

Inside Orpheus' Songs: Orpheus as an Argonaut in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*

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ORPHEUS WAS KNOWN to be part of the Argonauts' crew from at least the sixth century, to judge from a metope in Delphi.¹ Pindar in his fourth Pythian ode, the first extant, non-fragmentary version in European literature of the famous myth of Jason and the Argonauts, presents Orpheus as an active participant, sent by Apollo, the father of song (*Pyth.* 4.176–177).² His part in the expedition is highlighted further in Apollonius' *Argonautica*.³ In the narrative he is

¹ The metope of the Sikyonian *monopteros*: M.-X. Garezou, *LIMC* 7.1 (1994) 81–105, at 84; G. N. Szeliga, "The Composition of the Argo Metopes from the Monopteros at Delphi," *AJA* 90 (1986) 297–305. For an overview of early literary accounts that include Orpheus in the expedition see W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*² (London 1952) 27. For Simonides fr.62 (Page, *PMG*) as referring to the expedition see E. Robbins, "Famous Orpheus," in John Warden (ed.), *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth* (Toronto 1982) 3–23, at 21. A possible reference by Ibycus: fr.25 *PMG*.

² Cf. E. Robbins, "Jason and Cheiron: The Myth of Pindar's Fourth Pythian," *Phoenix* 29 (1975) 205–213, at 205; C. Segal, *Orpheus: The Myth of the Poet* (Baltimore 1989) 12–13. The ode commemorated the victory of King Arcesilas of Cyrene in the chariot race at the games of 462 B.C.E.; Arcesilas claimed descent from one of the Argonauts.

³ E. Bowie, "The Reception of Apollonius in Imperial Greek Literature," in M. A. Harder et al. (eds.), *Apollonius Rhodius* (Hellenistica Groning. 4 [2000]) 1–10, at 9, notes the prominence of Apollonius' account of the Argonauts in the Greek literary tradition, as no poet tried to supersede him until the late antique *Orphica Argonautica*.

the first named in the roster of the crew, in the office equivalent to that of a *keleustes*, as he undertook the role of giving the rhythm to the rowers with his chanting (*Arg.* 1.23–34, 540).⁴ By examining Orpheus' performances during the expedition, I seek to re-assess his role as an Argonaut.⁵ The function of his music is not only to set the rhythm for the rowers, but has a more profound power, as he also performs a variety of religious rites. Accordingly, I will examine his role in historical terms,

⁴ Guthrie, *Orpheus* 28. For the role of Orpheus in the Argo's departure see R. J. Clare, *The Path of the Argo: Language, Imagery and Narrative in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (Cambridge 2002) 59–60. On the conspicuous absence of the gods in the Argonauts' departure see D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford 1991) 69.

⁵ The figure of Orpheus as an Argonaut has been discussed in D. Nelis, "Demodocus and the Song of Orpheus," *MusHelv* 49 (1992) 153–170, who relates him to the Homeric singer Demodocus, and S. Busch, "Orpheus bei Apollonios Rhodios," *Hermes* 121 (1993) 301–324, who sees in him the portrayal of the ideal artist. Clare, *Path of the Argo* 231–260, sees Orpheus as the figure that brings order, in opposition to Medea, a figure also associated with magic and charms, one that brings disorder and destruction. B. Scherer, *Mythos, Katalog und Prophezeiung: Studien zu den Argonautika des Apollonios Rhodios* (Stuttgart 2006) 115, remarks that the implications of his prominent position have still not been fully researched, with most scholarly attention going to the possible philosophical, religious, and historical connotations of Orpheus. For his songs, especially the cosmogonic song at *Arg.* 1.496–511, see M. Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche. Un'analisi del racconto in Apollonio Rodio* (Rome 1985) 58–63; A. J. Kleywegt, "Die 'anderen' Argonauten," in M. Korn and H. J. Tschiedel (eds.), *Ratis Omnia Vincet. Untersuchungen zu den Argonautika des Valerius Flaccus* (Hildesheim 1991) 229; S. Natzel, *Klea gunaikon, Frauen in den "Argonautica" des Apollonios Rhodios* (Trier 1992) 205; J. Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts. The Redefinition of the Epic Hero in Book 1 of Apollonius's Argonautica* (Berkeley 1993) 26–32; R. Albis, *Poet and Audience in the Argonautica of Apollonius* (Lanham 1996) 29–31; C. Pietsch, "Weltdeutung im Orpheusgesang. Zur Bedeutung von Apollonios Rhodios, *Arg.* I 496–511," *Gymnasium* 106 (1999) 521–540. For Empedoclean allusions in the songs of Orpheus see P. Kyriakou, "Empedoclean Echoes in Apollonius Rhodius' 'Argonautica,'" *Hermes* 122 (1994) 309–319. For Orpheus as *alter ego* of the narrator see M. Asper, "Apollonius on Poetry," in T. Papanghelis and A. Rengakos (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Apollonius Rhodius* (Leiden 2008) 167–197, at 177–179.

and compare it to the role of an oikist in colonization expeditions.⁶

In the scholia to the *Argonautica* we find a surprising debate about Orpheus' participation in the expedition. One tradition distinguished two figures named Orpheus, one of whom was an Argonaut, the other the son of Apollo and the Muse of epic poetry Calliope. This uneasiness about including Orpheus among the Argonauts was addressed by Pherecydes, who held that it was not Orpheus but Philammon who sailed with the Argonauts. While in Apollonius it is clearly Orpheus the poet, the doubt in the scholia reflects the difficulty presented by a figure related to music and poetry participating in a heroic expedition. The scholiasts wonder why a *weak* man like Orpheus sailed with the heroes (schol. on 1.23–25a):

