# ❧ *BACCHIC ECHOES* ☙

## DIONYSUS AS METAPHOR IN APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA*

---

M. A. TAURIAN

█████████

**Word Count: 20,559**

# ೫ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ೫

# ❧ TABLE OF CONTENTS ☙

# ❧ Conventions and Abbreviations ☙

All dates are BCE, unless otherwise indicated. Common Era dates are marked as CE. In the spelling of Greek names, ease of recognition has been the principal aim.

All text and translations of Apollonius, except where otherwise indicated, are from Race's 2008 Loeb edition. Commentaries on Apollonius are cited by the editor's name only. The principal commentaries consulted are:

Hunter[3]              Hunter, R. (1989). *Argonautica: Book III*. Cambridge University Press.

Hunter[4]              Hunter, R. (2015). *Argonautica: Book IV*. Cambridge University Press.

Mooney              Mooney, G. W. (1912). *The Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Longman.

All text and commentary of Euripides' *Bacchae* follow Dodds's 1960 Clarendon Press Edition (hereafter: Dodds). All translations of Euripides' *Bacchae*, except where otherwise indicated, are from Buckley, T. A. (1892). *The Tragedies of Euripides: Vol. 1*. Harper & Brothers.

Other abbreviations are as follows:

Burkert, *GR*              Burkert, W. trans. J. Raffan (1985). *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Blackwell.

*FGrH*              Jacoby, F. (1923–). *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Brill.

Fraser, *Ptol. Alex.*              Fraser, P. (1972). *Ptolemaic Alexandria*. Oxford University Press.

LSJ              Liddell, H. G. et al. (1940). *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. Oxford University Press.

*OGI*              Dittenberger, W. (1903). *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Hirzel.

*PMG*              Page, D. L. (ed.) (1962). *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford University Press.

*P. Oxy*              Grenfell, B.P & A.S. Hunt. *The Oxyrynchus Papyri*. Oxford University Press.

*SEG*              Hondius, J. J. E. et al. (1923–). *Supplementum Epigraphicam Graecum*. Brill.

*ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι*

(Plato, *Phaedrus* 69c)

# ❧ Introduction ☙

✻

There are six explicit references to Dionysus in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. He is mentioned in passing in the opening catalogue of heroes as the father of an Argonaut named Phleias (Διωνύσοιο, 1.116). In Book 2, the Argonauts sail past a region in which Dionysus (Διὸς Νυσήιον υἶα, 2.916) once carried out orgiastic rites while on his way to Thebes. A later digression details the history of a purple robe which once belonged to him (Διωνύσῳ, 4.424; ἄναξ αὐτὸς Νυσήιος, 4.431). He is then mentioned in a passing comment about his childhood nurse, Makris (Διωνύσοιο τιθήνην, 4.540), who we are later told fed him honey in his infancy (Διὸς Νυσήιον υἶα, 4.1134). In Book 3, he is referred to implicitly when Jason mentions the *corona borealis* constellation, originally the bridal crown which Dionysus gave Ariadne on their wedding (μέσῳ δέ οἱ αἰθέρι τέκμαρ | ἀστερόεις στέφανος, τόν τε κλείουσ᾽ Ἀριάδνης, 3.1002–3).[1]

On no occasion in the *Argonautica* does Dionysus appear in the flesh, and this handful of unrelated, passing references to him perhaps indicates why scholars have not bothered to consider the god's role within the poem, let alone analyse the poem from a Dionysiac angle.[2] This thesis argues that Dionysus and aspects of his cult form a complex metaphorical pattern throughout Apollonius' *Argonautica*, affirming the god's interconnectedness with Ptolemaic imperial power and ideology.[3]

---

[1] Cf. Aratus, *Phaen*. 71–72.

[2] The symbolism of Dionysus (D.) is mentioned in passing by Bulloch (1985) 594. To my knowledge, Campbell (1974) 39 is the only other scholar who has taken a distinctly Bacchic reading of any of the poem's episodes.

[3] I adopt a broad meaning of "metaphor", namely: where a thing is regarded as representative or symbolic of something else.

## Poet and King

We can only gather so much from the four remaining, fragmentary sources on Apollonius' life.[4] He was Chief Librarian at the Alexandrian Library and lived during, but not necessarily for the entire duration of, the reigns of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284–246) and Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–222). Most scholars agree that he served as Euergetes' tutor (an office held in association with that of Chief Librarian)[5] and wrote the *Argonautica* during Philadelphus' reign, likely between 270 and 260.[6] He is said to have been exiled to Rhodes because an early version of the poem was very poorly received in Alexandria (multiple scholia refer to a προέκδοσις, that is, either an early version of the poem or its preliminary edition).[7] During his time in exile, he rewrote the poem and returned to Alexandria, where he met immense praise.[8]

Apollonius was a poet in Philadelphus' court and worked under his patronage. In a recent monograph, Strootman uses a detailed model of court cultural dynamics to argue for the existence of a ritualised system of guest-friendship between poet and king: instead of a regular salary, poems would be exchanged for gifts, renumerations, favours, and land.[9] Although we cannot be certain of the extent or intimacy of the relationship between Apollonius and Philadelphus, or whether all court poets would have enjoyed a relationship of this kind with their king,[10] it would be inconceivable to suggest that there was not *some* relationship between the two men.[11] Philadelphus was a renowned patron of the arts and was praised by a number of Apollonius' contemporaries.[12]

There have been outspoken efforts to minimise the role of the political in our understanding of Apollonius' poetics. Cameron, for example, an ardent opponent of the 'ivory tower' view of Hellenistic poetry,[13] argues that Ptolemaic court poetry was not slavish in its

---

[4] For a survey of these sources, see Hunter[3] 1–9. See also Webster (1964) 63–67; Pfeiffer (1968) 141; Fantuzzi & Hunter (2005) 89; Mori (2008a) 9–10; Mori (2008b) 149–150; Lefkowitz (2008). Murray (2012) challenges the value of *P. Oxy* X 1241, *contra* Grenfell & Hunt (1914) 100.

[5] Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 308–309.

[6] Hunter[3] 1–9.

[7] Pfeiffer (1968) 142; Hunter[3] 5; Lefkowitz (2008) 61.

[8] We cannot say whether the poem was rewritten in whole or in part during the exile. On the exile of Apollonius (Ap.), see Cameron (1995) 263–264; cf. Fränkel (1952) 155 n. 34.

[9] Strootman (2017) 63–72. On Ptolemaic poetic patronage generally, see Pfeiffer (1968) 87–104; Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 305–335; Hunter (2004) 24–45; Strootman (2010).

[10] For the cautious approach, see Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 309.

[11] Of course, this argument is not predicated on the assumption of a close relationship between Ap. and Philadelphus: Ap.'s knowledge of the aesthetics of Ptolemaic power is sufficient.

[12] Theoc. *Id*. 14.59; *Id*. 17; Callim. fr. 392; Herod. 1.30. Cf. Joseph. *AJ* 12.6; Diog. Laert. 5.58.

[13] The view is held by Goldhill (1991) 223–224.

response to the kings' demands.[14]  And Hunter stresses that the *Argonautica* was not part of any "organisation of opinion" by the Ptolemies.[15]  Nonetheless, scholars in recent decades have become willing to at least consider the implication of Apollonius' political context for his work.[16]  As is true of much other Hellenistic poetry that is the product of Ptolemaic poetic patronage, it is highly likely that the *Argonautica* is concerned with the construction of political authority.[17]  And the construction of political authority need not be part of any organised programme, especially when there is a guest-friendship incentive to construct that authority.

In fact, there is good reason to believe that many, if not most, Hellenistic epics were at least partly concerned with celebrating the deeds of the Hellenistic kings.[18]  Inscriptions and honorific decrees from the Hellenistic period reveal that epic poets used to travel from city to city, competing in various festivals in the "epic poet" (ἐπῶν ποιηταί) category.[19]  Although the *Argonautica* is our only full exemplar of this genre, it would not be surprising if the same political strategy were at play in that poem.

## Dionysus in Hellenistic Alexandria

The god Dionysus was central to the way in which Hellenistic kings represented their political authority.  Ptolemaic kingship has been described as "monarchie bicèphale"[20] and "Janus-like"[21] because it involved monarchical self-representation as both a Hellenistic king and Egyptian pharaoh.  Dionysus – the great cross-cultural deity – was a convenient symbolic tool in this representational programme: his Greek cult resonated closely with the Egyptian Osiris myth and tradition, which may well have been the original source of Dionysiac worship in the Greek-speaking world and beyond.[22]  To appeal to both Greek and Egyptian subjects, therefore, the Ptolemies appropriated Dionysus' image: Ptolemy II Philadelphus, III Euergetes, IV

---

[14] Cameron (1995) 30.

[15] Hunter (1993) 168.

[16] Ibid. 152–169; Mori (2001), (2008a), (2008b); Thalman (2011).

[17] Cf. Mori (2001) 90; (2008b) 151.

[18] Ziegler (1966).  For dissenting voice: Cameron (1995) 263–302, esp. 265–267, 287–289.  For recent papyrological discoveries *contra* Cameron: Barbantani (2001).  See also Nelson (forthcoming), with references.

[19] Cameron (1995) 47; Collins (2004) 201–202; cf. Fantuzzi & Hunter (2005) 191–196.  Csapo & Slater (1995) 248 *ad OGI* 51.37–40: an Egyptian inscription *c*. 240 lists three epic poets who belonged to the local guild of Dionysian *technitai*.

[20] Peremans (1987).

[21] Koenen (1993) 25.

[22] Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 206; Burkert, *GR* 163; Goyette (2010) 6.  On the D.–Osiris association, see Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 364d–365a; Hdt. 2.42, 2.143–144; Lattimore (1939) 364–365.  For a recent discovery of Graeco–Egyptian religious syncretism, see Bailey (2007).

Philopater and the later XII Auletes all made conscious and pragmatic attempts to associate themselves with the god.[23]

Alexander the Great was in many ways indirectly responsible for this Ptolemaic reliance upon a Dionysiac model of political authority. The Ptolemies saw Alexander as a direct descendant of Dionysus through the lineage of the Argead royal household,[24] and detected a number of parallels between Dionysus' Indian triumph and Alexander's own successes in the East: both man and god, for example, had travelled to the ends of the earth and the limits of human civilisation.[25] The relationship between Dionysus, Alexander and the Ptolemies is explained by Diodorus: he traces the origins of Alexander's diadem to Dionysus and states that Dionysus' headdress "led to the introduction of the diadem for kings" (παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι καταδειχθῆναι, Diod. Sic. 4.4.4).[26] Alexander's mother Olympias and her involvement in Bacchic rites in Macedonia during Alexander's childhood may have also been an important influence.[27]

This evidence does not, however, necessarily indicate that Alexander was consciously cultivating a Dionysiac personality: many of the parallels between Alexander and Dionysus may only be the product of modern historical interpretation.[28] It was not until the Ptolemies that kings made conscious and pragmatic attempts to associate themselves with Dionysus, or, perhaps more precisely, *with* Dionysus *through* Alexander.[29]

By far the most famous display of Ptolemaic–Dionysiac royal ideology was the grand procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in which Dionysus and his cult played a central role.[30] The procession featured a 15-foot statue of Dionysus which was followed by thousands of men and women dressed in Dionysiac attire, along with dozens of carts containing wine presses,

---

[23] See generally Fraser, *Ptol. Alex.* I 203–205; Rice (1983) 84–85. On Philopator and D., see Hölbl (2001) 171. On Auletes and D., see Hölbl (2001) 274–275; Le Guen (2016) 244–245. On Ptolemy I Soter and D., see Hazzard (2016) 9.

[24] *OGI* 1.54.

[25] Fraser, *Ptol. Alex.* I 202–203; Rice (1983) 67, 84–85. Consider Eur. *Bacch.* 13–20; Arr. *Anab.* 5.1, 28.1.

[26] Cf. Plin. *HN.* 7.191. On Alexander's *diadem* generally, see Fredricksmeyer (1997) 102; Smith (1988) 35–37. For coins minted shortly after the death of Ptolemy I which confirm the headdress' association with D., see Smith (1988) 37; Goyette (2010) 3.

[27] See generally Hamilton (1965); Fredricksmeyer (1966); Carney (1987) 40–41.

[28] Nock (1928) 22–30; Rice (1983) 84; Smith (1988) 37–38; Burkert (1993) 262; Bloedow (2004) 99; Seaford (2006) 37.

[29] Cf. Pàmias (2004): the remarks of Eratosthenes, a well-known critic of Ptolemaic–Dionysiac royal ideology, serve as important evidence that the Ptolemies consciously modelled themselves on D. Cf. Sanders (1991) esp. 280 for the claim that Dionysius I of Syracuse was the founder of Hellenistic Ruler Cult (Dionysius was a tyrant whose statue depicted him with the attributes of D.).

