side, we also see a strong return to Heracles as the champion of justice.

In the *Aetia*, Callimachus gives us two stories about Heracles killing a plough-ox that

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<sup>100</sup> For Heracles and education, including in the context of this poem, see esp. Stephens (2003) 142-46 and Wissmann (2010) 62-77. Wissman notes how the anachronism of having Heracles learn his letters makes the hero seem even more ordinary for his Alexandrian audience. Fowler (2013) 267 surveys the sources that discuss Heracles' various teachers. See, also, Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 201-10 and 255-66 for the realism of this poem: "as far as possible, this heroic tale becomes a story of everyday domestic reality" (257).

<sup>101</sup> For these terms (pre-*kleos*, pre-epic) used in this context, see Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 210-15, Clare (2003).

<sup>102</sup> Depicting famous mythical characters at stages in their lives that precede fame, as is done here with *Idyll 25* and in *Idyll 24*, is a common Hellenistic trope. See, e.g., Clauss and Cuyppers (2010) 4-5.

explore his mythical role as judge, jury, and executioner. In 22-22c,<sup>103</sup> Heracles steals the ox of a farmer at Lindos and eats it, disregarding—even enjoying—the owner’s curses and complaints. Killing such an animal was a crime,<sup>104</sup> and Heracles’ bad behavior here is further highlighted by a brief reference to when he killed Linus (his lyre teacher) in anger, being “not very gentle” (οὐ μάλ’ ἐλαφρός, 6). But this negative account of Heracles robbing and mocking the farmer is directly followed by a similar story which casts Heracles in a much better light.<sup>105</sup> He is traveling with his son Hyllus and wife Deianeira when he arrives in the land of the Dryopians. Hyllus is starving (cf. πείνη / θυμαίνων, 24.1-2) and, in a charmingly sentimental picture of domesticity, he pulls on his father’s chest hair in frustration which causes Heracles to laugh in amusement and pain (24.1-3). They come across Theiodamas, a farmer ploughing his field, and in response to Heracles’ humble request that the man provide “only so much food as will drive away the terrible hunger from his child” (τόσσο]ν ὅσον τ’ ἀπὸ πα[ιδὶ κακὴν β]ούπειναν ἐλά[σσαι, 24.11), Theiodamas “laughs in a rude, uncivilized way” (ἀγρεῖον...εγέλασσε, 24.13). Our text gets very fragmentary at this point, but we know from other sources that Theiodamas refuses, and Heracles, angered, takes Theiodamas’ ox and kills it to feed his son.<sup>106</sup> A war between Heracles and the Dryopians commences, and once Heracles is victorious, he relocates the people to the Peloponnese so that they might become more civilized and “abstain from their piratical customs” (τοῦ ληστρικοῦ ἥθους ἀπόσχωνται, 25b.16-17). Heracles, therefore, exhibits anger and violence, but his actions are carefully justified and lead to the betterment of an entire people known for

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<sup>103</sup> I will be following the numbering found in Harder (2012).

<sup>104</sup> Harder (2012) 215.

<sup>105</sup> See Harder (2012) 232-55 for how this story evokes the reader’s sympathy for Heracles and his situation.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Callimachus *Hymn* 3.161 which implies that Heracles killed the ox purely because of his own gluttony, a key difference.

their uncultured lifestyle. He is, once again, a civilizing agent. Concerning the contrary portraits we receive in 22-23c (the plough-ox of the Lindian farmer) and 24-25d (the plough-ox of Theiodamas), Harder says, “one gets the impression of a ‘false start’, which serves as a foil for the sequel: the Muses begin with a rather burlesque and unflattering story about Heracles and this bad impression is subsequently corrected by the more positive story of Heracles and Thiodamas, in which Heracles adopts his role of a civilizer of mankind and appears again as the kind of ancestor of whom the Ptolemies could boast.”<sup>107</sup> The first Heracles is reminiscent of the rough, primitive, lawless man of Homer, while the second is the more evolved family man and champion of justice.