πρῶτά νυν Ὀρφῆος· Ἡρόδωρος δύο εἶναι Ὀρφείους φησιν, ὧν τὸν ἕτερον συμπλεύσαι τοῖς Ἀργοναύταις. Φερεκύδης ἐν τῇ σ' Φιλάμμωνα φησι καὶ οὐκ Ὀρφέα συμπλευκέναι. ἔστι δέ, ὡς Ἀσκληπιάδης, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Καλλιόπης· ἐνιοὶ δὲ ἀπὸ Οἰάγρου καὶ Πολυμνίας. ζητεῖται δέ, διὰ τί Ὀρφεὺς ἀσθενὴς ὧν συνέπλει τοῖς ἥρωσιν· ὅτι μάντις ὧν ὁ Χείρων ἔχρησε δύνασθαι καὶ τὰς Σειρήνας παρελθεῖν αὐτοὺς Ὀρφέως συμπλέοντος.

But first let us remember Orpheus: Herodorus (*FGrHist* 31 F 42) says that there are two Orpheuses, one of whom sailed with the Argonauts. Pherecydes in the sixth book (3 F 25) says that it was Philammon, not Orpheus, who sailed with them. He was, according to Asclepiades (12 F 6c), the son of Apollo and Calliope; but some say of Oeagrus and Polymnia. Some wonder, though,

⁶ For the Argonauts' journey as modelled on Greek colonization see A. Moreau, "Les transformations du périple des Argonautes. Un miroir des progrès de la colonisation grecque," *Euphrosyne* 28 (2000) 325–334. For the term "colonization," conventionally applied to the foundation of cities by a mother city (*metropolis*) under the leadership of an official founder (*oikistes*), see I. Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity* (Berkeley 1998) 13. For the traditional conception of colonization as religious act see R. Parker, "Athenian Religion Abroad," in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (eds.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts presented to David Lewis* (Oxford 1994) 339–346.

why Orpheus, who was weak, sailed with the heroes: because Cheiron, being a soothsayer, prophesied that they would be able to get past the Sirens with Orpheus sailing with them.

The passage maps out early reflections on poetic activity and Apollonius' intertextual matrix. In light of the scholiast's explanation, the encounter of Orpheus with the Sirens becomes of great importance vis-à-vis the meta-poetic references that are created throughout the poem. Orpheus, like the Muses, is closely associated with the construction of the poetic self and has been interpreted as a mirror of the poet; as Sherer remarks, with Orpheus, the poet himself sails on the ship.⁷

Orpheus' presence among the heroes has also been viewed in conjunction with the new epic ideals that arise in Hellenistic times and the new approaches to heroic and ethical behavior.⁸ The standard epithet for Jason, *amechanos*, "resourceless," marks a strong difference from the values attributed to the traditional heroes of early Greek epic.⁹ The female Medea gradually gains

⁷ Sherer, *Mythos* 117–118. See also C. M. Beye, *Epic and Romance in the Argonautica of Apollonius* (Carbondale 1982) 18–19; Fusillo, *Tempo delle Argonautiche* 59; S. Goldhill, "The Paradigms of Epic: Apollonius Rhodius and the Example of the Past," in *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1991) 284–333, at 297–298; Busch, *Hermes* 121 (1993) 323–324; R. Hunter, *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies* (Cambridge 1993) 150–151; M. Margolies, *Apollonius' Argonautica. A Callimachean Epic* (Leiden 1994) 82; P. Kyriakou, *Homeric Hapax Legomena in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius: A Literary Study* (Stuttgart 1995) 190–191.

⁸ S. Stephens, *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Berkeley 2003) 225, who argues that Orpheus' and Jason's particular skills are exemplified by song and intelligence, while Medea adds magic. In her view, this is a fusion between Greek and Egyptian journey tales, where song, intelligence, and magic are the main threads of a pattern exemplified by heroic figures or the respective mythologies. See also K. Gutzwiller, *A Guide to Hellenistic Literature* (Malden 2007) 84.

⁹ On Jason's heroism see Hunter, *Argonautica* 15–25; also D. Clayman, "The Scepticism of Apollonius' *Argonautica*," in Harder, *Apollonius* 33–53, for the view that Jason's *amechania* reflects a Skeptic intellectual stance. The epithet *amechanos*: *Arg.* 1.460, 2.578, 3.126, 3.951, 3.1157, 4.107.

dominance as a central figure.¹⁰ While Medea is associated with magic, which despite its efficacy brings discord, Orpheus is associated with ritual activity, communication with the divine sphere, and restoration of *homonoia* and order. In this nexus of character dynamics, the figure of Orpheus appears even more intriguing, since it is he who, in a subtle manner, provides resources at critical moments during the journey. As the narrative states from the beginning, his song's power makes his participation in the crew essential (1.23–34). Thus it is important to delve into the representation of his song in order to evaluate what further parameters his presence brings in Apollonius' epic.¹¹ Orpheus was thought by the Greeks to be not only a teacher but also the inventor of ritual.¹² The tradition of the inventor of ritual is blurred with that of the first Argonaut on the Argo.¹³

The presentation of the crew members in catalogue form (1.23–227) is based on the structure of the catalogue in *Iliad* 2.¹⁴

¹⁰ The female character emerges as a counterpoint to the male: Natzel, *Klea* 203. For the disjunction between Orpheus as someone with beneficial effects on the Argonauts' goals and Medea as the maleficent sorceress see Clare, *Path of the Argo* 249–260.