[30] The procession is described in Kallixeinos' lost work entitled Περὶ Ἀλεξανδρείας which was quoted some centuries later in Ath. 5.197C–203B. See generally Rice (1983).

gilded furniture, and scenes from the god's birth and childhood.[31]  It is generally accepted that the procession was a political act with the purpose of enhancing the worship of Dionysus in Alexandria and publicly legitimising Ptolemaic claims to authority by casting the kings as heirs of Alexander the Great in Egypt.[32]

## Philadelphus and Attic Tragedy

One of this thesis' main claims is that certain portrayals of Dionysus and Dionysiac cult found in Attic tragedy are echoed in the *Argonautica*.  Attic tragedy was of great influence upon Hellenistic court poetry, and the recent work of Sistakou in particular has considered the reception of tragedy and the transformation of the tragic idea in the poetry of Apollonius, Callimachus and Theocritus.[33]  The status which Attic tragedy enjoyed in Alexandria – and under Philadelphus' reign in particular – explains this poetic influence.

In Hellenistic Alexandria, original tragic plays were written and performed alongside classical ones.  Le Guen has vigorously argued against the traditional view that theatre went into decline during the Hellenistic period: she has marshalled convincing evidence that the kings in particular continued to sponsor its production.[34]  Sistakou has argued that by promoting classical drama, the Ptolemaic kings imposed a culturally Greek identity onto their inhabitants of their new Egyptian city.[35]

Tragedy, in particular, was essential to Philadelphus' cultural program.  The great theatre of Alexandria was built during his reign,[36] and the Alexandrian *Pleiad* (a group of seven Alexandrian poets and tragedians) was founded by him and worked in his court under his patronage.[37]  In Theocritus, Philadelphus is depicted supervising a dramatic festival in Alexandria (*Id*. 7.112–14).  Centuries later, Galen recounts how Ptolemy[38] 'borrowed' books from the Athenians containing the dramatic works of Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles in order to make his own copies.  The prologue to Byzantine scholar Tzetzes' edition of Aristophanes' comedies (1.1–3) also alludes to Philadelphus' personal copies of a number of

---

[31] Ath. 5.197c–203b.
[32] Rice (1983) 85; Goyette (2010) 7.
[33] Sistakou (2016).
[34] Le Guen (1995), (2007).
[35] Sistakou (2016) 1–30.
[36] McKenzie (2007) 41.
[37] Sistakou (2016) 19.
[38] Gal. *Hipp. Epid*. iii 17.a.607 (this Ptolemy is thought to be either II Philadelphus or III Euergetes).

tragic plays: Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ Φιλαδέλφῳ τὰς σκηνικὰς διωρθώσαντο βίβλους, τὰς τῆς […] τραγῳδίας […] φημί.[39]

The extent of Philadelphus' involvement in the Alexandrian tragic scene did not end there. He established an organisation called "The *Technitai* of Dionysus" (a royal decree gives them their official name: οἱ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνῖται).[40] Members had unique artistic abilities, gave public performances of tragedies and comedies and enjoyed a range of privileges, including royal patronage.[41] The organisation adopted the trappings of a state and had assemblies, magistrates and ambassadors.[42]

A key duty of the *technitai* was to serve the god Dionysus and the cults set up by the Ptolemaic king.[43] Le Guen explains the politico-religious significance of these *technitai* and argues that they were designed to "guarantee the Dionysism of the Ptolemies".[44] In other words, the placement of the *technitai* under royal patronage was a means by which Philadelphus could carry on the programme of Dionysism that Ptolemaic ideology had already attached to Alexander and hence legitimate his (Philadelphus') power.[45]

Philiscus of Corcyra illustrates the deep implication of Dionysiac cult in Ptolemaic poetic production: he was both a tragic poet *and* priest of Dionysus in Philadelphus' court who paraded as the head of the Dionysian *technitai* in Philadelphus' grand procession.[46] His status (and perhaps also the emphasis of religious themes in his works)[47] demonstrates the interconnectedness of tragedy and the Ptolemaic cultivation of Dionysus in Hellenistic Alexandria. It is perhaps worth wondering whether either of the two Apollonii referred to in an Egyptian inscription dated from 240 which lists the Dionysian *technitai* is our poet of the *Argonautica*.[48] It would not be completely implausible: Ἀπολλώνιος appears to have been a rather uncommon name during the early Hellenistic period, with only thirty-six of the 574 attestations of Ἀπολλώνιος antedating 200.[49]

---

[39] Sistakou (2016) 27 *ad loc*.

[40] Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 619; Le Guen (2016) esp. 237; Lightfoot (2002). For evidence of the existence and activity of the organisation, see Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. II 870 n. 1; Aneziri (2009) 229–232.

[41] *OGI* 51 lists poets, actors, musicians, mask makers, dancers and other artists. On the privileges of the *technitai*, see Aneziri (2009) 229–232; Le Guen (2016) 248–252.

[42] Le Guen (2016) 232.

[43] For Hellenistic cults generally, see Tondriau (1984); Chaniotis (2003). On Hellenistic Dionysiac cults in Alexandria, see Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 201–207; Le Guen (2016) 233.

[44] Le Guen (2016) 246.

[45] Ibid. 245, 250–251.

[46] See the account in Ath. 5.27. On Philiscus generally, see Kotlińska-Toma (2015) 66–74.

[47] Sistakou (2016) 66, 84.

[48] *OGI* 51, Csapo & Slater (1995) 248–249 *ad loc*.

[49] Parker (2000) 66.

**The Plan of This Thesis**

This thesis is divided into three chapters, each of which explores a different aspect of my principal hypothesis: that Apollonius' *Argonautica* is in part concerned with the metaphorisation of Dionysus and aspects of his cult.

In my first chapter, I will consider multiple intertexts between Euripides' *Bacchae* and Apollonius' *Argonautica*, most of which have gone largely unnoticed by Apollonian scholars. The intertexts range from broader thematic similarities to subtler verbal echoes. Euripides' *Bacchae* will emerge as an important narratological and thematic backdrop for the *Argonautica* and its larger Dionysiac framework.

In my second chapter, I will argue that Apollonius has aligned the women of the *Argonautica* with the politically destructive maenads who appear not only in the *Bacchae* but also in the broader tradition of Attic tragedy. Their maenadic characterisation brings Dionysus into the world of the *Argonautica* – it draws Jason into a network of Dionysiac relations and facilitates his association with the god.

In my third and final chapter, I will argue that Apollonius has actively aligned Jason with the god Dionysus; Jason has a distinctly Dionysiac personality which is reminiscent not only of the polarising Euripidean Dionysus of the *Bacchae*, but also of the wine-god 'Philadelphean' Dionysus upon which Ptolemy Philadelphus based his mode of political authority. Jason's Dionysiac characterisation, in other words, is the product of two conflicting but complementary forces: the pull of Classical literature versus the pull of contemporary political ideology.

Zanker argues that in Hellenistic poetry there is a generally held assumption that "the describing poet expects his reading viewer to put in some of the work".[50] Strootman agrees, and argues that "by means of allusion and suggestion, court poets prompted the audience, as it were, to 'decode' the text".[51] Apollonius adopted a "learned approach to myth",[52] and there is no doubt that his mention of certain aetiological myths and use of complex allusions not only to myth generally but also to preceding and occasionally variant versions of the Argonautic myth would have had important meaning for an educated audience at the Ptolemaic court. We must bear this in mind when considering the Dionysiac moments in the *Argonautica*: in order

---

[50] Zanker (2004) 8. His comment is, of course, in the context of *ekphrasis*, but the point has wider significance for the practice of allusivity, as Strootman explains (n. 50 below).
[51] Strootman (2017) 80.
[52] Hunter[3] 21.

to 'decode' their poetic, tragic and political significance, we must frequently look below the surface and tease out the complex, often metaphorical, representational strategies at play.

## ❧ Chapter I ❧

### Tragic Influence and Euripides' *Bacchae*

✤

Attic tragedy was a genre which enjoyed prime status under Philadelphus' reign, and its influence upon Hellenistic court poetry is now well known;[1] Apollonius' debt to the plays of Sophocles and Euripides on both a philological and broader thematic level has been detected by a number of ancient and modern commentators.[2] Crucially neglected by these studies, however, is Apollonius' debt to Euripides' *Bacchae*.[3]

The *Bacchae* enjoyed sustained influence throughout antiquity. A recent study by Mac Góráin and Perris tracks all of the ancient texts – from the fourth century BCE to the 12th century CE – in which the play's influence is felt.[4] This study is important to us because it shows that the *Bacchae* was a popular subject of Hellenistic court poetry. A Callimachean epigram, for example, is set in a school classroom over which a mask of an open-mouthed Dionysus looms.[5] The teacher asks the students to repeat after him ἱερὸς ὁ πλόκαμος, that is, a direct quote from the *Bacchae* (494).

The classroom scene Callimachus describes is contextually significant: the postclassical education system was one at least somewhat based on the formalistic study of literature, and

---

[1] See my Introduction: 'Philadelphus and Attic Tragedy'.

[2] See esp. the monographs of Stoessl (1941); Nishimura-Jensen (1996); Schmakeit (2003). See also Campbell (1983) 41–42, 111 n. 27; Hunter[3] 18–19; Papadopoulou (1991); Knight (1991); Porter (1990); Nelson (2016); Sistakou (2016) 141–167, and 141–142 n. 3 on the ancient scholia.

[3] To my knowledge, the only exception is Campbell (1974) 39, who acknowledges a number of verbal echoes between the play and Ap.'s Bebrycian boxing episode (2.1–97).

[4] Mac Góráin & Perris (2019).

[5] Callim. *Epigr*. 48.

there is evidence that the *Bacchae* was, at some point or another, a popular school text.[6] A later, possibly second-century Alexandrian papyrus depicts the scrawls of an Egyptian schoolboy who has copied out the opening lines of the play multiple times.[7] Theocritus was equally familiar with the play: *Idyll* 26 is a retelling of Bacchic ritual and the Euripidean account of Pentheus' *sparagmos*. The poem adopts Euripides' pun on Pentheus' name (πένθημα / Πενθῆα),[8] and Theocritus' declaration of loyalty to Dionysus following the savage murder of a family member is greatly reminiscent of the *Bacchae*'s conclusion.[9]

Absent from Mac Góráin and Perris' list is Apollonius' *Argonautica*. It is certain that Apollonius would have been intimately familiar with the play given his own interest in Attic tragedy, as well as his contemporaries' poetic interest in the play itself and the ideological significance of Dionysus (the play's central character) in third-century Alexandria.

<div align="center">BACCHIC INTERTEXTS</div>

The general narrative structure of the *Argonautica* is indebted to that of the *Bacchae*. Mac Góráin observes an important overlap between the deployment of the so-called 'hospitality plot' in the *Bacchae* and Virgil's *Aeneid*,[10] but he does not consider the likely possibility that Apollonius could have been the first to exploit the *Bacchae*'s treatment of this theme.

It is worth explaining what is meant by 'hospitality' plot. Both the *Argonautica* and the *Bacchae* feature a figure of divine–mortal lineage (Jason in the *Argonautica*, Dionysus in the *Bacchae*) who travels away from their home to some distant land in order to establish religious rites or carry out a religious function. Their arrival throws their host community into a state of disorder, but the sensible few (Medea in the *Argonautica*, Cadmus and Tiresias in the *Bacchae*) acknowledge their status and welcome them. Resistance against the stranger is led by a hot-headed young local (Apsyrtus in the *Argonautica*, Pentheus in the *Bacchae*). The remainder of the plot follows the stranger's response to this resistance and their attempts to thwart it. The leader of the resistance then dies a horrible death at the stranger's hands.

---

[6] Morgan (1998) 116, 321–322; Sistakou (2016) 53. For other examples of Hellenistic schoolboys copying and memorising dramatic lines, see Herod. 3.30–6; Asclepiades *HE* 27.

[7] Cribiore (1996) 204.

[8] Theoc. *Id*. 26.25–26; Eur. *Bacch*. 367–368, 508, 1244.

[9] Mac Góráin & Perris (2019) 53.

[10] Mac Góráin (2013) 125–126. For treatment of the hospitality theme in ancient literature, see Hollis (2009) 341–354, with references.

This Euripidean–Bacchic influence extends not only to the *Argonautica*'s broader narrative structure, but also to that structure's implementation on the level of individual scenes. A close reading of two of the poem's key episodes will support this analysis. These two episodes are the Bebrycian boxing episode and Apsyrtus' slaughter.

## The Bebrycian Microcosm

A traditional travel-narrative is not well suited to Aristotelian notions of dramatic unity. Hunter argues that "it is precisely this inherent inconsequentiality, the episodic partition imposed by the very nature of travel, which can be seen at the heart of the Western tradition of romance, as opposed to the harsh teleologies of epic".[11] Hellenistic poets tried to move away from "classical regularity" and for this reason often included in their poetry digressions and "fleeting side-glimpses into various recesses of history, learning or life".[12] This is an important aspect of Apollonius' poetic method, and it explains why the *Argonautica* has long been compared unfavourably to its Homeric predecessors and treated as an episodic epic lacking unity.[13] In recent decades, however, the poem has acquired newfound appreciation: "perhaps the greatest paradox of this episodic poem is that no other epic surviving from antiquity demonstrates a greater degree of structural unity, or a more precise and measured execution of a professed remit".[14] Stephens has argued more recently that the *Argonautica* is "a poem about place, in which the seemingly disparate narrative patterns, solar journey, *katabasis*, colonisation, and the movement from chaos to order form a logical nexus for *one* place – Ptolemaic Alexandria".[15]

The Bebrycian boxing match in the *Argonautica* best exhibits this paradox: it functions both as an independent episode and a microcosm for many of the poem's larger themes.[16] The episode begins when the Argonauts reach the gulf of Olbia at the eastern end of the Propontis.