Heracles elsewhere in the *Aetia* continues to fulfill his task to right wrongs committed against him or others. Fragments 44-45 (each a line long) show that Callimachus discusses Busiris, an Egyptian king who killed strangers until he was executed by Heracles, but it is not known how much of the story Callimachus tells nor if he even includes Heracles in the account.<sup>108</sup> If, however, Heracles’ involvement were included (which seems plausible), it would be yet one more example of the hero deposing a lawless, guest-killing ruler. We get just such an ousting in the aetiology of the nuptial rite of Elis. Actual text from Callimachus is little and fragmentary (76b-77b), but we are told Callimachus discusses the myth’s entirety (77c-77d): Augeas refuses to pay Heracles his promised wages for cleaning out the stables and unjustly exiles his own son Phyleus who supported Heracles’ cause in opposition to his father; Heracles successfully attacks Elis, installs Phyleus as king, and rebuilds the population by having his army

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<sup>107</sup> Harder (2012) 214.

<sup>108</sup> See Harder (2012) 369-70.

sleep with the widows;<sup>109</sup> and Heracles founds the Olympian games in Zeus' honor from the spoils of the sack of Elis.<sup>110</sup> Heracles, therefore, is using his might to right wrongs committed against himself and others, and instead of keeping the wealth to enrich himself, he uses it to benefit Greece.

In the *Victory of Berenice* (54-60j), Callimachus throws Heracles into the domestic sphere in a similar way as he did with Theseus in the *Hecale*, showing us a Heracles who participates in everyday life. In Pindaric fashion, Callimachus includes a lengthy myth in the middle of his praise of Berenice after her victory at the Nemean games in the chariot race (54-60j). Heracles, on his way to kill the Nemean lion, stays with Molorcus, a poor man who is struggling to be a proper host because he is unable to leave his home to collect wood or to let his flocks out of the courtyard due to the threat posed by the Nemean lion (54b). Molorcus also has monsters of his own he is battling: mice. His attempts to trap the lion-like (e.g. 54c 10-11)<sup>111</sup> mice who are destroying his possessions and home—not to mention dancing on his head at night (27-28), a rather comical addition—are described in mock-epic style.<sup>112</sup> At some point, Heracles leaves and defeats the Nemean lion, after which he gives Molorcus a mule to thank him for his generosity (54i). It is unknown which part of the myth had the greater focus, that is, how much space was dedicated to Heracles' battle with the lion and how much to Molorcus' domestic battles with hosting a stranger amidst the difficulties of wood scarcity and invading mice. We

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<sup>109</sup> While this city-wide administration of rape or (at the least) coerced sex is repulsive to modern sensibilities, it is unlikely, I believe, to have caused too much ethical angst in the ancient world. Their focus would presumably be on the positive here, namely, the survival and continuation of the *polis*.

<sup>110</sup> This last bit—i.e. Heracles using the spoils to found the Olympics—is made explicit in Pind. *Olymp.* 10.34-46.

<sup>111</sup> For how the mice are described as lions, see Harder (2012) 444-45.

<sup>112</sup> See Harder (2012) 384-499 for the various ways in which the poem has a mock-epic tone.

have more fragments describing the latter, but that could be a coincidence of preservation. Regardless, what is evident is that a significant portion of the *Victory of Berenice* details the humble scene of Heracles being hosted by Molorcus, and Heracles' fitting appreciation for that service. Callimachus is giving us a glimpse into what Heracles might have been like as an everyday house guest and neighbor, not a warrior.<sup>113</sup>

*(Pseudo-)Lycophron*

In Theocritus and Callimachus, therefore, we receive versions of Heracles who is still remarkably strong and violent, but who also experiences feelings and situations everyday humans face. Not so for the Heracles in Lycophron's obscure, complex poem, the *Alexandra*.<sup>114</sup> Here, he is more akin to the archaic, rough portraits of the hero found in Homer. While the focus of Cassandra's lengthy prophecy in Lycophron's *Alexandra* (31-1460) concerns the future of Troy and of various Greek and Trojan warriors after the war, she makes frequent references to the mythically historical figure Heracles. In fact, she begins her prophecy by describing the first sack of Troy carried out by Heracles (31-38) and mentions, without any seeming purpose, a few additional details about his life—attacking Hera, wrestling with Zeus, killing Scylla, and being killed by Nessos' treachery (39-51)—before continuing to the second sack of Troy (39-51). After this, Heracles is explicitly referred to an additional fourteen times. Most of these references