¹¹ On the opposition of Orpheus' power and Heracles' strength see Clauss, *Best of the Argonauts* 30, and M. Williams, *Landscape in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (Frankfurt 1991) 204. Williams (203–210) presents Orpheus as the possessor of *techné* in a structuralist reading, emphasizing the importance of landscape description. For a review of Orpheus' presence throughout the *Argonautica* see Scherer, *Mythos* 117–124.

¹² Ar. *Ran.* 1032; cf. F. Graf, "A History of Scholarship on the Tablets," in F. Graf and S. I. Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (New York 2007) 50.

¹³ It is noteworthy that Apollonius does not discuss the Argo as the first ship. On that tradition see S. Jackson, "Argo: The First Ship?" *RhM* 140 (1997) 249–257.

¹⁴ J. F. Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic," *YCS* 13 (1952) 35–143; D. N. Levin, "Apollonius' Heracles," *CJ* 67 (1971) 22–28; Beye, *Epic and Romance* 22–23; J. Clauss, "A Mythological Thaumatrope in Apollonius Rhodius," *Hermes* 119 (1991) 484–488; E. Sistikou, "Παράδοση

The two halves of Apollonius' catalogue are introduced with Orpheus and Heracles.¹⁵ They both perform tasks that involve travel and transportation: Orpheus brought the oak trees from Pieria to Thrace with his music (28–31), and Heracles brought the Erymanthian boar from Arcadia to Mycenae with his physical strength (124–129). As Clauss remarks, Orpheus introduces the first part of the crew, which involves heroes who “achieved their respective feats through their communicative skills; the second half is framed with accounts of heroes who attained the object of their quest through their physical prowess.”¹⁶ The reference to Orpheus at the beginning of the catalogue of heroes makes a geographical reference as well. While he was known as a Thracian hero, his birthplace is stated to be Pierian Pimpleia, in Thessalian territory, the region that was the departure point for the expedition.¹⁷ Thrace and Thessaly are interlaced through Orpheus, whose origin is described at the very beginning of the *Argonautica* (1.24–25); he was born near the peak of Pimpleia, an offspring of the union between Pierian Calliope and Thracian Oeagrus. Apollonius pays special attention to Orpheus' origin while marking the power of his lyre-playing, which could charm wild oaks and bring them from Thrace to Pieria (28–31).

Orpheus is responsible for all ritual activities during the Argonauts' journey.¹⁸ He also provides solutions at moments of

και Νεοτερικότητα στον Κατάλογο των Αργοναυτών,” *Hellenica* 51 (2001) 231–264; Sherer, *Mythos* 125–134.

¹⁵ See Clauss, *Best of the Argonauts* 30–32.

¹⁶ Clauss, *Best of the Argonauts* 32.

¹⁷ For the importance of geography and of the Thracian-Thessalian connections see Sherer, *Mythos* 125. On the catalogue of heroes, with a detailed analysis on Apollonius' narrative digressions and emphasis on the heroes' biographies, as well as on the appropriation of hymnic elements in the presentation of a Hellenistic catalogue of heroes, see Sistikou, *Hellenica* 51 (2001) 231–264, who suggests that Apollonius modelled his construction of the extended sections of the catalogues, such as the one referring to Orpheus (1.26–31), on hymnic presentation.

¹⁸ This role is presented at its peak at the end of the *Argonautica* (4.1547),

crisis. In this capacity, his presence among the Argonauts resembles many aspects of the role of an oikist. The ritual functions that he often performs in the poem quite recognizably allude to rituals of *ktisis*. The oikist was responsible for performing the proper rites and for establishing cults, social order, and laws. The evidence of his full role and duties is scanty and often conflicting.¹⁹ All sources associate the oikist's role with the delegation and performance of religious duties. He was the one who decided on places, times for ritual activities, shrines of the gods, and secret burial places of heroes. The authority of individual oikists varied in different times and circumstances. An oikist's role involved leadership at many levels: organizational, military, spiritual. Sometimes there were two or more oikists with shared duties. The oikist was responsible for communication with the divine through oracle consultation, divination during the journey, transfer of sacred fire, and the establishing of new sanctuaries and cults. He was a figure invested with religious duties and authority. Often the oikist would receive a hero cult in the founded city after his death.²⁰

where he tells the Argonauts to offer the tripod of Apollo to the gods of lake Tritonis if they want a safe return. Diodorus (4.43.1) also reports that he saved the Argonauts by praying to the Dioscouri, as he was the only one who was initiated into their mysteries.

¹⁹ *Od.* 6.7–11 on the role of Nausithous has been regarded as the earliest account of an oikist. Among early sources are Pind. *Pyth.* 5.85–93 on Battus of Cyrene and Hdt. 6.38 on Miltiades of Athens who was offered posthumously sacrifices by the people in Chersonese, as was customary for a founder (cf. Thuc. 5.11). On the historical role of an *oikist* see Hdt. 4.159, Thuc. 1.24, 3.92, 6.3, and later Pl. *Resp.* 379A, Diod. 12.35, Strab. 12.3.11, Plut. *Mor.* 407F–408A, *Sol.* 2.7, *Tim.* 35.4. Cf. J. P. Wilson "Ideologies of Greek Colonization," in G. Bradley and J.-P. Wilson (eds.), *Greek and Roman Colonization: Origins, Ideologies and Interactions* (Swansea 2006) 43–48; I. Malkin, *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece* (New York 1987); A. J. Graham, *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece* (Manchester 1964) 29–39.