---

[11] Hunter (2008) 140–141.

[12] Fränkel (1952) 154. This is, of course, a highly contested point, and the *Odyssey*, for example, is hardly free of these "fleeting side-glimpses". Fantuzzi & Hunter (2005) see classical 'originalism' and novel 'inspiration' as a duality inherent in Hellenistic poetry; Cameron (1995) sees as much continuity as radical newness in Hellenistic practice. But digressions and displays of *doctrina* are doubtless characteristic of the Hellenistic poetic genre.

[13] This is has led to judgements like those of Fränkel (1952) 155: "[Ap.] is not what one would call an inspired poet, and much of his epic is downright tedious".

[14] Clare (2002) 172.

[15] Stephens (2008) 95–114.

[16] For a useful account of the mythopoetic treatment of the Amycus–Pollux boxing tale before Ap., see Cuypers (1997) 10–31.

The land belongs to the Bebrycians and their king Amycus. Amycus has imposed a law that no visitor can depart without first boxing him (2.11–18). Pollux takes up the challenge. He fights and defeats the king, and the Argonauts continue on their way Colchis.

The Argonauts' later arrival in Colchis is greatly reminiscent of the Bebrycian episode and similarly explores the hospitality theme, as well as the "necessity of diplomatic communication between potential enemies".[17] The number of parallels between the two scenes shows that their similarity can be no coincidence. At both points in the narrative, the Argonauts arrive at a distant, alien land (the gulf of Olbia, later Colchis), the king of which (Amycus, later Aeetes) pressures the newcomer (Pollux, later Jason) to undergo a test (a boxing match, later Jason's contest). The newcomers' victories then provoke military action by the enemy king and his men.[18] Both newcomers are youthful in appearance and lack facial hair (ἴουλοι, 1.972; ἰούλους, 2.43), and share an association with stars (φαεινῷ ἀστέρι ἶσος, 1.774–780; ἀτάλαντος | ἀστέρι, 2.40–41). Both also wear ornate cloaks which are gifts of Lemnian mistresses, as the following metrically aligned verses show: φᾶρος | λεπταλέον, τό ῥά οἵ τις ἑὸν ξεινήιον εἶναι | ὤπασε Λημνιάδων (2.30–32); φᾶρος | ἕσσατο κυάνεον, τό ῥά οἱ πάρος ἐγγυάλιξεν | Λημνιὰς Ὑψιπύλη (3.1203–1205).[19]

But this thematic and textual resonance is not merely internal. The general hospitality theme is, of course, also central to Euripides' *Bacchae*. We will find that Pollux and Amycus are a doublet not only of Jason and Aeetes, but also of Euripides' Dionysus and Pentheus.

The "dramatic kernel"[20] of the *Bacchae* is its second scene (434–518) when Pentheus meets the disguised Dionysus for the first time. The two are opposites: Pentheus thinks himself strong and Dionysus weak. By the play's conclusion, their roles have reversed, though they still remain in opposition: Dionysus emerges as the stronger party (a god) and overpowers the far weaker, mortal Pentheus. Apollonius uses the antithetical symmetry of Euripides' initial characterisation of Dionysus and Pentheus as a model for his own characterisation of Pollux and Amycus, thus imparting a Dionysian flavour to the hospitality theme in the Bebrycian episode which will later resonate with Jason's arrival at Colchis.[21] Like the Dionysus of the *Bacchae* (ἥσυχος θάσσων, 622; ὀργῇ δ᾿ ὑπόθες ἥσυχον πόδα, 647), Pollux is the confident

---

[17] Rose (1984) 117.

[18] Lawall (1966) 134 notes a number of important similarities between the personalities of the two kings.

[19] Cf. Rose (1985) 33–34; Cuypers (1997) 8.

[20] Dodds 131.

[21] For Ap.'s antithetical characterisation of Pollux and Amycus, see Rose (1984) 122, Cuypers (1997) 61–63. Campbell (1974) 39 acknowledges Ap.'s linguistic debt to the *Bacchae* in this instance.

foreigner, charming and composed (2.40–45).[22] He has the beast within him (θηρός, 2.45), as does Dionysus (θήρ, 436, 922). Pollux smiles in the face of danger (μειδήσας, 2.61), and in the *Bacchae* Dionysus laughs when he is being taken prisoner (γελῶν, 439).[23] Amycus, on the other hand, like Pentheus, is a hot-headed king who is hostile towards strangers. He is associated with the Chthonian race (ὁ μὲν ἢ ὀλοοῖο Τυφωέος, ἠὲ καὶ αὐτῆς | γαίης εἶναι ἔικτο πέλωρ τέκος, 2.38–39), as is Pentheus in the *Bacchae* (χθόνιον γένος, 38–39).[24]

Apollonius is importantly not the only Hellenistic author to depict Pollux in a Dionysian mode. An episode in Theocritus' *Idyll* 22 also recounts the Bebrycian boxing match (27–134). The episode contains a stichomythic *agon* between Pollux and Amycus (54–74), not unlike that between Dionysus and Pentheus in the *Bacchae* (461–518). Theocritus gives Pollux (34) the same epithet (οἰνωπός) that Euripides gives Dionysus (236, 438): the word is striking because Pollux otherwise has no association with wine. The effect must be to align the boxer with the wine-god. Although the *Idyll*'s date of composition remains uncertain,[25] it still becomes more plausible that Apollonius is engaging with the *Bacchae* if one of his Alexandrian contemporaries is doing the same.[26]

The Bebrycian boxing match and its microcosmic status, therefore, pits the Dionysian Argonaut against the imprudent, Penthean king, and cements (one of many aspects of) the *Argonautica*'s overarching Euripidean–Bacchic theme. When Jason later sets foot upon Colchian soil and is forced to undergo the test by Aeetes, the learned Alexandrian reader will be reminded of this earlier Euripidean, Dionysian confrontation.

## Jason as βουτύπος

Also overlapping the narrative arcs of the *Bacchae* and *Argonautica* are the respective deaths of Pentheus and Apsyrtus: the hot-headed young local (Pentheus in the *Bacchae*, Apsyrtus in the *Argonautica*) fails in his attempt at resisting the stranger (Dionysus in the *Bacchae*, Jason in the *Argonautica*) and then dies a horrible death at the stranger's hands.[27] Apollonius'

---

[22] Seaford (2006) 108 describes a state of divine calm (ἡσυχία) produced by Dionysiac liberation; cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 693 (θαῦμ᾽ ἰδεῖν εὐκοσμίας).

[23] Cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 380 (γελάσαι); *Hymn Hom. Bacch.* 14 (μειδιάων).

[24] See Dodds 144 on Eur.'s frequent mention of Pentheus' ancestry.

[25] See the discussion in Sens (1997) 24–35, 104: "there is no need to see a *specific* reference to [D.] here, though the allusive way the adjective is used might indeed be thought to argue for the priority of [Ap.'s] description".

[26] Cf. Theoc. *Id.* 22.19–22 and Dodds 213–214 *ad* Eur. *Bacch.* 1084–1085. Cf. συμφλέγω at Theoc. *Id.* 22.211 and Eur. *Bacch.* 595. Consider also the large debt to Eur. *Bacch.* in Theoc. *Id.* 26.

[27] Cf. Hunter[4] 6, 146–147 for the suggestion that Apsyrtus' mutilation invokes that of Agamemnon recounted

description of the murder continues to puzzle scholars because it is a major departure from Homeric models of heroism and from Pindar's earlier account of the Argonautic myth in his fourth *Pythian*.[28] The entire episode may even be an Apollonian innovation because earlier versions of the myth display either Medea as murderess, or her brother as a little boy and not the commander of a powerful fleet.[29] This makes it more likely that Apollonius has innovated moments of the Argonautic myth and brought them in line with Euripides' treatment of the hospitality theme in the *Bacchae*.

Apsyrtus' murder is marked as a major turning point in Apollonius' narrative by the clear authorial interjection immediately preceding it (σχέτλι᾽ Ἔρως, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν, 4.445). So too is Pentheus' murder a turning point in the *Bacchae*: Dodds stresses both its linguistic peculiarity and the poignant dramatic contrast between the narrator's and the chorus' reactions to the events.[30]

Further, the murders in the *Bacchae* and *Argonautica* are both described with sacrificial overtones. The action of the *Bacchae*'s later scenes (912–1240) simulates Greek sacrificial ritual, and it has been argued that Pentheus' μίτρα and χιτών are analogous to garments with which the sacrificial victim is adorned prior to sacrifice.[31] In the *Argonautica*, prior to Apsyrtus' murder he is associated with a "wild beast" (ἄγριον θῆρα, 4.444) and during the slaughter he is a "bull" (ταῦρον, 4.467), struck by the axe of Jason the "ox-slayer" (βουτύπος, 4.467).[32] The slaughter importantly takes place on sacred ground (νηοῦ σχεδόν, ὅν ποτ᾽ ἔδειμαν | Ἀρτέμιδι Βρυγοὶ περιναιέται ἀντιπέρηθεν, 4.469–470). The sacred ground is also markedly exotic: the Brygoi are a quasi-mythical Balkan people. Pentheus too dies on the 'exotic' ground of Cithaeron. In addition, Apollonius' use of ἐξάργματα (4.477) denotes a similar meaning to ἄργματα or ἀπάργματα which refer to the first pieces of flesh cut from a sacrificial victim.[33]

---

elsewhere in epic and tragedy.

[28] See the discussions of Byre (1996); Ceuleumans (2007); Mori (2008a) 188 n. 1.

[29] Cf. ἀταλὸς πάις (4.460), which may invoke this alternate myth. Dyck (1989) 461 argues that the murder under these circumstances is Ap.'s innovation. See also Porter (1990) 261–262; Hunter[4] 140.

[30] Dodds 206 distinguishes the language at 1024–1052 from other Euripdean accounts in its descriptions of physical horror.

[31] See Seidensticker (1978) 318, (1980).

[32] Cf. Hom. *Il*. 17.520–523; Porter (1990) 266–267. Cf. Amycus' alignment with a βουτύπος (2.90–92). On sacrifice here in Ap., see Ceulemans (2007) 106–107.

[33] Ceuleumans (2007) 102; Hunter[4] 148.

The removal of extremities played an important part in Dionysiac cult practice, especially on Chios and Tenedos,[34] and finds general association with the broader Dionysiac mythological tradition. Pentheus and Lycurgus were two kings who famously banned the cult of Dionysus: the former was then torn limb from limb and the latter cut off his son's limbs with an axe.[35] Apsyrtus – the "resister" of the outsider – is in many ways analogous to both of these figures, and the chopped-up limbs which Apollonius describes (ἐξάργματα, 4.477) may mark out this additional Dionysiac parallel.

The similarities do not stop there: the robe which Jason gives Apsyrtus doubles the χιτών which Dionysus gives Pentheus and firmly brings Apsyrtus into the Dionysiac fold: not only are both men sacrificial victims who have been given sacrificial garbs,[36] but upon death they both take on feminised appearances.[37] The robe in the *Argonautica* originally belonged to Dionysus himself and was passed down to Jason through Thoas (Dionysus' son) and Hypsipyle (Thoas' daughter).[38] The digression on the robe's history invokes Dionysus twice (Διωνύσῳ, 4.424; ἄναξ Νυσήιος, 4.431). Apollonius foregrounds Dionysus as an indirect cause of Apsyrtus' death: he was the first to use the robe as a means of deception when he used its divine smell to coax Ariadne into yielding to him sexually. The robe's seductive power is enduring (ἀμβροσίη ὀδμὴ πέλεν ἐξέτι κείνου | ἐξ οὗ, 4.430–431):[39] it will now be used in the same way by Dionysus' surrogate, Jason, who will enchant Apsyrtus and force his submission.

Apollonius may be associating the love-triangle (of sorts) between Jason, Medea and Apsyrtus with that of Dionysus, Ariadne and Theseus so as to give Jason's impending violence a sexualised dimension. Indeed, the atmosphere of a wedding is subtly invoked with Apsyrtus standing on a threshold (προδόμῳ, 4.471) when Medea's silver-white veil (ἀργυφέην καλύπτρην, 4.473–474) is spattered with blood.[40] Further, the mention of Ariadne's "beautiful breasts" (καλὰ στήθεα, 4.432–433) is strikingly erotic in a context otherwise concerned with preparations for murder.

This is not to say that the obvious Jason–Theseus parallel would not stand: Apollonius aligns the two heroes in an earlier *exemplum* (3.997–1004), and alludes to this parallel on

---

[34] Dodds xix; Otto (1965) 107.