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<sup>113</sup> Other places Heracles is referred to (or *might* be referred to) in the *Aetia* include the following: ll. 32-40 of the prologue (see Harder [2012] 73-74), the return of the Argonauts and the rite at Anaphe (7c-21d), a statue of Hera with a lion skin at her feet (101-101b), and the horses of Diomedes and/or the divine horses of Laomedon (114a; see Harder [2012] 903-906).

<sup>114</sup> I include a discussion of Lycophron's poem with one important caveat: scholars debate whether the poem should be placed in the third or second centuries BCE. If the former, he would have been writing at the same time as Apollonius, Callimachus, and Theocritus. If the latter, afterwards. See, e.g., Hornblower (2015) 36-39, 114, who discusses the poem's dating and proposes a date of c. 190 BCE. Regardless of the poem's date, Hornblower does believe that the author was aware of the writings of the Alexandrian poets in the third century (26-35).

establish Heracles as a martial figure, and none of them portray him with any of the intellectualizing, philosophizing, or humanizing tendencies of previous authors.<sup>115</sup> He is the “beast” (θήρ, 1327) and the “lion” (λέων, 33, 459, 697, 917) who kills both the deserving (e.g. Eryx) and undeserving (e.g. Calchas). This somewhat negative, mostly unevolved representation of the hero may reflect Cassandra’s general tactic of denigrating the Greeks, such as Achilles and Odysseus, who attacked her homeland.<sup>116</sup> Heracles was, after all, the first to burn her beloved city. But whatever the reason, it is important to mention Lycophron here because, of all the Hellenistic authors writing around the time of the third century BCE, his version of Heracles is the most like Apollonius’.

### **Heracles: Apollonius**

In constructing his Heracles, Apollonius disregarded the hero’s Classical and Alexandrian transformations, giving us a version that is most in line with Homer’s austere Strongman. As I show in Chapter 1, Heracles in the *Argonautica* is almost solely defined by his strength, martial prowess, and potential for destruction. At no time does he exhibit any of the

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<sup>115</sup> Here are the fourteen references: his bow and arrows were used to kill Paris (56), he prayed to Zeus to make Ajax invulnerable (455-62), the attack on Poseidon’s monster (468-79) and Scylla (651-52) are mentioned a second time, the destruction of the Laistrygonians by Heracles is referred to (662-63; cf. 957), there is a brief mention of the paths he made herding Geryon’s cattle (697-98), he is mentioned as the ancestor of Alexander’s son Heracles (801-804; n.b. this is the only mention of a historical figure in the poem, Hornblower [2015] 76), he defeated the guest-killing Eryx (866-70), a temple was dedicated to him by Jason and the fifty Argonauts (871-73), Philoctetes burns Heracles’ body (916-17), Heracles kills the seer Kalchas in anger (979-81), there is a brief mention of Heracles’ son Telephos’ children (1245-49), Theseus and Heracles abduct Antiope and steal Hippolyte’s belt (1327-31), and Heracles’ sack of Troy is referred to one last time (1346-50). Heracles is indirectly alluded to in several more passages: e.g. 124 (Heracles is the one who killed Proteus’ criminal sons), 688-90 (while Heracles is not mentioned, he was instrumental in the giants’ defeat), 691-93 (Heracles is the one who defeated the Kerkopes), and 931-38 (the events involving Amphitryon at the time of Heracles’ conception are described).

<sup>116</sup> See Hornblower (2015) esp. 182.

moralizing and intellectualizing traits described above, and there is little which evokes his divine role as the “champion of justice.”<sup>117</sup> His presentation is simple and unevolved, lacking many of the nuances found in his contemporaries’ versions of Heracles.