²⁰ Malkin, *Religion and Colonization* 3–4. For the problems arising from both literary and archaeological evidence regarding the role of an oikist and the varied approaches to founder and founder-cult in different sources see Wilson in Bradley and Wilson, *Greek and Roman Colonization* 44–48.

Mythological narrative has a strong capacity for “diffuseness” and “mutability.”²¹ As such, Apollonius’ version of the Argonauts’ journey is replete with foundation stories and subplots that negotiate cultural boundaries.²² The basic structure of the story deploys elements of interaction with regions perceived as populated by monsters or figures outside of the boundaries of the civilized world.²³ Apollonius had a strong interest in *ktisis*, specifically foundation poetry, of which few fragments survive (fr.4–12 Powell).²⁴ He wrote accounts of the foundation of Alexandria, Naucratis, Caunus, Cnidus, Rhodes, and possibly Canobos and Lesbos.²⁵ This type of poetry must have had an effect on his later compositions, as the *Argonautica* is usually assumed to be. The Ptolemaic political context and interest in religious activity had a special resonance on contemporary poetics.²⁶ Stephens argues convincingly that the prominence of *aitia* and foundation myths is a result of the Ptolemaic state’s colonizing dimension: “Like those Greeks who settled in the eastern Mediterranean and in Sicily and South Italy in an earlier age, the Ptolemies were claiming new territories, and there was need, subconsciously or otherwise, to reconfigure them imaginatively in Greek terms.”²⁷ Even the centrality of Jason and Medea’s marriage can be read as an analogue of the

²¹ Terms used by A. Zissos, “Allusion and Narrative Possibility in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus,” *CP* 94 (1999) 289–301, at 300.

²² Stephens, *Seeing Double* 186–196.

²³ Stephens, *Seeing Double* 185.

²⁴ See E. Sistikou, “Beyond the *Argonautica*: In Search of Apollonius’ *Ktisis* Poems,” in *Brill’s Companion* 311–340; S. Stephens, “Ptolemaic Epic,” in *Brill’s Companion* 96–97; Gutzwiller, *Guide* 75; N. Krevans, “On the Margins of Epic: the Foundation-Poems of Apollonius,” in Harder, *Apollonius* 69–84; R. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes: Argonautica Book III* (Cambridge 1989) 10–12.

²⁵ For discussion of the testimonia see Sistikou in *Brill’s Companion* 311–340.

²⁶ A. Mori, *The Politics of Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica* (Cambridge 2008) 4.

²⁷ Stephens, *Seeing Double* 188.

unions between gods and local nymphs that populate Greek colonization myth, also deployed in Pindar's version of the myth in *Pythian* 4.²⁸

Thus, Orpheus' role needs to be re-examined and seen in the larger scheme of encountering the "other." Particularly in relation to the divine, he is the one to give the guidelines of what ought to be done in each case. After leaving Lemnos, the Argonauts come to Samothrace, where they are initiated into the Mysteries of the Cabiri on Orpheus' instructions (1.913–921). Apollonius imposes silence on the poetic persona by proclaiming that it is forbidden to speak openly about the secret rites on the island of Electra (921).²⁹ The voice of the narrator and that of Orpheus are blended in an allusion to mysteries and the insider's reticence about religious initiation, necessary for the continuation and safety of the rest of the journey.

Orpheus is the one who performs the inaugural sacrifice, and later in Book 1 commands the Argonauts to sacrifice to Rhea, after they had killed King Cyzicus by accident on their second return (1132–1141):

πολλὰ δὲ τήνγε λιτῆσιν ἀποστρέψαι ἐριώλας
 Αἰσονίδης γουνάζετ', ἐπιλλείβων ἱεροῖσιν
 αἰθομένοις· ἄμυδις δὲ νέοι Ὀρφῆος ἀνωγῆ
 σκαίροντες βηταρμὸν ἐνόπλιον ὠρχήσαντο,
 καὶ σάκεα ξιφέεσσιν ἐπέκτυπον, ὡς κεν ἰωὴ
 δύσφημος πλάζοιτο δι' ἥερος ἦν ἔτι λαοί
 κηδείη βασιλῆος ἀνέστενον. ἔνθεν ἔσαιεῖ
 ῥόμβω καὶ τυπάνῳ Ῥεῖην Φρύγες ἰλάσκονται.
 ἢ δέ που εὐαγέεσσιν ἐπὶ φρένα θῆκε θυηλαῖς
 ἀνταίη δαίμων, τὰ δ' εἰκότα σήματ' ἔγεντο.

Jason supplicated the goddess with many prayers to turn away the tempest, as he poured libations on the blazing sacrifices. At the same time, upon Orpheus' command, the young men leapt

²⁸ Stephens, *Seeing Double* 192.