[35] Eur. *Bacch.* 1122–1136; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.5.1.

[36] Byre (1996) 11: "Apsyrtus […] is never shown actually receiving the garment […] but his reaction to it is suggested indirectly, through the reaction that the poet hypothesises of his audience".

[37] On the femininity of Pentheus and D. in this scene in the *Bacchae*, see Zeitlin (1989) 64.

[38] This same robe is mentioned later at 3.1204–1206.

[39] Cf. *Hymn Hom. Bacch.* 36–37 (ὀδμὴ | ἀμβροσίη).

[40] The significance of this image and of Medea's association with wedding imagery and its often-tragic subversion will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

multiple occasions elsewhere throughout the poem.[41] But the existence of that parallel elsewhere does not prevent readers from detecting a more marked Jason–Dionysus parallel at the moment of Apsyrtus' slaughter: Hunter notes that "Hypsipyle–Jason, Medea–Jason, Ariadne–Theseus and Ariadne–Dionysus are all seen to be part of the same pattern and thus mutually illustrative".[42] It is therefore likely that the details of the robe's Dionysian lineage associate Jason with Dionysus contrary to our expectations and prepare the reader for Apsyrtus' impending Penthean slaughter.

Upon his death, Apsyrtus is compared to a bull which is κερεαλκής (4.468), literally, "strong in his horns".[43] This *hapax* may find resonance with Callimachus' *Iamb* 13 in which the poet responds to poetic criticism, likely that of either Apollonius himself or the Telchines of *Aetia* fragment 1.[44] In a study of what fierce poetic rivalry has done to the literary community, Callimachus writes: "the poet is furious to the point of using his horn, angry at a poet" (ἀοιδὸς ἐς κέρας τεθύμωται | [κοτέω]ν ἀοιδῷ).[45] A Horatian *Epode* uses a similar expression – also specifically in reference to the anger of an iambist – which connotes the anger of a horned bull: *in malos asperrimus | parata tollo cornua*.[46] The interpretation that Jason's butchering of the "strong-horned" Apsyrtus represents an epic, metapoetic triumph over the iambic genre is tempting,[47] but the *Bacchae* provides a more complete explanation. A herdsman's report in the *Bacchae* describes maenads tearing the flesh off "arrogant bulls who showed their fury with their horns" (ταῦροι δ᾽ ὑβρισταὶ κἀς κέρας θυμούμενοι, 743). Virgil's debt to this phrase in his twice used "*irasci in cornua*" (*Aen*. 12.104; *G*. 3.232) has been acknowledged,[48] but Apollonius' has not. In noting that the *Aeneid* and the *Bacchae* are structurally homologous, Mac Góráin argues that Virgil's debt to the phrase aligns Turnus with Pentheus and destines him to "a ritual Penthean slaughter".[49] The curious specificity of the bulls' horns (κερεαλκέα) in Apollonius' sacrificial simile suggests that Virgil might not have been the first to draw upon the Euripidean passage. Apollonius therefore destines Apsyrtus to a ritual, Penthean slaughter not unlike Turnus' as Mac Góráin describes.

---

[41] On the parallel, see Bulloch (1985) 594–595; Jackson (1999).

[42] Hunter[3] 207–208.

[43] Hunter[4] 147: "a word found only here".

[44] Trypanis, Gezler & Whitlam (1975) 146–148.

[45] Callim. *Ia*. 13.52.

[46] Hor. *Epod*. 6.11–14.

[47] But this has not, to my knowledge, been argued elsewhere.

[48] Dodds 167.

[49] Mac Góráin (2013) 141.

We have thus far examined important points of structural overlap between the *Bacchae* and *Argonautica*. Apollonius characterises Pollux, Amycus and Apsyrtus with Euripidean prototypes in mind, and the episodes in which they feature exhibit Apollonius' debt to the hospitality theme and its very particular treatment in the *Bacchae*. We will now broaden the scope of our Euripidean–Bacchic analysis of the *Argonautica*.

<div align="center">DIONYSIAC PSYCHIC COHESION</div>

In this section, I will argue that the double-layered group consciousness which Euripides displays in the *Bacchae* – both on a cultic level among the members of the Dionysiac *thiasos* and on a dramatic level on stage among the members of his tragic chorus who sing and act as one entity while they *resemble* a Dionysiac *thiasos* – is displayed by Apollonius with his 'chorus' of Argonauts.[50] This 'chorus' is led by Orpheus, whom Apollonius characterises as a kind of Bacchic "choral leader" (χορηγός).

In order to understand Apollonius' 'choral' dramatisation of Dionysiac group consciousness (what Seaford calls "psychic cohesion"),[51] we must first consider the descriptions of the natural world in both the *Bacchae* and *Argonautica*. We will find that, in both texts, a similar relationship binds the individual, the natural world and divine power.

**Nature and Landscape**

German philosopher-poet Fredrich Schiller claimed that in the Hellenistic period there was a change in the way that nature was treated in poetry, and that Euripides (especially his *Bacchae*) was a precursor to these Hellenistic developments.[52] This Hellenistic poetic shift has been noted by others and is generally rationalised as a response to the destruction of the classical *polis* as Alexandrian citizens lost touch with the world around them and became cogs in an "impersonal, smoothly running bureaucratic machine".[53] But these arguments are unhistorical

---

[50] The resemblance of Ap.'s Argonauts as a chorus has been observed by Phinney (1963) 73–74 and discussed by Nishimura-Jensen (2009).

[51] Seaford (2006) 33.

[52] Schiller (1966): "Diese Veränderung in der Empfindungsweise ist zum Beispiel schon äußerst auffallend im Euripides". On this statement, see generally Payne (2014).

[53] Hartwell (1922) 182. Zanker (1987) 19–28 makes a similar argument of cultural isolation, but cf. Cameron (1995) 25–26. Excluding Schiller (1966), others who discuss this poetic shift include: Williams (1991) esp. 11–23; Nishimura-Jensen (2000) esp. 314; Payne (2014). Cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 230d: φιλομαθὴς γάρ εἰμι· τὰ μὲν οὖν χωρία καὶ τὰ δένδρα οὐδέν μ᾿ ἐθέλει διδάσκειν, οἱ δ᾿ ἐν τῷ ἄστει ἄνθρωποι.

because they disregard depictions of the natural world in archaic and classical poetry.[54] They also assume that a court poet's words give voice to the sentiments of ordinary Alexandrian citizens.

When Schiller labelled Euripides a precursor of the Hellenistic naturalism (so-called), he likely had in mind moments in the *Bacchae* in which nature is described as a force of its own, existing and operating separately from human action: "the entire earth will dance" (γᾶ πᾶσα χορεύσει, 114), an entire mountain "reveled" (συνεβάκχευ᾽, 726), green life springs under the shadowy hair of the forest (ἡδομένα | βροτῶν ἐρημίαις σκιαρο- | κόμοιό τ᾽ ἔρνεσιν ὕλας, 874–876), and air becomes quiet as the woody glade holds its leaves in silence (σίγησε δ᾽ αἰθήρ, σῖγα δ᾽ ὕλιμος νάπη | φύλλ᾽ εἶχε, 1084–1085). In his landmark commentary on the *Bacchae*, Dodds calls this a "very rare" aspect of Greek poetry, that is, "the romantic vision of nature not *sub specie humanitatis* but as a world apart from man, having a secret life of its own".[55]

In the *Argonautica*, too, nature acts independently and often in opposition to human force and will. When the Argonauts leave Iolchus, the harbour shouts (ἴαχεν, 1.525), land sinks into the mist (δύετο, 1.581), a mountain rises (ἀνέτελλε, 1.601), and the air lulls the sea to sleep (εὔνασε, 1.1155).[56] When they later pass through the Clashing Rocks, the ocean cries aloud (αὖε, 2.565), the sky roars (ἔβρεμεν, 2.567), caverns boom (ἐβόμβεον, 2.569), and the Clashing Rocks open (οἴγοντο, 2.574).[57] Wind has obvious symbolic significance and is associated with the Argonauts' movement towards their destination and hindrance from reaching it: ἄνεμος appears more than forty times throughout the poem and οὖρος more than ten, and the two words are constant reminders that the voyage's trajectory is outside of the Argonauts' sphere of control.[58]

This is obviously not to suggest that Euripides' portrayal of nature in the *Bacchae* acted as Apollonius' primary source of inspiration – I have noted already the other occasions in Hellenistic poetry (as well as in poetry predating the *Bacchae*, such as Pindar's) in which nature is described as acting independently.[59] However, a distinctly proto-Romantic view of nature

---

[54] The natural landscape is the locus of Hes. *Op.* and underpins the Homeric simile: Lattimore (1951) esp. 43. Steiner (1986) 28–39, 99–110 discusses the importance of plant and animal life to the Pindaric metaphor. Cf. the picturesque setting of Aphrodite's grove in Sappho. fr. 2.1–23.

[55] Dodds 186.

[56] 1.365–366; 1.520–522; 1.524–525; 1.580–582; 1.601–602; 1.954; 1.154–155; 1.1279 (I include λιμήν as part of the natural landscape).

[57] See also the 'animate' natural descriptions at 3.1218; 4.920–929; 4.1423–1424.

[58] See Williams (1991) 211–220.

[59] See Nishimura-Jensen (2000) who discusses the moving landscapes of Callim. *Hymn* 4.

is nonetheless on display in both the *Bacchae* and *Argonautica*, whether or not the former influenced the latter in this respect. In both texts, nature exists, predominantly, in a world unto itself: so it is all the more striking when human lives and minds *do* come into contact with the natural world. Both authors pay special attention to such encounters, which occur almost invariably under the auspices of divine inspiration. The mortal and the natural world are synthesised through a kind of sympathetic Bacchic ecstasy – a dynamic which takes on marked importance precisely because human and natural affairs are elsewhere completely distinct.

Dionysus and those inducted into his *thiasos* have an important relationship with and power over the natural world, particularly water, animals and vegetative growth.[60] In the *Bacchae*, maenads suckle wild animals (699–702), their cheeks are licked affectionately by snakes (698) and they are able to procure water, wine, milk and honey *ex nihilo* (142–143; 704–714). They are compared to birds (ὥστ' ὄρνιθες, 748), and the chorus leader is likened to a fawn as he rushes through the meadows (ὡς νεβρὸς χλοεραῖς ἐμπαί- | ζουσα λείμακος ἡδοναῖς, 866–867). Seaford describes the cause of this Dionysiac union with nature as "psychic cohesion, or group consciousness",[61] shared by the members of the *thiasos*. His words are best encapsulated by the phrase sung by the Bacchic chorus, θιασεύεται ψυχὰν (75) – "he congregationalises his soul".[62] The phrase describes the initiand's resultant inward feeling of unity with Dionysus, the *thiasos* and the natural world.

The psychic cohesion and resultant affinity with nature which is shared by Dionysus and the maenads in the *Bacchae* is reminiscent of the group consciousness and relationship with the natural world which Apollonius describes among the Argonauts in the *Argonautica*.[63]

## Orpheus as Bacchic χορηγός

It is importantly Orpheus – not Jason – who brings about this psychic cohesion. In opening the Catalogue of Heroes with Orpheus' name (πρῶτά νυν Ὀρφῆος μνησώμεθα, 1.23), Apollonius underscores his centrality to the Argonautic expedition.[64] Orpheus has a well-

---

[60] Otto (1965) 143–170; Seaford (2006) 15–25; Harrison (1908) 444–446.
[61] Seaford (2006) 33.
[62] Dodds 76, citing Verall's translation.
[63] I note also that in the catalogue of heroes (1.23–233), Ap. associates each of the Argonauts with distinct geographical phenomena and gives them god-given powers over various aspects of the natural world: Orpheus can move rocks and boulders (1.23–34), Tiphys can predict meteorological phenomena (1.105–108), Lynceus can look under ground (1.153–155), Euphemus can run on water (1.179–184), etc.
[64] For a useful bibliography on the role of Orpheus in Ap., see Karanika (2010) 392 n. 5.

recognised metaliterary role in the *Argonautica* as Apollonius' 'alter-ego', and it has been argued that the magical power of his music represents the Apollonius' ability to manipulate the poetic fabric of the text.[65] Orpheus' role and characterisation is therefore of marked importance not only within the narrative of the text but also for our understanding of its mode of presentation: it is highly consequential that Orpheus is presented as a Bacchic choral leader. It is as though Apollonius has chosen a Bacchic director for his *magnum opus*: the character of the work, as a whole, cannot help being shaped by the (metaliterary) figure who presides over its construction.