Apollonius even explicitly disregards the justifying tendencies of previous authors when he describes Heracles’ murder of Theiodamas at the end of Book 1 (1211-19). In contrast to Callimachus where Heracles was the sympathetic figure, now sympathy is in Theiodamas’ court. The farmer is “noble” (δίου Θειοδάμας, 1213; vs. ἀγρεῖον in Callimachus), and he is said to be “stricken by distress” (ἀνίη βεβολημένος, 1216) even before Heracles comes to accost him, implying some kind of difficulty in the man’s life or—at the least—suggesting that the ploughing he is doing is a tough task.<sup>118</sup> This is not the kind of man who deserves death. In turn, Heracles’ behavior is depicted as aggressive and unreasonable. He “commands” (ἤνωγε, 1217) the man to give him the ox “although he is unwilling” (οὐκ ἐθέλοντα, 1217), and when the man refuses, Heracles “ruthlessly” (νηλειῶς, 1214) kills the man. Notably, this adverb is in line-initial position which enhances the sense of disapproval lurking here. Furthermore, unlike in Callimachus where Heracles kindly asks for food to help his starving son and only becomes hostile when Theiodamas callously refuses, the rationale behind Heracles’ assault in Apollonius is first stated to be a quarrel he had with Theiodamas over the plough-ox (1214) and later to be “because he desired a baneful pretense for war to be thrown upon the Dryopians, since they lived with no regard for law” (ἔτετο γὰρ πρόφασιν πολέμου Δρυόπεσσι βαλέσθαι / λευγαλέην, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι δίκης ἀλέγοντες ἔναιον, 1218-19). The first stated motive comes with no details other than the

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<sup>117</sup> For Apollonius’ Heracles as an archaic figure different from the more contemporary versions of the hero outlined above, see esp. Galinsky (1972) 108-116, Beye (1982) 53-56, and Feeney (1986b) 51-66.

<sup>118</sup> The latter is what Race (2008) 101 suggests.

following description of Heracles ordering the man to turn over his ox. Was that the extent of the quarrel? That is, was there no prelude other than Heracles demanding another man's possession? If so, Heracles is wholly out of line here. The second motive is even more troubling: Heracles wants to fulfill his role as "champion of justice," so to do so, he kills a seemingly innocent, struggling farmer in order to provoke a war.<sup>119</sup> This Heracles is a warmonger and murderer. Apollonius cuts the story off there, leaving in silence the fate of the Dryopians and whether or not, as in Callimachus, their society benefitted from Heracles' actions. The implication is, perhaps, that any positive benefit is meaningless when compared to the outright crime being committed here: it does not matter if the people were made more civilized if an act of brute uncivilization is what brought it about. While it is unclear whether Callimachus' version came first or Apollonius', it is very clear that Apollonius' version is altogether negative.<sup>120</sup>

Another way in which Apollonius disregards later transformations of the hero is by ignoring Heracles' celebrated lust and gluttony. The absence of these qualities has been noted by several scholars, especially with the way in which Heracles turns down sex at Lemnos. Hunter suggests—as do others<sup>121</sup>—that this could be evidence of Apollonius being influenced by Prodicus' virtuous Heracles but adds the qualification, "Nevertheless, it is the delay to the expedition, not the fact of casual love-making, which upsets Heracles."<sup>122</sup> Indeed, the morality of the situation is not on Heracles' radar at all; he simply wants to get the quest moving. And since the Argonauts were at Lemnos for days before he spoke up, there would have been plenty of time for Heracles to visit the city for a brief few hours to bed a woman or two (or fifty, given

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. Hesiod *Shield* 43aMW, ll. 55-67 and Soph. *Trach.* 361.

<sup>120</sup> See Harder (2012) 234-35 for a discussion of the two passages.

<sup>121</sup> E.g. Ardizzoni (1967) 213.