²⁹ On this scene see Clare, *Path of the Argo* 274, who connects the self-imposed reticence of the poet with that of Phineus at 2.388–391.

as they danced the dance-in-armor and beat their shields with their swords, so that any ill-omened cry of grief, which the people were still sending up in lament for their king, would be lost in the air. Since then, the Phrygians have always propitiated Rhea with rhombus and tambourine. The amenable goddess evidently paid heed to their holy sacrifices, for fitting signs appeared.³⁰

The cult of Rhea is associated with musical and dance performances to the accompaniment of a drum, and Orpheus' order to perform such dances is represented in the *Argonautica* narrative as an *aition* of Rhea's cult. It is after this incident that the Phrygians propitiate the goddess with the "wheel and the drum" (1139). This scene brings into focus cross-cultural relations and the effect of the Argonauts on them. A story about the establishment of a cult in a newly-discovered place is the epistemological way of reconfiguring Greek identity in a foreign people. As Stephens argues: "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."³¹ The killing of the local king, as in the Cyzicus episode, presents for the Argonauts with a problem of pollution that requires purification. Contact and conflict with indigenous populations was the epitome of Greek colonial experience.³² The model presented in Apollonius' narrative is one of murder-pollution, linked to ritual purification, a model that addresses anxieties in the colonial process.³³ Dougherty persuasively argues that "the Greeks considered colonization to be a kind of purification; their foundation stories consciously record and proudly display

³⁰ Translations of Apollonius are from W. H. Race (Loeb, 2008). Other translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

³¹ Stephens, *Seeing Double* 188.

³² C. Dougherty, *The Poetics of Colonization: From City to Text in Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1993) 67.

³³ Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 38–40, 157–158.

their polluted and murderous origins.”³⁴ This links even more closely the role of Orpheus to that of an oikist.³⁵ Orpheus presents the solution to the problem of pollution and institutes new rites in honor of Rhea. She responds with approval through the manifestation of signs (1141). The vocabulary of signs is presented carefully throughout the *Argonautica*. The signs of Orpheus’ music (σήματα μολπῆς, 1.28) correspond to Rhea’s signs.³⁶ The goddess’s approval highlights a permanent change to the landscape that brings the transformation of a dry land into one of fertility and abundance. Such a transformation is in accordance with underlying ideologies of formerly arid lands transformed into prosperity thanks to the intervention of the newcomers.

Orpheus’ role as the spiritual leader of the expedition is emphasized throughout the *Argonautica*. After the arrival at the isle of Thynias, Apollo’s glorious epiphany to the crew is expounded by Orpheus, who orders a hymn and sacrificial rites (2.669–719). When the other crew members emulate their leader Jason in his resourcelessness (681, τοὺς δ’ ἔλε ... ἀμήχανον), Orpheus is the one who will behave like the oikist and give a name to the island and lead sacrificing and altar-building there (685–693):

Ὀρφεὺς ἔκφατο μῦθον ἀριστήεσσι πιφαύσκων·
 “εἰ δ’ ἄγε δὴ νῆσον μὲν Ἑωίου Ἀπόλλωνος
 τήνδ’ ἱερὴν κλείωμεν, ἐπεὶ πάντεσσι φαάνθη
 ἦψος μετιῶν· τὰ δὲ ῥέξομεν οἷα πάρεστιν,
 βωμὸν ἀναστήσαντες ἐπάκτιον. εἰ δ’ ἂν ὀπίσσω
 γαῖαν ἐς Αἰμονίην ἀσκηθέα νόστον ὀπάσση
 δὴ τότε οἱ κεραῶν ἐπὶ μηρία θήσομεν αἰγῶν·
 νῦν δ’ αὐτῶς κνίσση λοιβῆσί τε μελιξασθαι
 κέκλομαι· ἀλλ’ ἴληθι, ἄναξ, ἴληθι φαανθείς.”

³⁴ Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 41.

³⁵ For the close connections between colonization and religion see Malkin, *Religion and Colonization*.

³⁶ Clare, *Path of the Argo* 73.

At last Orpheus made this declaration to the heroes: “Come, let us name the sacred island of Apollo Heoius, because he appeared at dawn to us all as he passed by, and let us set up an altar on the shore and sacrifice whatever is at hand. And if hereafter he grants us a safe return to the Haemonian land, then indeed we shall place on his altar the thighs of horned goats. But for now, I bid you propitiate him as best we can with the savor of meat and libations. Be gracious, lord, be gracious, you who appeared to us.”

An oikist names the new city as part of founding a colony.³⁷ In Aristophanes’ *Birds* the colonization process is described in detail: name-giving and sacrifice form the two essential stages. Through parody, the play gives important insight into the steps of founding a new city. When Euelpides and Peisthetaerus form their new city and the chorus asks about the next step, the answer is that they should give the newly-established city a great and glorious name (*Av.* 809–811):

πρῶτον ὄνομα τῇ πόλει
θέσθαι τι μέγα καὶ κλεινόν, εἶτα τοῖς θεοῖς
θῦσαι μετὰ τοῦτο.

First we should establish a great and glorious name for the city, and then, after that, make sacrifices to the gods.

The verb repeated in Aristophanes’ *Birds* is οἰκίζω.³⁸ Although the Argonauts are not founding a colony, Apollonius is playing with the notion of colonization without quite conforming to all its practices. He creates the illusion of crucial colonization acts like naming cities and establishing altars by ascribing the initiative to Orpheus. The founding and naming of cities had a particular resonance in Hellenistic times, when new cities were established and named for contemporary rulers. Orpheus as the son of Apollo, the god with whose cult center colonization was so closely associated, is setting new boundaries of Greek

³⁷ Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 24, 84.