A poetic correlation between Orpheus and Bacchic rites should not be surprising. Orpheus and Dionysus share a close relationship, and the many similarities between their rites and mysteries indicate that the two gods were not always separate in the minds of the Greeks.[66] In the Hellenistic period, there might have even been a firmer division between them given the growing academic interest in the mythic and religious content of Orphic and Bacchic mysteries,[67] however the precise nature of their cultic distinction remains largely unclear. I do not wish to oversimplify the complex relationship between Orpheus, Dionysus and their respective rites, but I will note that Guthrie writes in his landmark study on Orpheus and Greek religion: "to the question 'who was the god of Orphic Religion' there can be but one answer – Dionysus".[68]

On multiple occasions throughout the *Argonautica*, the Argonauts sing and dance together, and on each of these occasions, Orpheus leads.[69] Once the Argo has set sail, there are two similes in close proximity, both of which contain Orpheus as their subject (1.536–541; 1.569–579). These similes are by no means explicitly Dionysiac, but nonetheless contain Dionysiac overtones. In the first, Orpheus plays a lyre-song (ὑπ' Ὀρφῆος κιθάρῃ, 1.540) to keep the men's stroke-speed in time, and the Argonauts are compared to a chorus of young men who dance around an altar (περὶ βωμόν, 1.538) in honour of Apollo. Circular choruses for Apollo (paeans) and Dionysus (dithyrambs) "come closest to each other in terms of modality of performance",[70] and the most familiar realisations of ancient Greek circular dance

---

[65] See Hunter (1993) 148–151; Asper (2008) 177–179.

[66] Hdt. 2.81; Eur. *Hipp*. 954; Apollod. *Bibl*. 1.3.2. Dodds 146: "the original character of their relationship is not clear". On their relationship, see generally Harrison (1908) 454–477; Guthrie (1935) 43.

[67] Herrero (2012) 31–86 and esp. 57. For Orpheus in the Hellenistic period, see Guthrie (1935) 249–273.

[68] Guthrie (1935) 41, cf. 45. But see the cautious approach of Dodds (1940) 168–169.

[69] 1.536–541; 1.1134; 2.161–163; 2.701–710; 4.1155–1160.

[70] Prauscello (2011) 301; cf. Pavlou (2012) 531. Cf. the musical Apollonian and Dionysian counterparts at Eur. *HF*. 673–694.

are related to Dionysus, "the dance god *par excellence*".[71] Orpheus soon after plays another lyre-song which causes the fish around the boat to dart above the water "like sheep following in the footsteps of a rustic shepherd" who is "beautifully playing a shepherd's tune on his shrill pipes" (1.569–579). The language of this simile has Homeric precedent (*Il.* 18.569–572),[72] although the word ἀίσσοντες is an Apollonian addition. The word connotes a quick shooting motion and is used of wild dancing in the *Bacchae* multiple times (147; 625; 631). Csapo writes that "it is a *topos* of Greek literature that dolphins dance around ships because compelled by music that kept the rhythm for rowers", and that this music "usually has a Dionysian quality".[73] Apollonius' small but deliberate detail of the fish's motion "above" (ὕπερθ, 1.573) the water evokes a dolphin-like motion and brings Orpheus – the Argo's *keleustes* – further in line with a Dionysian choral leader who would, in Csapo's words, lead "a kind of processional marine dithyramb".[74] With the oar-stroke thus regularised, the Argonauts become a cohesive whole and demonstrate the same kind of 'psychic cohesion' as the chorus of the *Bacchae*: Orpheus, as *keleustes*, is responsible for this cohesion, meaning that he is (on this level at least) a kind of χορηγός.

The above simile has internal resonance with a much later one that is unrelated to Orpheus: the Nereids save the Argonauts from death by surrounding the Argo in a circle like dolphins as they push the boat through the Planctae (ὡς […] δελφῖνες ὑπὲξ ἁλὸς […] | […] ἑλίσσωνται, 4.933–934). Nereids and dolphins are both associated with choral circular dance and are "frequently depicted in a marine *thiasos* of a distinctly Dionysiac character".[75] Indeed, the particular word (ἑλίσσω) that is used multiple times by Apollonius to describe the Nereids' circular motion around the Argo (4.934; 4.937; 4.949) has firm associations with Dionysiac cultic dance.[76] Csapo argues that Nereids and dolphins in literature and myth traditionally play a role in saving the lives of ordinary men, which, in turn, "makes them symbols of eternal salvation, giving them a doctrinal role in the mysteries and a further, more metaphysical

---

[71] Fitton (1973) 263, cf. 258 n. 5. Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 77: the dithyrambic chorus would regularly dance around the altar of D. in circular formation at the City Dionysia. Cf. the circular dance for D. at Ar. *Thesm.* 985–1000.

[72] Levin (1971) 220–221.

[73] Csapo (2017) 140; but cf. Pavlou (2012) 525 on Apollo's relationship with dolphins.

[74] Csapo (2017) 140.

[75] Csapo (2003) 92.

[76] On the Dionysiac significance of ἑλίσσω, see Csapo (2003) 93–94, (2017) 145.

connection with Dionysus".[77]  This later simile thus confirms the Dionysiac overtones in the earlier one.[78]

The Dionysiac overtones in this pair of similes (1.536–541; 1.569–579) prepare the reader for Orpheus' role in the Dindymon episode (1.1117–1152) which, as I will argue, is both heavily reminiscent of and structurally homologous to the first half of the messenger scene in the *Bacchae* (677–727).  This firmly establishes Orpheus as the kind of Bacchic choral leader I describe.

**Dance on Dindymon**

The Dindymon episode commences when the Argonauts find themselves on Cyzicus, where strong winds prevent them from leaving.  The seer Mopsus interprets an omen and urges Jason to establish a cult of the Mother Goddess (Rhea/Cybele) on the mountain's peak.[79]  Although it is Jason who wakes up his men and urges them to participate (1.1104–116), and although the unspecified 'they' participate in pre-ritual preparation (1.1117–1128), Orpheus initiates the dance, that is, the ritual's central element (Ὀρφῆος ἀνωγῇ, 1.1134).  The cult of the Mother Goddess is then established, and the winds cease the following day.

The rites of the episodes in the *Bacchae* (677–727) and *Argonautica* (1.1117–1152) both take place on mountaintops – "the maenadic locus *par excellence*"[80] – namely Cithaeron and Dindymon (ὄρους, 658; οὔρεος, 1.1108), although "woods" also form part of the setting (καθ᾽ ὕλην, 689; ὕλη, 1.1117).  Both episodes commence with peaceful scenes of sleep (683–686; 1.1080–1082); the one leading the *orgia* then urgently wakes those about to participate (ἐξ ὕπνου, 690; ἐξ εὐνῆς, 1.1104); cattle are led up the mountain (677–678; 1.1107–1108); those participating wear oak garlands (στεφάνους δρυός, 703; στεψάμενοι δρυΐνοισι, 1.1124);[81] liquid magically gushes from rock (704–713; 1.1146–1149),[82] and man and woman are finally united with beast (695–702, 726–727; 1.1144).

---

[77] Csapo (2003) 94–95.

[78] This is not to say that this (later) simile has anything direct to say about Orpheus.  The simile, rather, gives another example of a circular aquatic dance which the iconographic evidence shows is strongly associated with D.  We can, therefore, be much more confident that the earlier circular aquatic dance which did feature Orpheus was also meant to be Dionysiac in character.

[79] Cf. Dodds 84.  I will use "Rhea" and "Cybele" interchangeably, as was characteristic of the religious syncretism of the late fifth century onwards.

[80] Henrichs (1978) 144.

[81] Cf. δρυὸς φύλλοισι (Eur. *Bacch*. 685).

[82] Note also κρήνην: Eur. *Bacch*. 707, cf. 142–3; Ap. 1.1149.

We should especially note that the βρέτας (1.1119) of Cybele, which the Argonauts place among oak trees, is carved out of a vine stump. The scholia remind us of oak's association with Cybele,[83] but the vine has no such association with the goddess, and is, of course, a major part of Dionysus' cult personality.[84] Further, the miraculous flow of choice liquids *ex nihilo* is a common thread throughout ancient literature and is frequently associated with Dionysus.[85] Pausanias describes a spring in Cyparissiae named after Dionysus (Διονυσιάδα, 4.36.7) which had a similar creation story and was formed after Dionysus struck the ground with his *thyrsus*. Apollonius' decision to name the spring of water after Jason (Ἰησονίην κρήνην, 1.1148–1149) may well evoke this, or a similar, Dionysian aetiological myth.[86] I note also that the language which describes the Argonauts' wild dancing (σκαίροντες, 1.1135) recalls that of the leaping fish in the earlier Orphic simile (διασκαίροντες, 1.574), encouraging an association between Orpheus' Dionysiac, choral power in two otherwise unconnected episodes.

The description of the dance and ritual on Dindymon (1.1134–1138) operates as an aetiological myth for the Phrygian Frenzy, a Cybelic cult practice that featured frenzied devotees engaging in orgiastic rites while whirling *rhomboi* and beating tambourines: ἔνθεν ἐσαιεὶ | ῥόμβῳ καὶ τυπάνῳ Ῥείην Φρύγες ἱλάσκονται (1.1138–1139).[87] Cybele, a Phrygian goddess, was adopted by Greek colonists in Asia Minor and spread to Western Greece by the sixth century.[88] But elsewhere it is Dionysus, not Orpheus, who is responsible for or is at least associated with the origins of the Phrygian Frenzy. In the *Bacchae*, Dionysus asserts that he and Cybele have invented the Phrygian tambourine, an indispensable element of the Frenzy (τύμπανα, Ῥέας τε μητρὸς ἐμά θ᾽ εὑρήματα, 59).[89] Apollodorus later writes that Dionysus learnt Cybele's rites while in Phrygia (τελετὰς ἐκμαθών, *Bibl*. 3.5.1),[90] and it is likely for this reason that there is a common association (in Strabo's words, a κοινωνία; 10.3.13) between the rites of Dionysus and those of Cybele. This association is displayed in the *Bacchae*: τά τε

---

[83] Apollod. *FGrH* 244 F 92, cited incorrectly by Żybert (2012) 379 as evidence for Cybele's association with oak *and* vine. We can also associate oak with D: Eur. *Bacch*. 109–110, 685, 703, 1103.

[84] For tree effigies of D., see Jameson (1993) 50–53; Dowden (1999) 68–69. Cf. Bukovec (2015) and consider D.'s epithet Ἔνδενδρος ("in the tree").

[85] Bonner (1910); Eur. *Bacch*. 142–143, 704–714. Cf. Hom. *Hym*. 7.35ff; Nicander. Ap. Anton. Lib. 10.

[86] Cf. Roller (1999) 43–44 on Cybele's (early) association with springs.

[87] Cf. Val. Flac. *Arg*. 2.624 (*Phrygius furor*).

[88] Roller (1999) 143.

[89] Cf. Eur. fr. 586. Cf. Dodds 84, that the aetiological myth given at Eur. *Bacch*. 120–134 to explain Eur. *Bacch*. 59 is unlikely the "true explanation".

[90] Cf. the usage of τελετάς also at Eur. *Bacch*. 73; Dodds 76: "from the later fifth century onwards" τελετάς is "used chiefly of the rites practised in the mystery cults" but "does not always mean 'initiations'".

μ ατρὸς μεγάλας ὄρ- | για Κυβέλας θεμιτεύων, | ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων, | κισσῷ τε στεφανωθεὶς | Διόνυσον θεραπεύει (78–82).  Two early fifth century kraters from Ferrara also indicate a strong correlation between the two gods.[91]

The dance of the Argonauts also resonates with the Cretan myth of the Kouretes, who danced and beat their armour in similar fashion around the infant Zeus to drown out his cries and save him from Kronos.[92]  But later Hellenistic versions of this myth feature the infant Dionysus at the centre rather than Zeus,[93] to which Apollonius may be alluding, especially given the episode's Bacchic overtones and the centrally located vine stump.

Apollonius, therefore, brings Orpheus in line with Dionysus and Dionysus ritual: Orpheus presides over a ritual that is Dionysiac in resonance and thus emerges as a Dionysiac χορηγός.  He brings a psychic cohesion to the Argonauts like that which is to be found among members of a Dionysiac *thiasos*.

**The Chorus of Argonauts**

We must remind ourselves that the Dionysiac *thiasos* is most likely the original form of the tragic chorus itself.[94]  Just as the *thiasos* is of one mind in its worship and cultivation of Dionysus, so too does a tragic chorus sing and act as one entity, giving "single, univocal expression […] to a group consciousness and to the experience and memory of that group".[95]

Apollonius similarly adopts the model of a chorus to dramatise Dionysiac psychic cohesion.[96]  Unlike the *Iliad* which concerns itself with the μῆνις of Achilles, or the *Odyssey* which concerns itself with the ἀνήρ πολύτροπος, the *Argonautica* is an epic about a group of men (φωτῶν […] οἵ, 1.1–2), whose group-solidarity Apollonius often emphasises.[97]  Whether Apollonius' 'chorus' is lyric or theatrical in kind we cannot say, but it should be hardly assumed that Apollonius intended such a distinction, given the allusive quality of his (and other Hellenistic) poetry.  Nonetheless, there are resonances which are, at least, highly suggestive of a tragic chorus.  For example, the dithyrambic chorus – the precursor to the tragic chorus –

---

[91] Roller (1999) 152 fig. 43, 153 fig. 44.  See esp. the explanation for the association in Dodds 76–77.