<sup>122</sup> Hunter (1993b) 33-34. Cf. Feeney (1986b) 54-55.

Heracles' legendary stamina), not to mention that there are several examples in literature and art which suggest that Heracles is willing to set aside his heroic duties to enjoy festivities for a time, sexual or otherwise.<sup>123</sup> In short, Apollonius' Heracles appears to be uninterested in sex with women. This is a version of the hero Megacleides would have approved of.

Thus, Apollonius is consciously giving us a more archaic picture of the hero than that which existed in his own time. This is a Heracles who is most similar to the versions of Homer and, to a lesser extent, of Hesiod, maybe also of Creophylus, Pisander, and Panyassis. He is strong, focused, and dangerous, free from the justifying and humanizing additions of the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Apollonius did not simply cut Heracles from the crew manifest as several traditions had done before him,<sup>124</sup> but at the same time, he could not let the philosophers' Heracles on the ship. If he had, Jason's new heroism would have been obscured. Heracles would have been as untraditional an epic hero as Jason is, and, as a result, the *Argonautica* would have lost much of the tension between old epic and new that lies just beneath the surface. But, as it is, the Heracles of the *Argonautica* is archaic and thus serves as a fitting foil for Jason and the new, unusual hero he represents.<sup>125</sup>

### **Heracles and Achilles**

I discuss in Chapter 1 the ways in which Apollonius' Heracles reflects Homer's Achilles. It is worthwhile to note, therefore, the many striking similarities these two warriors share in

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<sup>123</sup> E.g. in the *Alcestis*, Heracles stops at Admetus' house on his way to claim the horses, and enjoys a good deal of food and wine.

<sup>124</sup> See, e.g., Clauss (1993) 176 n. 1 who lists Heracles' involvement or lack thereof in the other traditions of Jason and the golden fleece.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Galinsky (1972) 116: "Without [Heracles] as a backdrop, Jason's new kind of 'heroism' would be pointless."

Homer and elsewhere. They have, indeed, been linked together long before Apollonius.<sup>126</sup>

In the *Iliad*, Achilles and Heracles are connected on the level of both plot and vocabulary, ensuring that the audience considers the two heroes together. Concerning the former, Homer makes several references to Heracles' previous sack of Troy (5.627-51, 14.249-51, 20.144-48). According to the story, Heracles saved Hesione, the daughter of the former Trojan king Laomedon, from a sea monster sent by Poseidon. In exchange for his service, Laomedon had promised Heracles immortal horses but ended up cheating him of that prize, and in response, Heracles gathered together an expedition of six ships and destroyed Troy.<sup>127</sup> This event shares some core similarities with the Trojan War. Paris, Laomedon's grandson, revealed similar duplicitous behavior when he stole Helen from Menelaus, initiating the Trojan War, and—on another front—Achilles quarrels with Agamemnon because, like Heracles, he does not receive the compensation he rightly deserves. While we do not see Troy's second destruction in the *Iliad*, the threat that Achilles might bypass what is fated and breach the walls is always present (see, e.g., 20.30). Therefore, just as Heracles was surely the "best" of the Greeks attacking Troy the first time, now Achilles is the "best"—two heroes from two different eras threatening the same city with destruction.

Achilles even turns to Heracles at one of the most crucial moments in the epic, using the former hero's death and legacy as a blueprint for his own death and legacy. After Achilles learns

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<sup>126</sup> A few of these similarities are noted in Galinsky (1972) 14-15, and Barker and Christensen (2014) esp. 269-77. See the latter for a lengthier and more in-depth exploration of the heroes' similarities in the *Iliad*.