³⁸ *Av.* 172, 173, 183, 196. For a tradition about the oikist naming a city see also Plut. *Arat.* 45.8.

influence, creating the idealized paradigm, in a narrative about a voyage that can be read as a proto-colonization enterprise.

In Book 2 the Argonauts find themselves on a desert island (*ἐρημαίης νήσου*, 2.672). Here in his structure of the story of Apollo's fight against Delphynes, Apollonius follows Callimachus *Ap.* 97–104. But as Köhnken argues,³⁹ whereas Callimachus focuses on the figure of Apollo and the etymology of the god's name, Apollonius presents three *aitia*: the island of Apollo Heoios (2.686–688), the origin of the salutatory cry to the god (711–713), and the founding of the temple of Homonoia (715–719). Colonial foundation narratives are often conceptualized around uninhabited islands that have never been tamed and are thus in need of cultivation.⁴⁰ Pindar in his fifth Pythian (89–93) says that Battus, founder of Cyrene, established altars for the gods, with specific reference to the cult of Apollo and the rites in his honor. Inauguration of a cult in honor of a particular god was conceived as part of the city founder's duties. Orpheus follows that pattern at the desert island Thynias: he establishes the cult of Apollo by building an altar and then performs a hymn in honor of the god. The hymn focuses on a narrative of victory, that of Apollo over the monster Delphynes at Mt. Parnassus. Orpheus' performance presents a famous foundation story, like the one in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* about the establishment of Apollo's cult in Delphi.⁴¹ Apollonius

³⁹ A. Köhnken, "Hellenistic Chronology: Theocritus, Callimachus, and Apollonius Rhodius," in *Brill's Companion* 73–94, at 78.

⁴⁰ See Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 21–24, for examples.

⁴¹ The second part of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the so-called Pythian part, and in particular lines 247–546. At the same time, Apollonius alludes to Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, see Stephens, *Seeing Double* 114–121. Clare, *Path of the Argo* 238–240, notes Orpheus' central role in establishing Apollo as the protector god and reaffirming the Argonauts' mission. The content of his song, Apollo's victory over Delphynes, relates directly to the situation of the Argonauts, and to the monstrous serpent guarding the fleece, described earlier by Phineus (2.404–407).

rewrites traditional colonization narratives by incorporating in his allusions the central role of the oracle at Delphi. At the same time, by alluding to Pindar's comparisons of colonization and victory, he exploits the parallel between founder and victor.⁴²

Orpheus is the one who will respond to a divine portent, during the Argonauts' voyage home (4.1411–1421), as they carry the Argo on their shoulders.⁴³ In search of a spring to quench their thirst, they come to the sacred plain of the Hesperides nymphs. The sacred serpent Ladon that had guarded them had already been struck down by Heracles. As the Argonauts approach, the nymphs undergo a transformation, becoming dust and earth. Orpheus addresses the nymphs and prays to them for a sign of a source of water, a wish that was granted (1408–1418):

ταὶ δ' αἶψα κόνις καὶ γαῖα, κιόντων
 ἔσσυμένως, ἐγένοντο καταυτόθι. νόσατο δ' Ὀρφεύς
 θεῖα τέρα, τὼς δέ σφε παρηγορέεσκε λιτήσιν.
 “δαίμονες ὦ καλαὶ καὶ εὐφρονες, ἴλατ', ἄνασσαί,
 εἴτ' οὖν οὐρανίαις ἐναρίθμιοί ἐστε θεῆσιν
 εἴτε καταχθονίαις, εἴτ' οἰσπόλοι καλέεσθε
 νύμφαι· ἴτ', ὦ νύμφαι, ἱερὸν γένος Ὠκεανοῖο,
 δείξατ' ἐελδομένοισιν ἐνωπαδὶς ἄμμι φανείσαι
 ἢ τινα πετραίην χύσιν ὕδατος ἢ τινα γαίης
 ἱερὸν ἐκβλύοντα, θεαί, ῥόον, ᾧ ἀπὸ δίψαν
 αἰθομένην ἄμοτον λωφήσομεν.”

The women instantly turned to dust and earth there on the spot. Orpheus recognized the divine portent and for his comrades' sake sought to comfort the nymphs with prayers. “O goddesses

⁴² Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 95.

⁴³ For an interpretation of this scene and the metaphor of the Argo as poetics as it relates to Apollonian poetics see J. Murray, “The Constructions of the Argo in Apollonius' *Argonautica*,” in M. A. Harder and M. P. Cuypers (eds.), *Beginning from Apollo. Studies in Apollonius Rhodius and the Argonautic Tradition* (Leuven 2005) 88–106.

beautiful and kind, be gracious, O queens whether you are counted among the heavenly goddesses or those under the earth, or are called solitary nymphs, come, O nymphs, holy offspring of Ocean, and appear before our longing eyes and show us either some flow of water from a rock or some sacred stream gushing from the ground, goddesses, with which we may relieve our endlessly burning thirst.”

Colonial discourse projects the image of femininity as embodied by the nymphs, who are associated with the flow of sacred water.⁴⁴ Scenes of marriage or of rape, especially of local nymphs, are an integral part of the formation of colonization narrative.⁴⁵ The daughters of Hesperus will be transformed into trees that retain their facial characteristics, Hesperie into a poplar, Eretheis an elm, Aegle a willow. The retention of facial characteristics could also reflect Apollonius’ Ptolemaic context, which promoted copresence.⁴⁶ The nymphs do not disappear but continue to be present as they have been transformed into talking trees with faces of young women. If this transformation is a metaphor for Apollonius’ cultural interweaving and encounter with the “other,” then it is noteworthy that the new form of a tree is a static one, yet with awareness of its origins.