[92] Mooney 140.  Cf. 2.1232–1241; Callim. *Hymn* 1.52–54; Eur. *Bacch*. 120–129.

[93] Csapo (2017) 143–144, with references.  Cf. Sturgeon (1977) 34–36.

[94] Murnaghan (2006) 100.

[95] Gould (1996) 223.

[96] The resemblance of Ap.'s Argonauts as a chorus has been observed by Phinney (1963) 73–74 and discussed by Nishimura-Jensen (2009).

[97] 1.336–337; 3.171–175; 3.1163–1166.

contained 50 men.[98]  Apollonius' descriptions of the Argo lend the assumption that the boat is a *penteconter* (literally, "fifty-oared"), that is, a ship which will take 50 men.[99]  Earlier versions of the myth record 100 Argonauts,[100] so Apollonius' reduction of that number to 50 is significant, and may well be an effort to match the number of Argonauts to the traditional number of dithyrambic dancers.  Upon the Argonauts' initial departure from Iolchus, Apollonius emphasises not their strength, but their ability to sing and dance in harmony (1.536–541), and frequently throughout the poem the Argonauts are described as singing and dancing in performative, choral contexts.[101]

Greek choruses were intimately related to war, and Apollonius' choral descriptions are entwined with his portrait of Argonautic martial valour.  Socrates reportedly said that οἳ δὲ χοροῖς κάλλιστα θεοὺς τιμῶσιν, ἄριστοι ἐν πολέμῳ,[102] and Wilson argues that "choral activity itself – including tragedy, with its rectilinear rank-and-file *khoros* – encouraged skill of orderliness, obedience and co-ordination, as well as physical fitness which would serve the hoplite in the phalanx".[103]

Insofar as Apollonius' Argonauts share a group consciousness that is both choral and militaristic in kind,[104] each Argonaut has a unique identity, as the catalogue of heroes makes clear (1.23–233).  This is a contrast from the faceless men of Odysseus' crew in the *Odyssey*: the Argonauts are characterised individually and hence differentiated from one another, each with their own thoughts and feelings.[105]  By no means does this undercut the hypothesis that the Argonauts have a poetic function analogous to that of a chorus, a body that is traditionally thought to be unanimous and in constant synchronisation.  A chorus is a highly complex unit and one which can be divided into multiple parts.[106]  In discussing the exemplary scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (1348–1371) in which the chorus is broken down into a sequence of diverse, dissonant voices, Gould argues that the "collective experience of the chorus can serve

---

[98] Arist. *Poet*. 1449a.

[99] Carspecken (1952) 44.

[100] Meuli (1921) 1; cf. Gantz (1993) 341–345.

[101] In addition to 1.536–541: 1.1134; 2.161–163; 2.701–710; 4.1155–1160.  Nishimura-Jensen (2009) 12 n. 38: Ap. often describes the Argonauts as a band of youths (νέοι); Plato suggests repeatedly (Pl. *Leg*. 657d, 665b, 665d–665e) that choral performance is too strenuous for those older than 30.

[102] Ath. 628f; Pl. *Leg*. 7.814e–816d.

[103] Wilson (2000) 46–47; cf. Schüler (2017).

[104] Cf. Nishimura-Jensen (2009) 8: the tragic chorus "is artificially unanimous; they share their opinions and act as one […] the synchronisation of their movements and unison of their song further demonstrate the unnatural harmony of their opinions".

[105] See the index in Race (2008) 487–511.

[106] Scott (1984); cf. Finglass (2011) 389–390 on the hemichoruses in Soph. *Aj*.

to define, by difference and opposition, the heroic isolation of the protagonist".[107]   The Argonauts' relationship with Jason can be defined precisely in this way: it has been argued that each of the Argonauts' distinct qualities fall into allegorical categories – static types – which act as foils to Jason as he undergoes an education and transformation throughout the course of the poem.[108]

It should be clear to any reader of the *Argonautica* that Orpheus and Jason both have complex and competing relationships with this 'chorus' of Argonauts.  Both are, in a way, leaders of that chorus, and both have distinctly Dionysiac modes of authority – especially Jason, as I will argue in my third chapter.  These modes of authority are importantly not in conflict with one another because they are exercised in different ways and at different times.  Thus Murnaghan: "a choral performance enacts a well-functioning, mutually beneficial, collaboration between chorus leaders and chorus members, with the right mixture of hierarchy and equality".[109]

---

[107] Gould (1996) 226.

[108] Lawall (1966): there are men of brawn (Heracles), men of skill (Tiphys, Polydeuces, Ancaeus), men of valour (Telamon, Peleus, Idas), and men of piety (Idmon, Phineus, Mopsus, Orpheus).

[109] Murnaghan (2011) 258.

# ❧ CHAPTER II ☙

APOLLONIUS' MAENADS

꙰

The poetic significance of maenads in Greek literature is illustrated above all by the words μαινομένη and βάκχη in similes and metaphors. Hedreen argues that "the appearance of the maenad in these poetic contexts is significant because the contexts have nothing to do with Dionysus or with ecstatic religion. In them, the mythical figure of the maenad has transcended any ritual basis".[1] This is true of the two references to maenadic frenzy in Homer, both of which are used of Andromache in the *Iliad* (μαινομένη ἐϊκυῖα, 6.389; μαινάδι ἴση, 22.460).[2] Neither simile any explicit connection with Dionysus. The absence of maenadism in Homer is partially attributable to the lesser status enjoyed by the god at the time:[3] the Dionysus of Archaic Greece was not the omnipresent wine-and-theatre deity that he was in fifth-century Athens, let alone the icon of royal ideology that he was in third-century Alexandria.

We should then find it interesting that despite the god's centrality to Ptolemaic iconography, there is only one maenadic simile in the *Argonautica*: αὐτίκα πασσυδίη πυλέων ἔκτοσθε Μυρίνης | δήια τεύχεα δῦσαι ἐς αἰγιαλὸν προχέοντο, | Θυιάσιν ὠμοβόροις ἴκελαι (1.634–636). The simile is used of the Lemnian women upon the Argonauts' approach: they are likened to the Thyiades (Dionysus' frenzied female worshippers from Delphi) who engage in the traditional maenadic practice of eating raw flesh.[4] Apollonius' simile operates in the same oblique way that Homer's two maenadic similes do in the *Iliad*, namely, as a model of

---

[1] Hedreen (1994) 57.

[2] But see also *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 386: ἠΰτε μαινὰς ὄρος κάτα δάσκιον ὕλῃ.

[3] Cf. Tsagalis (2008) 1–29. D. makes brief appearances at Hom. *Il*. 6.132, 6.135, 24.325.

[4] Cf. Eur. *Bacch*. 139 (ὠμοφάγον χάριν), Dodds xvi–xx *ad loc*.

comparison for female behaviour. Never has the subject of maenadism in the *Argonautica* –
let alone the broader significance of this maenadic comparison – been the subject of scholarly
debate.

The earliest archaeological and epigraphical evidence for ritual maenadism can be
traced to the early Hellenistic period,[5] however "there is no evidence that formal Dionysiac
mysteries existed as early as the third decade of the third century [BCE]".[6] Diodorus writes
that the women of the Hellenistic period only worshipped Dionysus "in imitation (μιμουμένας)
of the maenads who are said to have been associated with the god in the old days" (4.3.3).[7]
This is true at least of Philadelphus' grand procession: though Kallixeinos describes 'maenads'
of differing cults participating (θίασοι παντοδαποὶ […] Μακέται αἱ καλούμεναι Μιμαλλόνες
καὶ Βασσάραι καὶ Λυδαί, Ath. 5.198e),[8] Dodds finds it hard to believe that their wreathes of
snakes were actually real (ἐστεφανωμέναι τινὲς μὲν ὄφεσιν, Ath. 5.198e).[9] Rice's extensive
commentary on the procession deliberately (but rather unsurprisingly) avoids the difficult
question of whether or not the cults described were real, let alone institutionalised.[10] Indeed,
θίασοι (Ath. 5.198e) are not necessarily equivalent to μαινάδες: a θίασος is traditionally
characterised by a unity of religious feeling, not necessarily by frenzy.[11]

The extent of maenadism's Alexandrian institutionalisation evidently remains a
difficult issue.[12] But this chapter altogether avoids historical and contextual difficulties of this
sort and is chiefly concerned with the ways in which poetic manifestations of maenadic
experience in the *Argonautica* reflect the literary function of maenads in the traditions of
Homeric epic and Attic tragedy. In this chapter I will argue that Apollonius aligns the women
of the *Argonautica* with the politically destructive maenads which appear in those traditions. I
will apply and extend to the *Argonautica* an hypothesis developed by Schlesier: that references
to maenads and maenadic behaviour in tragedy "should be appreciated as important models

---

[5] Henrichs (1978); Goff (2004) 213–216, 271–288.

[6] Rice (1983) 61. See generally Burkert (1993).

[7] Trans. Hedreen (1994) 58.

[8] Rice (1983) 61 gives them the title "maenads" and argues that "the combination of the 'mystic' features in the
procession may suggest that certain mystic cults did exist at that period, either on their own, or as part of an older
series of Mysteries out of which the later, formal Mysteries of [D.] developed".

[9] Dodds (1940) 163 n. 43.

[10] Rice (1983) 60–62.

[11] Although the word can have Bacchic connotations: Hdt. 4.79; Eur. *Bacch.* 680; Ar. *Ran.* 156.

[12] The scarcity of evidence complicates the argument of Friesen (2013) 77–80, namely that the prevalence of ritual
maenadism during third-century Alexandria shaped Theocritus' portrayal of maenadism in *Idyll* 26 and
encouraged a poetic divergence from earlier, Attic descriptions of maenadism; cf. Griffiths (1979) 98–106. See
also Fountoulakis (2002) esp. 313–319, who applies contextual questions of ritual maenadism and Dionysiac cult
to a reading of Herod. 8.

whereby the intervention of gods other than Dionysus […] is presented and understood according to the model of Dionysus' intervention in the human sphere", such that Dionysus is "subtly included as a vigorous agent and an object of reference even in those plots where the decisive divinity is not Dionysus himself".[13] The maenadic characterisation of the women in the *Argonautica* bring Dionysus into the world of the poem and facilitate an association between Jason and Dionysus, an association I will discuss in detail in the subsequent chapter.

I will include in my discussion Hypsipyle, the Lemnian women, and Medea. Hypsipyle and Medea are complementary maenadic figures because they both have analogous narrative functions: queen and princess respectively, both become romantically involved with Jason and both envisage him as the father of their children. The Lemnian episode thus becomes a "microcosmic foreshadowing"[14] of the later and much larger 'Medea plot' in Colchis. I omit from discussion Arete because she does not attract a maenadic comparison; but not *all* women in the *Argonautica* need necessarily be 'maenadic' for Schlesier's hypothesis to stand.

## Maenadic Lemnos

Maenadic similes and metaphors occur most commonly in contexts of kin killing and intra-familial violence.[15] That the Lemnian women have killed all of their husbands is therefore likely to be at least one reason why they attract the maenadic comparison (Θυιάσιν ὠμοβόροις ἴκελαι, 1.636). We can name a few others: just as maenads abandon their established domestic roles to become warriors and hunters,[16] the Lemnian women grow weary of their household chores and instead prefer to put on armour and engage in male agricultural tasks (τῆσι δὲ βουκόλιαί τε βοῶν χάλκειά τε δύνειν | τεύχεα, πυροφόρους τε διατμήξασθαι ἀρούρας | ῥηίτερον πάσῃσιν Ἀθηναίης πέλεν ἔργων, 1.627–629). The numerous verbs of "pouring" which describe their collective movement (προχέοντο, 1.635, 1.883; ἐχέοντο, 1.638) evoke identical Homeric usages of these same verbs to describe men (and men alone) "pouring" across the land.[17] Aggression and belligerence are, of course, two typically maenadic qualities.[18]

---

[13] Faraone (1993) 5 *ad* Schlesier (1993) esp. 101.
[14] Hunter (1993) 47–48.
[15] Hedreen (1994) 57.
[16] Eur. *Bacch.* 52, 755–757, 761–764, 1236–1237; Aesch. *Eum.* 25; Paus. 2.20.4. Cf. March (1989) 36 for vase paintings of maenads with swords.
[17] Hom. *Il.* 2.465, 15.360, 16.267; *Od.* 10.415.
[18] See n. 16 above.