<sup>127</sup> This myth appears in a variety of sources; see, e.g., Hellanikos *FGrH* F26, Euripides *Tro.* 799-819, Isocrates 5.111, Pindar fragment 140a, Pindar I 5.34-38. See these sources and also *Iliad* 21.441-57 and 7.446-53 for an explanation of why Poseidon sent the monster. Fowler (2013) 311-15 and Gantz (1993) 400-402, 442-45 have helpful surveys of the various texts. Cf. the similar events described in Pind. Olymp. 10.24-42: Augeas refuses to pay Heracles after he cleans the stables, and Heracles destroys him and his city.

of Patroclus' death, he finally decides to re-enter the war despite the assurance that he, too, will die if he does so. He tells his mother that he will accept that fate and draws on Heracles' memory for consolation (18.117-21):

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα,  
ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι·  
ἀλλὰ ἐ μοῖρα δάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης.  
ὥς καὶ ἐγών, εἰ δὴ μοι ὁμοίη μοῖρα τέτυκται,  
κείσομ' ἐπεὶ κε θάνω· νῦν δὲ κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀροίμην.

For not even the mighty Heracles avoided his doom, he who was by far the most beloved of lord Zeus, the son of Cronus. But destiny overcame him, along with the troublesome wrath of Hera. Even so will I lie when I die, if indeed a similar destiny awaits me. But now let me gain a glorious reputation.

We do not know what kind of traditions existed before Homer concerning Heracles' post-mortem status. The *Odyssey* curiously states that Heracles himself is on Olympus while his "likeness" (εἶδωλον) is in Hades (11.601-604), and other early authors, such as Hesiod, describe how Heracles never died but, rather, was granted immortality, the version most commonly seen in extant mythology.<sup>128</sup> Here in the *Iliad*, however, Heracles appears to be wholly mortal, and Homer's choice to go with this version of the myth instead of the perhaps more popular account of immortality speaks to a deliberate desire to bring Achilles into closer proximity with the hero. At this pinnacle moment where Achilles finally decides to don the mantle of soldier and hero, he decides to model himself off the Heracleian *mythos*. He will die, but so, too, did Heracles. That is fate. Yet also implicit in this speech is the possibility of immortality gained through one's *kleos*: Heracles is dead but his fame lives on, evidenced by Achilles' remembrance of him here, and that same timelessness is within Achilles' grasp. It is no coincidence, then, that he jumps straight

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<sup>128</sup> See, e.g., Hesiod *Theog.* 950-55; *Catalogue* 25 MW ll. 17-33 and 229 MW ll. 6-13; Pind. *Isth.* 4.52-60. See Kirk (1974) 177-79 and Padilla (1998) 15-16, 51 for the possibility of later interpolations in Homer and Hesiod. Liapis (2006) discusses some of the ambiguity over Heracles' mortality in relation to, esp., Homer and the *Trachiniae*.

from discussing death and Heracles to announcing his intention to grasp κλέος ἐσθλὸν in line 121. To quote Barker and Christensen, “By embracing the heroic paradigm of a short life for eternal renown, concomitant with the suffering it entails, Achilles willingly performs his story as a Heraclean tale.”<sup>129</sup> Achilles is accepting death but with the hope of living on through memory.

Subtler but still just as compelling is how the vocabulary used to describe Heracles and Achilles is interconnected, further solidifying the two heroes’ relationship. To start with, both men are “city-sackers.” In Book 2, Heracles is said to have “sacked many cities” (πέρσας [from the verb πέρθω] ἄστεα πολλά, 2.660), and in other texts, the epithet “city-sacker” (πτολί/πορθος [also from the verb πέρθω]) is applied to him (e.g. the *Catalogue* 229 MW line 17). In the *Iliad*, the only other people who are given that epithet are gods (Enyo 5.333, Ares 20.152), men not on the fields of Troy (Oileus 2.728, Otrynteus 20.384), Odysseus (2.278, 10.363), and—importantly—Achilles (8.372, 15.77, 21.550, 24.108). The verb ἐξαλαπάζω, in the context of sacking Troy, is also used for both Heracles (5.642, 14.251) and Achilles (20.30). Thus, both heroes are expressly identified as city-sackers. Furthermore, of the only nine adjectives used in the *Iliad* to modify Heracles, four are also used for Achilles, among other men (κρατερός 5.392 = 18.55, 21.553, 21.566, 24.212; σχέτλιος 5.403 = 9.630, 16.203, 22.41, 22.86; ὑπέρθυμος 14.250 = 20.88, 20.333; θεῖος 15.25, 20.145 = 16.798-99, 17.199, 19.279, 19.297), and two other adjectives are *exclusively* used for these two men and no others in the *Iliad* (ὀβριμοεργός 5.403 = 22.418; θυμολέων 5.639 = 7.228).<sup>130</sup> The combination of the adjective αἴσυλος with the verb