At Lake Tritonis, the god Triton conducts the Argo from the lake into the sea. It is on Orpheus’ advice that they offer Apollo’s tripod to the local deities in order to obtain a safe journey back (4.1547–1555):

⁴⁴ The story of Arethusa’s rape by the river Alpheus and her transformation in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (5.570–641) exemplifies this narrative of union between gods and local nymphs. The transformation of humans into trees is common in Ovid as in the story of Daphne (1.449–568) to avoid rape, as well as the Philemon and Baucis episode (8.618–724). On the latter see E. Gowers, “Talking Trees: Philemon and Baucis Revisited,” *Arethusa* 38 (2005) 331–365.

⁴⁵ Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 9, 62–84.

⁴⁶ The term *copresence* is used and analyzed in the context of Apollonian poetics and Ptolemaic policies by Stephens, *Seeing Double* 196–208.

αὐτίκα δ' Ὀρφεύς
 κέκλετ' Ἀπόλλωνος τρίποδα μέγαν ἔκτοθι νηός
 δαίμοσιν ἐγγενέταις νόστῳ ἔπι μείλια θέσθαι.
 καὶ τοὶ μὲν Φοίβου κτέρας ἵδρυον ἐν χθονὶ βάντες·
 τοῖσιν δ' αἰζῆν ἑναλίγκιος ἀντεβόλησε
 Τρίτων εὐρυβίης· γαίης δ' ἀνὰ βῶλον αἰείρας
 ξείνι' ἀριστήεσσι προῖσχετο, φώνησέν τε·
 “δέχθε φίλοι, ἐπεὶ οὐ περιώσιον ἐγγυαλίξαι
 ἐνθάδε νῦν πάρ' ἐμοὶ ξεινήιον ἀντομένοισιν.”

And suddenly Orpheus advised taking Apollo's great tripod from the ship and placing it as a propitiary offering to the indigenous divinities to secure their return. So they disembarked and were setting up Phoebus' gift on the shore, and wide-ruling Triton met them in the guise of a young man. He picked up a clod of earth and offered it as a guest-gift to the heroes, and said: “Take this, friends, since I do not now have here with me any magnificent guest-gift to give to suppliants.”

Orpheus appears as the bridge to the indigenous people and their gods. However, he brings Apollo's symbol, the tripod, from the ship and sets it in the new land. This is a paradigmatic act that seeks to integrate the dynamics of power that are negotiated at a moment of crisis for the Argonauts. While the local gods are propitiated, Apollo's tripod represents the supremacy of the colonizers' culture. The narrative here addresses the problem of contact with native cultures and their gods in foreign territory. Although violence is dismissed, cultural tensions are present, negotiated through gift-giving.⁴⁷ Apollonius “constructed the literary space of Egypt and North Africa from the perspective of Greek myth and history, particularly through Pindaric allusion.”⁴⁸ The last performances of Orpheus are in the episodes of the Hesperides and Triton, both figures who shift and transform. As Stephens argues, with the

⁴⁷ See Malkin, *Returns of Odysseus* 233: “awareness of violence in relation to natives is highly exceptional in the world of Greek colonization.”

⁴⁸ Stephens, *Seeing Double* 196.

focus on mutable figures like these “the narrative itself effects a virtual collapse into symbolic chaos that presages the dawn of a new order in which two distinctive cultures—Greek and North African—will necessarily be joined.”⁴⁹ From this perspective, Orpheus’ songs go beyond the presentation of a cosmogony, a common theme associated with Orpheus; they encapsulate the beginning of a new cosmos.

In the first book, Orpheus calms the strife that has arisen between Idas and Idmon by singing of the creation of the world (1.494–515). The reference to *neikos*, archetypal strife, makes the narrative of his song very appropriate to the situation it remedies. It is possible that the quarrel between Idas and Idmon is an invention of Apollonius, his contribution to the tradition of quarrel scenes in Greek literature.⁵⁰ As if there is some sympathetic magic ascribed to his singing, the content and the performance context are associated one with the other. Orpheus’ song brings a resolution to the quarrel, and by restoring peace and *homonoia* assures the continuation of the journey.⁵¹ This similarity was remarked already by the scholia (on 1.496–498a):

ἤειδεν δ’ ὡς γαῖα· τὴν πρώτην σύγχυσιν τῶν στοιχείων ἄδειν βούλεται, ὡς ἕκ τινος φιλονεικίας τὸ ἴδιον ἕκαστον μετέσχευε καὶ τάξιν ἔλαβεν. οἰκεία δὲ καὶ τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἢ ᾧδῇ, ὅτι πρέπον ἐστὶ τῆς μάχης παύσασθαι καὶ εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν διάθεσιν ἐπανιέναι.

He sang how earth: He wishes to sing the first mixing of the elements, how out of a kind of strife each obtained its share and received its place. The singing is appropriate to the background,

⁴⁹ Stephens, *Seeing Double* 194.

⁵⁰ For an interpretation of the hymn in the context of *neikos* narratives see Mori, *Politics* 74–82. For the songs of Orpheus and Homeric allusions see Hunter, *Argonautica* 148–151. For intertextual connections with the *Odyssey* with a focus on Demodocus’ song about Ares and Aphrodite, and the complexities of Apollonian poetics in the presentation of characters like Orpheus, see Asper in *Brill’s Companion* 178–179.