A later simile likens the women to bees: the way in which the "dewy meadow rejoices" to their buzzing (ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμὼν | ἐρσήεις γάνυται, 1.879–880) is reminiscent of the natural environment's response to collective maenadic action in the *Bacchae* (αὐτίκα γᾶ πᾶσα χορεύσει, 114; πᾶν δὲ συνεβάκχευ᾽ ὄρος, 726).[19] Even the verb of buzzing (περιβρομέουσι, 1.879)[20] evokes Dionysus' title of "roarer" (Βρόμιος) and calls to mind his association with bees and honey: in his infancy, he was fed with honey by his nurse Makris (as Apollonius later tells us: 4.1129–1134), and in the *Bacchae* honey flows spontaneously from the ground at the god's appearance (142–143) and from the maenads' *thyrsoi* (710–711).[21]

This simile may even resonate with the preceding simile likening the Lemnian women to the frenzied Thyiades (1.636). The Thyiades and the Corycian nymphs (their mythical equivalents in the entourage of Dionysus at Delphi) are associated with the bee maidens in the Homeric *Hymn* to Hermes (αἳ δ᾽ ὅτε μὲν θυΐωσιν, 560).[22] Perhaps then, the description of the Lemnian women's white hair (ἀδμῆτες λευκῇσιν ἐπιχνοαούσῃ ἐθείραις, 1.672) recalls the white heads of Homer's bee maidens, besprinkled with barley (κατὰ δὲ κρατὸς πεπαλαγμέναι ἄλφιτα λευκά, 554). This reference would explain the otherwise baffling[23] depiction of the young and virginal Lemnians as having a hair colour that is normally associated with old age.

It is only Dionysus who is able to fetter collective, maenadic action since he is its originating source. It should then come as no surprise that Jason – a surrogate for the god (if we apply our earlier Euripidean–Bacchic lens of analysis) – is not torn to shreds by the women but is, rather, the object of their hypnotic delight. The Lemnian women surge behind Jason, relishing his presence (ὄπισθεν ἐπεκλονέοντο γυναῖκες, | γηθόσυναι ξείνῳ, 1.783–784), and later "encircle" him (εἱλίσσοντο 1.844); Csapo calls ἑλίσσω a "programmatic word" which gives a "Dionysian spin" to "round dance or anything else that moves in circles, since the word ἕλιξ also designates [Dionysus'] attribute, ivy".[24]

---

[19] The simile also emphasises the woman's social organisation, the purity of life of the bees, the ability of the bees to sting while providing the sweetness of honey, and Jason's effect on a feminine multitude. Cf. 'honeyed-words' (μειλίξατο, 1.650).

[20] Cf. the verb used later of Medea (δεινὸν δὲ περιβρομέεσκον ἀκουαί, 4.17).

[21] Ovid later attributes the discovery of honey to D. (*Fast*. 3.736–762).

[22] See Thomas (2020) 458–459 *ad loc*. On this Homeric comparison, see Scheinberg (1979) 12–13; cf. Cook (1895).

[23] See Levin (1971) 65 n. 3, citing various interpretations.

[24] Csapo (2017) 145. Cf. Eur. *Bacch*. 1123 (ἑλίσσουσ᾽).

## Old Comedy and Dionysiac Ritual

Panoussi is quick to assert that the *Argonautica* is the earliest surviving text which describes the Lemnian women with maenadic characteristics.[25]  She goes on to argue that Apollonius' maenadic colouring influenced Silver Latin poets and their maenadic portrayals of Hypsipyle and the Lemnian women.[26]  Apollonius almost certainly did influence these poets, but Panoussi's analysis ignores not only earlier dramatic treatments of the Lemnian myth where the women's 'maenadism' is associated with Dionysus generally, but also specific aspects of Dionysiac ritual on display in Apollonius' Lemnian episode.

Zeitlin argues that there existed within Attic society a framework of Dionysiac ritual which insisted that its members 'play the other' before assuming the pre-established identities of 'man' and 'woman'.[27]  She argues that this framework was reinforced by several Greek festivals in which men and women changed dress and imitated the opposite sex, and in a number of Attic tragedies in which feminised males are countered by masculinised women.[28]  Both Attic drama and Attic society are, according to Zeitlin, intertwined in a sympathetic, Dionysiac relationship.  The theatrical, symmetrical inversion Zeitlin describes is displayed upon Jason's arrival at Lemnos: the poem's feminised, sexualised hero encountered by a throng of masculinised warrior-women.[29]  According to Finkmann, there is a number of male–female "gender pairings" on Lemnos "accompanied by a reversal of the traditional gender roles".[30]  For example, Aethlides and Iphinoe (male herald and female messenger), Polyxo and Heracles (elderly counsellor and experienced hero), Hypsipyle and Jason (leader of the Lemnians and leader of the Argonauts) and, of course, the Lemnians *vis-à-vis* the Argonauts.  This gender-reversal is typified by the Lemnian women's arrangement into a mock assembly (ἷζον ἰοῦσαι | εἰς ἀγορήν, 1.653–654), an act which represents their usurpation of what would otherwise be a male-dominated *polis*.

The process of politicised feminisation is often the subject of dramatic treatment in Old Comedy,[31] and finds important resonance with Dionysiac ritual: it has been argued that Old Comedy enacts (in a way that serious poetic genres do not) a Dionysiac mythic–ritual pattern

---

[25] Panoussi (2019) 148.
[26] Ibid. 147–167; cf. Soerink (2014).
[27] Zeitlin (1989) 66 n. 8.
[28] Ibid. 66–67. Although a later source, see Philostr. *Imag.* 1.2.
[29] For Jason's femininity, see my Chapter 3: 'The Feminine'.
[30] Finkmann (2015) 3.
[31] Ar. *Lys*, *Thesm*, *Eccl*.

in which the comic hero(ine) is identified with both Dionysus and the poet: this dynamic subverts civilised norms of life in a *polis* and performs a kind of regression to a primitive stage of human existence.[32] This so-called "disfoundation of the city" results in a state of 'bliss'. The comic plays thus invert and celebrate (by contrast) the *polis* norms of the real world. The women's actions in these comic plays[33] and their introduction of "otherness into the life of the city"[34] serve only to refound and reestablish the male-dominated order. Dionysiac rites and ritual come to this same conclusion.

The Lemnian episode in the *Argonautica* adopts the same Dionysiac pattern of inversions found in Old Comedy (outside–inside, foreigner–citizen, male–female, foundation–disfoundation). The same transgressive 'bliss' that Riu describes is also on display, here in the form of the women's song, dance and sex with the Argonauts (αὐτοὺς ξεινοῦσθαι ἐπὶ σφέα δώματ' ἄγεσκον, 1.849; ἄστυ χοροῖσι καὶ εἰλαπίνῃσι γεγήθει […] ἀοιδῇσιν θυέεσσί τε μειλίσσοντο, 1.857–860). The Lemnian episode thus prefigures a symbolic refoundation of the *polis* as the expected outcome of Dionysiac ritual. There is good reason to believe that the episode also resonated with Aristophanes' (lost) play on the same subject,[35] in which Riu's formula doubtless came to fuller, if not complete, fruition. This means it is likely that Apollonius already had a Dionysiac foundation upon which to base the episode.

But to what extent is this 'bliss' 'Dionysiac'? Jebb sees it as Apollonius' departure from (lost) Aeschylean and Sophoclean dramatic treatments of the Lemnian myth:[36] "[Apollonius] tones down the harsher features of the story agreeably to the taste of the Alexandrian epoch".[37] Jebb takes this view because a number of fragments and scholia indicate that these Aeschylean and Sophoclean plays characterised the Lemnian women as evil and aggressive: the women either attack the Argonauts or only grant them permission to land after they promise to help repopulate the island.[38] The *Lemnia kaka*[39] notably also serve as a formal *paradeigma* in an ode of Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* (631–637), in which the Lemnian women are classed as some of the most evil in history. But in the *Argonautica*, the Lemnian

---

[32] Riu (1999) esp. 1–11.

[33] Ar. *Lys*, *Thesm*, *Eccl*.

[34] Riu (1999) 194.

[35] Henderson (2014) 286–295 *ad* Ar. fr. 372–391.

[36] For the lost Aeschylean tetralogy, see Sommerstein (2010) 36–37. For Sophocles' treatment of the myth, see Jebb (1917) 51–56. Cf. the account in Pind. *Pyth*. 4.251–257, and Argonauts' athletic contests on Lemnos at Pind. *Ol*. 4.19–27; Callim. fr. 668.

[37] Jebb (1917) 52.

[38] Σ *ad* Ap. 1.769–773. Cf. Jebb (1917) 54 *ad* Soph. fr. 387 (ἄπλατον ἀξύμβλητον ἐξεθρεψάμην).

[39] The massacre of Lemnos' men by their wives and daughters.

women are "violent in retrospect alone";[40] Apollonius does not simply affirm the myth of Lemnos' repopulation but draws attention to the hospitable entertainment provided by the Lemnian women and their merrymaking with the Argonauts through song, dance and feast (χοροῖσι καὶ εἰλαπίνῃσι […] ἀοιδῇσιν θυέεσσί τε μειλίσσοντο, 1.857–860).

We cannot rely completely on Jebb's explanation for Apollonius' departure because it does not get us any closer to explaining the uniquely Dionysiac colouring of the *Argonautica*'s Lemnian chapter, which we explored above: Jebb simply attributes these features to Hellenistic poetic innovation.  There is a better explanation, as we shall now see.


**The Lemnian–Dionysiac Mythic Tradition**


The Dionysiac features of the *Argonautica*'s Lemnian chapter – including the abovementioned description of 'bliss' and Dionysiac liberation on Lemnos, as well as the Lemnian women's maenadic characterisation – ultimately derive from earlier associations between Dionysus and both Lemnos and various Lemnian goddesses found in the plays of Attic tragedians (especially Euripides in his *Hypsipyle*).  These tragedians were active in building up the links of Dionysus with Lemnos and Lemnian goddesses.[41]

When Athenians first settled on Lemnos in the early fifth century,[42] they built a theatre of Dionysus atop a native Lemnian sanctuary to the the Lemnian mother-goddess, whom the Athenians themselves worshipped as a form of Cybele–Demeter and associated with Dionysus.[43]  Elsewhere on Lemnos, "the Athenians respected the Lemnian sanctuaries but assimilated the rites to familiar forms".[44]  Attic playwrights perpetuated this assimilation not only through their plays' content and themes, but also by setting their plays on Lemnos, which Csapo and Wilson suggest made it possible to perform and reperform their plays there.[45] Euripides' *Hypsipyle* is particularly important in this regard for three reasons: although fragmentary, it is the most extensive surviving dramatic treatment of the Lemnian myth; it is more than a mere re-telling of the cliché of the *Lemnia kaka*; it features Dionysus as a

---

[40] Levin (1971) 78.
[41] Csapo & Wilson (2020) 676.
[42] Marchiandi (2008) 12–13, 24–27 discusses the date of settlement.
[43] Csapo & Wilson (2020) 676, with references.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

prominent[46] character who, in Collard's words, is presented as a "forebear, liberator and object of divine cultivation".[47] The generally accepted hypothesis is that the *Hypsipyle* concludes with Dionysus commanding Hypsipyle's twin sons Euenos and Thoas to take their mother back to Lemnos, while also telling Euenos to go on to Attica and establish the Euneidai, namely the official musicians and dancers in the Attic cult of Dionysus Melpomenos.[48] Collard argues that "the myth in this form seems to have had political overtones, dignifying the Athenian family of the Euneidae as direct descendants of Dionysus, and giving Athens a claim to religious and temporal authority to Lemnos".[49]

The play was therefore, in part, an effort at legitimising Athenian control over an external territory by means of myth and cult: that same dynamic may have been appealing to a Ptolemaic king, promoting their ideology of territorial and cultural expansionism, and may have meant that this and similar plays' approach to the Lemnos myth suggested itself as a model for legitimising that ideology. In other words, there is good reason to think that the Lemnian episode's Attic treatment inspired Apollonius' treatment of the same episode. Mori goes so far to say that the Apollonian version of the Lemnos episode "promotes Ptolemaic ideology […] in its justification of the Greco–Macedonian presence in Egypt and elsewhere".[50] There is good textual evidence showing Apollonius' debt to the Euripidean play: the invocation to Dionysus which opens the *Hypsipyle* is thought to allude to the same Delphic cult (Thiyades) mentioned in Apollonius' only maenadic simile (Θυιάσιν, 1.636).[51]

The Dionysiac associations of *Argonautica*'s Lemnian chapter are therefore much stronger and more deeply rooted in Athenian literary and political history than is immediately apparent. Although Dionysus did have some association with Lemnos prior to these Attic tragedians,[52] there is no doubt that the tragedians intensified and authenticated this association.

I have, up to this point, argued that the maenadic, Dionysiac significance of the *Argonautica*'s Lemnian chapter resonates with the poem's larger Bacchic design by

---

[46] There are frequent mentions of Bacchic cult throughout: Eur. fr. 752a-b; Cropp (2003) 132; Collard, Cropp & Gibert (2004) 173. D.'s name is the first word of the prologue and the papyrus indicates that he appeared *ex machina* in its final scene: Eur. fr. 752, 759a.1673.

[47] Collard, Cropp & Gibert (2004) 182.

[48] Cropp (2003) 132.

[49] Collard, Cropp & Gibert (2004) 178.

[50] Mori (2008a) 113, although she does not consider the episode's relationship to the Lemnian–Dionysiac mythic tradition.

[51] Burkert (1994) 45.