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<sup>129</sup> Barker and Christensen (2014) 276. They go on to discuss how Achilles inevitably cannot be a Heracles, partly because of his reintegration into the community and re-acceptance of the social values of the warriors at Troy.

<sup>130</sup> The adjective ὀβριμοεργός shows up nowhere else outside of these two passages (*caveat*: 5.403 might have some textual difficulties), and θυμολέων elsewhere only describes Odysseus and Achilles in the *Odyssey* (4.724, 4.814, 11.267). See Wilson (2002) for a discussion of this

ρέζω at line-end position is also only used for Heracles (ὄς οὐκ ὄθητ' αἴσυλα ρέζων, 5.403) and Achilles (περὶ δ' αἴσυλα ρέζεις, 21.214), both in moments where the heroes are assaulting deities.<sup>131</sup> To sum up, repeatedly throughout the *Iliad*, Heracles and Achilles are linked together. In a way, Achilles is carrying on Heracles' legacy—attacking Troy, assaulting gods, displaying remarkable feats of strength, and gaining glorious, endless *kleos*.

There are also the many similarities the heroes share in their biographies. Both have one divine parent and possess a superhuman *biē* that sets them apart from other heroes. Gods planned the circumstances surrounding their births to limit the heroes' power: when Zeus, excited for Heracles' birth, made an oath that the child born on that day would be the lord of the land, Hera delayed Alcmena's labor and hurried Nicippe's so that Eurystheus would fulfill the oath instead of Heracles (*Iliad* 19.95-138), and Zeus married Thetis off to Peleus instead of sleeping with her himself because it was prophesied that her son would be greater than his father (e.g. Aeschylus *PB* 764-70, Pindar *Isth.* 8.26-47). Cheiron educated them as boys,<sup>132</sup> and there is a chance that Heracles may have even met Achilles in this context. In a fragment by Antisthenes, Heracles compliments “some youth” (τινος νεανίσκου) who was being educated by Cheiron, saying, “because he is big in stature, attractive, and in the prime of life, no cowardly lover would love him” (μέγας γάρ...καὶ καλὸς καὶ ὠραῖος, οὐκ ἂν αὐτοῦ ἠράσθη δειλὸς ἐραστής), and Kennedy

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epithet and, more generally speaking, lion imagery/similes for Odysseus, Achilles, and Heracles in Homer.

<sup>131</sup> I have here discussed how six of the nine adjectives used to describe Heracles in the *Iliad* are also used for Achilles. The remaining three adjectives not discussed include φίλτατος (18.118; cf. Achilles at 20.334, φίλτερος ἀθανάτοισιν), θρασυμένων (5.639; the only other place it shows up in Homer is *Od.* 11.267, also modifying Heracles), and κρατερόφρων (14.324; the only other place it shows up in the *Iliad* is 10.184, describing a wild animal).

<sup>132</sup> The evidence for Cheiron educating Heracles is a sixth-century amphora that shows Hermes delivering Heracles to the centaur (Munich 1615A).

makes a convincing argument that this youth was Achilles.<sup>133</sup> Both Heracles and Achilles were dissatisfied serving men—Eurystheus and Agamemnon, respectively—whom they deemed lesser than themselves (e.g. *Od.* 11.617-26 and *Iliad* 1.163-71), and these two ultra-masculine heroes were compelled (by women, notably) to cross-dress at least once in their career.<sup>134</sup> They have both fought river deities.<sup>135</sup> They challenged the communal values that are indicative of warriors in the *Iliad*: Heracles was famously independent, and Achilles, after being slighted by Agamemnon, kept himself distant from the community of Greeks.<sup>136</sup> Both are heroes whose supreme merit can be both good and bad for society,<sup>137</sup> and they both underwent “mortality-destroying fire” to achieve immortality.<sup>138</sup> To put it simply, Heracles and Achilles are two heroes