⁵¹ See Mori, *Politics* 81.

since it is fitting that they end the battle and return to their proper disposition.

Such a construction of Orphic song in Apollonius' *Argonautica* had an enduring effect: the *Orphica Argonautica* continues a tradition of presenting Orpheus as the leading figure of the Argonautic journey, appropriating motifs of the founder figure and exploring further religious ramifications.⁵²

Orphic narrative as rendered by Apollonius is obsessed with beginnings and genealogical catalogues. The journey itself is fashioned on notions of poetic and political exploration and expansion, the onset of a new era in Alexandrian politics and poetics.⁵³ There are many references to the magical power of his singing during the voyage. The actual *keleustikon* song is presented as a muted performance, a mere reference with no substantial information about its content—with one small exception. When the expedition is launched, Orpheus is the one who plays and sings to invigorate the Argonauts' rowing. Apollonius describes Orpheus' song as *euthemon* (1.569–579):

τοῖσι δὲ φορμίζων εὐθήμονι μέλπεν αἰοιδῆ
 Οἰάγροιο πάϊς Νηοσσόον εὐπατέρειαν
 Ἄρτεμιν, ἣ κείνας σκοπιᾶς ἄλός ἀμφιέπεσκεν
 ῥυομένη καὶ γαῖαν Ἴωλκίδα. τοὶ δὲ βαθείης
 ἰχθύες αἰσσοντες ὑπερθ' ἄλός, ἄμμιγα πᾶυροις
 ἄπλετοι, ὑγρὰ κέλευθα διασκαίροντες ἔποντο.

⁵² The poet of the 1376 linguistically idiosyncratic hexameters, of around the fifth century, must have had access to pre-Apollonian and Roman traditions, see D. Nelis, “The Reading of Orpheus: The *Orphic Argonautica* and the Epic Tradition,” in M. Paschalis (ed.), *Roman and Greek Imperial Epic Poetry* (Herakleion 2005) 169–189, at 179. On genre and language see R. Hunter, “Generic Consciousness in the *Orphic Argonautica*?” in Paschalis 149–168, at 149. F. Vian, *Les Argonautiques Orphiques* (Paris 1987) 45, held that the poet's first language may not have been Greek—semi-hellenized, in Vian's terms—as the Greek emerges as too technical and stylized.

⁵³ As Dougherty, *Poetics of Colonization* 15, remarks, “the Greeks loved to speculate about the beginnings of things. The birth of men and heroes, the origins of cults and religious practices—all beginnings fascinated them, and the founding of cities formed part of this aetiological repertoire.”

ὡς δ' ὀπότ' ἀγραύλοιο μετ' ἵχνια σημαντῆρος
 μυρία μῆλ' ἐφέπονται ἄδην κεκορημένα ποίης
 εἰς αὐλιν, ὃ δέ τ' εἶσι πάρος, σύριγγι λιγείῃ
 καλὰ μελιζόμενος νόμιον μέλος—ὡς ἄρα τοί γε
 ὠμάρτευν· τῆν δ' αἰὲν ἐπασσύτερος φέρειν οὖρος.

The son of Oeagrus played his lyre for them and in a well composed song sang of Artemis Ship-Preserver, child of a great father, the goddess who watched over those peaks by the sea and protected the land of Iolcus. And fish darted above the deep sea, great mixed with small, and followed along, leaping through the watery paths. And as when countless sheep follow in the footsteps of a rustic shepherd to the fold after having had their fill of grass, and he goes in front, beautifully playing a shepherd's tune on his shrill pipes—thus then did the fish accompany the ship, and a steady wind bore it even onward.

Orpheus' role as a *keleustes* in this passage is the idealized form of a tradition that seeks to invigorate manual labor through musical performance. This is the only allusion to the content of the rowing song. The Argonauts were in a region protected by Artemis, as they were leaving Mt. Pelion, and the song takes the form of a hymn to the goddess. The reference to Artemis is pivotal in many ways, as she was associated with wild nature while also worshiped as a tutelary deity of cities. Callimachus (*Dian.* 225 ff.) explored these associations of Artemis, invoked with epithets like *πουλυμέλαθρος* and *πολύπτολις*.⁵⁴ Artemis is emblematic for her underlying role as a leader of colonization, while her city cult becomes the focus of contact with local cults, all fused in a new unity.

The conflation of *oikistes* and *keleustes* is achieved so as to present Orpheus as the steering poetic voice in the Argonautic

⁵⁴ Archaeological and epigraphic evidence connects her with various cities. At Pherae in Thessaly she was worshiped with the epithet *Φεραία*: I. Petrovic, *Von den Toren des Hades zu den Hallen des Olymp: Artemiskult bei Theokrit und Kallimachos* (Leiden 2007) 199 with bibliography. For possible references to colonization via Artemis' cult reflected in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* as well as for her cult in cities like Miletus or Ephesus see Petrovic 197–221.

expedition. Apollonius brings in his interest in foundation stories by showing Orpheus through the prism of a founder figure and making his performances entwined with theogonic and religious discourse. Ultimately, Orpheus as the first Argonaut renews the epic poetic ideals and framework in an expanded world. Political and religious contexts are woven together in the fabric of epic poetry through the legendary first Argonaut.⁵⁵

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