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<sup>133</sup> Kennedy (2017) 208-209 believes that Heracles is referring to Achilles based on similarities in vocabulary between this passage, another passage by Antisthenes comparing Alcibiades to Achilles, and descriptions of Achilles in the *Iliad*. (This passage is labeled as Antisthenes fragment Decleva Caizzi 25 = Giannantoni 98 = Kennedy [2017] MD7.) In Ovid, the two heroes do in fact meet: *Fast.* 5.379-414. Whether this is an Ovidian innovation or derived from a Greek source (like Antisthenes?) is unknown.

<sup>134</sup> Achilles dressed as a girl to avoid joining the Greek expedition against Troy (e.g. Paus. 1.22.6; Stat. *Achilleid*), and Heracles was forced to serve the queen Omphale wherein he appears in our fragments to have assumed a feminine role and appearance (e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 785e; Ovid *Heroides* 9.73-118, *Fasti* 2.303-58; possibly a sixth-century BCE amphora, Malibu 77.AE.45; see Fowler [2013] 318-21, Stafford [2012] 132-34, Llewellyn-Jones [2005] 57-58, Gantz [1993] 439-40, Pike [1977] 80-81). For a comparison of these two events, see Cyrino (1998), who also gives further details about the evidence for both stories.

<sup>135</sup> Achilles = Scamander (e.g. *Il.* 21.214ff.); Heracles = Acheloos (e.g. *Trach.* 507-30). Nagy (2005) 83 observes that Scamander bellows like a bull (21.237) while Acheloos appears as a bull to fight Heracles (Archilochus F 286-87).

<sup>136</sup> Galinsky (1972) 14: “[Achilles’ choice to compare himself to Heracles] is entirely appropriate; Achilles is the hero who breaks the noble code of behavior and truculently refuses to participate in the common undertakings of the Greeks. Even after he finally relents, he does not lose the lonely grandeur which sets him apart from the others.”

<sup>137</sup> For Achilles’ heroic ambiguity, see e.g. Goldhill (1991b) 16-18. For linking Achilles and Heracles together as ambiguous heroes who both save and destroy, see Kirk (1974) 205 and Papadopoulou (2005) 41-42, the latter of whom also notes how Heracles in Euripides’ *Heracles* parallels Achilles in the *Iliad*.

<sup>138</sup> See Burgess (2001) 215-17 who discusses how both heroes lived “between a state of mortality and a state of immortality” until they achieved the latter through fire. For Achilles, Thetis had tried—but was stopped by Peleus—to make her son immortal by burning his mortal

from different eras traveling parallel paths.

Thus, Apollonius draws from some traditions and ignores others in his version of Heracles so that the hero can more easily channel Iliadic heroism in the *Argonautica*. Apollonius chose an archaic, not contemporary, depiction of Heracles, disregarding the many transformations experienced by the Heracleian character across centuries in order to bring Achilles and Heracles closer together. Achilles is not known for lust, gluttony, pan-Hellenism, championing the cause of good over evil, or philosophy, so the *Argonautica*'s Heracles is not. Additionally, as was just discussed, a foundation of similarities between Achilles and Heracles had already been constructed long before Apollonius came around. Homer presents Achilles as something of a new Heracles, and several elements in their biographies intersect. Heracles was, therefore, effectively *primed* to be compared to Achilles when Apollonius set out to write the *Argonautica*.

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flesh (*Argonautica* 4.869-79, Apollod. 3.13.6), and after his death, she takes the immortal remnants of her son from his funeral pyre and brings him to Leuke, a story recounted in the *Aethiopsis*; see pp. 215-16. Heracles' transformation is discussed pp. 216-17. See also Mackie (1998).

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