[52] D. is Hypsipyle's grandfather; we find references to Lemnian wine-production in Homer (*Il.* 7.468–469) and Aeschylus (fr. 96, Sommerstein (2008) 108–109 *ad loc.*); Ficuicello (2013) 72 mentions a seventh-century *olpe* which depicts the Argonauts' games with the Lemnian women featuring D.'s robes as a prize.

establishing the Dionysiac environment in which Jason is characterised. Jason, through his romance with Hypsipyle, is drawn into a network of Dionysiac relations and is therefore himself characterised in a basically Dionysiac way. This allows him to stand as a vehicle – even as a doublet – for the god's appearance in the text, a point I will develop further in the subsequent chapter. As we shall now see, the Lemnian episode finds internal, maenadic resonance with the Colchian episode, its narrative counterpart,[53] in which Apollonius further develops the *Argonautica*'s Bacchic design through Medea's maenadic characterisation.

<div align="center">MEDEA AND MARRIAGE</div>

There is in tragedy a Dionysiac pattern which requires that the salvation of the *polis* be accomplished by the destruction of the royal household through the sexual union of an unmarried woman with an 'outsider'.[54] This destruction is repeatedly evoked in maenadic terms as a rejection of endogamy. There are connections between these myths and real-life Dionysian ritual. For example, the annual ritual practice at the Chöes (the second day of the Athenian Anthesteria) required that Dionysus marry the *basilinna*, the wife of the *basileus* (the Athenian archon). The ceremony would imitate a bridal procession from the *basilinna*'s pre-marital home (Dionysus' sanctuary "in the marshes") to her new marital home (the *basileus*' headquarters).[55] It has been suggested that the *basileus* dressed as and impersonated Dionysus as he had intercourse with the *basilinna*,[56] or that the *basilinna* had intercourse with Dionysus who was represented by a mask fastened to a pillar.[57] Whichever actually occurred, it goes without saying that the *basilinna*'s sexual union with and marriage to Dionysus was symbolically significant: it opposed the royal household's tendency to self-sufficiency by bringing into the equation Dionysus, a god of the *polis*.[58] Thus Burkert: "[o]nce again the community creates its solidarity through the veneration of one who does not belong to it".[59]

I argue that Jason and Medea's relationship in the *Argonautica* is modelled on the Dionysiac pattern of exogamy. Medea's sexual union with Jason, the 'outsider', represents a rejection of endogamy and results in the destruction of the Colchian royal household. I argue

[53] Hunter (1993) 47–52.
[54] Seaford (1993) *passim*, esp. 122, 137–138.
[55] Jameson (1993) 54–56.
[56] Keuls (1984) 293.
[57] Burkert (1983) 230–238.
[58] The interpretation of Seaford (1993) 134–137.
[59] Burkert, *GR* 260.

that the process is 'Dionysiac' because Medea's response to her period of transition from maiden to married woman is described in distinctly maenadic terms.

## Maenadic Pre-Marital Ritual

Maenadism has pre-marital origins, specifically in rituals whereby unmarried women were forced out of their homes and into the wild before marriage as a kind of coming-of-age initiation.[60] These rituals consistently occurred in a tripartite form (at least, this is how they were portrayed in literature): (1) pre-marital home; (2) transition (3) marital home.[61]

Apollonius stages Medea's progression from maiden to married woman according to this tripartite form: (1) Medea's time in the 'old state', that is, her parental, pre-marital home, specifically, her room in Aetees' palace; (2) her transitional state in the wild away from her pre-marital home prior to her arrival at her new marital home, which commences when she leaves Aetees' palace for the first time to meet Jason; (3) her incorporation and marriage into the 'new state', that is, her new Corinthian marital home.

In the *Argonautica*, Medea progresses from the first stage to the second. But she remains there since the third stage – her incorporation into the Corinthian marital home – does not strictly occur within the scope of Apollonius' narrative. Nonetheless, the third stage is hinted at when Medea is lifted by Jason and placed on the Argo (ἀνθέμενος, 4.189), recalling an iconographic tradition visible on a number of fifth century Attic vases where the bride does not mount the nuptial chariot but is herself lifted and deposited on it by her future husband.[62] Jenkins argues that the iconographical parallels between marriage and abduction on these vases are "indicative of a rite of abduction in which the transfer of the bride from one kinship group to another was ritualised".[63]

For a reader familiar with the tripartite maenadic marriage ritual, the 'lifting' in the *Argonautica* activates a suggestion of the third stage. We can be sure, then, that Medea's character and relationship to Jason is meant to be taken as an (often problematic) exemplar of this ritual. But, importantly, the elliptical third stage (as hinted by Apollonius) is perverted: the reader knows from their knowledge of the myth that Medea's incorporation into Corinth will be a failure. And within the course of the *Argonautica*, Medea's deteriorating relationship

---

[60] Bremmer (1984) 282–286, with references.
[61] Seaford (1988) 119–120. Cf. Van Gennep (1960) 11, 21.
[62] Jenkins (1983) 140.
[63] Ibid.

with Jason– which descends into what Dyck calls a "marriage of convenience"[64] – points in much the same direction. Apollonius can therefore achieve a tragic presentation of Medea, similar to that of Euripides,[65] while still operating within the tripartite marriage ritual structure: he alludes to the third stage, but reminds us it will be perverted. There is precedent for similar perversions of the tripartite marital ritual in Sophocles and Bacchylides: both poets omit the third stage of the ritual, an omission to which Seaford attributes ritual reluctance on the part of the bride to marriage.[66] The tripartite structure is thus at play in the *Argonautica*, despite the absence and proleptic perversion of the third stage.

Scholars argue that Apollonius uses marital imagery on two occasions in the *Argonautica* otherwise unrelated to Jason and Medea's actual marriage on the island of Drepane (4.1128–1169): during Jason and Medea's time on Colchis,[67] and during the Medea-Talos altercation off Crete.[68] But these scholars only consider the marital imagery at face value: the marital imagery is not considered in light of the associated ritual practices, let alone these practices' important Dionysiac associations. I will build upon the observations of these scholars and argue that Medea's subversion of certain aspects of pre-marital ritual, along with her aversion to the ritual's final stage, characterises her as someone wholly incompatible with the institution of marriage: a maenad.

**The Pre-Marital Home**

Let us begin with the first stage of Medea's maidenhood–marriage progression. Apollonius describes Medea's pre-marital home as a claustrophobic, restricted space. Aeetes' palace is a maze of chambers (θαλάμου θαλαμόνδε, 3.249; 3.670) in which Medea finds herself detained (ἔρυκε, 3.250), bolted in her room (κληῖδας, 3.822), looking searchingly up and down its walls (περί τ᾽ ἀμφί τε τοίχους | πάπτηνεν, 3.633–634). The symbolism is obvious: she is kept from leaving the secure, chaste world of her bedroom and crossing the "threshold" to the courtyard (ἕρκεος οὐδὸν ἄμειψεν, 3.647), that is, the outside world.[69]

---

[64] Dyck (1989) 457.
[65] This is the broader argument of Dyck (1989). Euripides' Medea is equally averse to marriage: γυναιξὶν οὐδ᾽ οἷόν τ᾽ ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν (*Med.* 237).
[66] Seaford (1986) 50–54 *ad* Soph. *Trach.* 141–149; Seaford (1988) 120–121 *ad* Bacchyl. 11.
[67] Campbell (1983) 58.
[68] See generally Cassidy (2019).
[69] Hunter³ *ad loc.*

The marital imagery which accompanies this description makes it clear that Medea is at the first stage of her maidenhood–marriage progression. She describes herself as a "wedded wife" (κουριδίην παράκοιτιν, 3.623) and is later likened to a bride (νύμφη θαλερὸν πόσιν ἐν θαλάμοισιν | μύρεται, 3.656–657).[70] Hunter notes the marital connotations of εἰσαγάγοιτο (3.622) which is used elsewhere in Greek literature as a technical term for taking a bride to her new home,[71] and Seaford notes that κάλυπτρα (used of Medea's veil: 3.384) is used of bridal veils in Attic tragedy.[72] Medea is repeatedly described as standing before and then passing through doorways (3.645, 3.822, 3.869, 4.41); a similar tableau is a common component of wedding scenes depicted on fifth-century Attic vases, where the door is the threshold between the pre-marital and marital worlds.[73] The repetition of the doorway scene in the *Argonautica* is emphatic, and suggests that a symbolic parallel is being drawn, which doubtless casts Medea as a maiden on the threshold of marriage.

Medea's mental instability while in this pre-marital space (ἐόλητο νόον μελεδήμασι, 3.471; μιν ἠπεροπῆες, | οἷά τ᾿ ἀκηχεμένην, ὀλοοὶ ἐρέθεσκον ὄνειροι, 3.617–618) belongs to the tradition found in Homeric epic and Attic tragedy, of heroines driven to maenadic frenzy by restriction within the household.[74] That these women, described in maenadic terms, rush to the walls of their houses is, as Seaford argues, indicative of a Dionysian urge to break free from the confines of the *oikos*. When Medea meets Jason for the first time, she represents the 'maenad' who finally breaks free from her pre-marital *oikos*, and is about to enter into the transitional, liminal stage in the wild prior to incorporation into the new marital household.

## Transition: ἐκ θύραζε

Ready to meet Jason in secret, Medea moves "out of the doors" (ἐκ θύραζε, 3.869) and into open space (διὲκ πεδίων, 3.888) where grass and poplar trees grow (τερείνης ἄνθεα ποίης, 3.898; αἴγειρος φύλλοισιν ἀπειρεσίοις κομόωσα, 3.928). She then encourages her attendant maidens to pick flowers with her (τὰ δὲ καλὰ τερείνης ἄνθεα ποίης | λεξάμεναι τότ᾿ ἔπειτ᾿ αὐτὴν ἀπονισσόμεθ᾿ ὥρην, 3.898–899), evoking a commonplace representation of the negative aspect of the loss of girlhood in marriage.[75] The extended simile which likens Medea to

---

[70] Cf. νύμφη of Medea at Eur. *Med*. 150.

[71] Hunter[3] *ad loc*.

[72] Seaford (1987) 124.

[73] Neils (2000) 213 with n. 37.

[74] Seaford (1993) *passim*, esp. 132–133 n. 84.

[75] Seaford (1987) 111–112.

Artemis (3.876–886)[76] is appropriate in this context: Artemis is the goddess of hunting and mistress of animals (πότνια θηρῶν, *Il.* 21.468), and "remains a virgin in the wild, adhering fiercely to the liminal stage of the girl's transition to marriage".[77] Artemis also had a role in cultic worship and premarital ritual: the cults of Artemis at Brauron, Mounychia and Lousoi all required young girls to undergo a period of ritual 'wilderness' before a wedding over which Artemis would preside.[78]

I argue that the descriptions of Medea's emotional responses to this period of transition are reminiscent of other literary descriptions of maenadic initiation. This is to be expected: as noted above, maenadic ritual has pre-matrimonial origins and can be traced to this second stage of the maidenhood-marriage transition.[79]

Prior to initiation into the cult of Dionysus, the soul (ψυχή) was thought to flutter around in the body.[80] This fluttering is almost always denoted by the verb πτοέω.[81] Apollonius describes Medea's mental agitation through verbs and other words that similarly denote fluttering, motion and flight: ἄημι (3.288), ποτάομαι (3.447, 3.684), ἠερέθομαι (3.638), ἀναπέτομαι (3.724), ἐλελίζω (3.760), πτερόεις (4.23). Medea's general fear and anxiety, accompanied by the occasional pang of hope, is a familiar feature in descriptions of the Dionysiac initiand prior to initiation.[82] Indeed, the two verbs of movement which accompany her mental agitation (ἐλίσσω, 3.655; δινεύω, 3.835) are both programmatic to choral and cultic dances and are, according to Csapo, charged with "mystic significance" and a "Dionysian spin".[83]

Dionysiac initiation brings an alleviation to this mental 'fluttering': the initiand's liberation is achieved through "a concomitant intensification of the agitation to the point at which it could – by means of music and dance – be finally transformed into divine calm, the ἡσυχία".[84] When Medea meets Jason, her agitation subsides and she appears to be completely disconnected from the world around her (τὰς δ' οὔτι περιπλομένας ἐνόησεν, 3.1150). Apollonius supplies the following explanation: "her soul has flown high up in the clouds"

---

[76] Ap. elsewhere associates Medea with Artemis: 4.345–346, 4.542.
[77] Seaford (1988) 124.
[78] See generally Sourvinou-Inwood (1988), (1990); Gentili & Perusino (2002).
[79] Bremmer (1984) 282–286.
[80] See generally Seaford (2018).
[81] Eur. *Bacch.* 214, 1268; Pl. *Phd.* 108a–b; Ar. *Nub.* 319; Plut. *Mor. De fac.* 943c-d. Cf. Seaford (1994) 284–285, Seaford (2018), with references.
[82] Seaford (2018) 376; cf. Seaford (1981) 256–258.
[83] Csapo (2017) 145–146.
[84] Seaford (2006) 108.

(ψυχὴ γὰρ νεφέεσσι μεταχρονίη πεπότητο, 3.1151).[85]  In other depictions of initiations, the fluttering soul often precedes acceptance into the underworld, after which the soul would fly upwards.[86]  Barkhuizen is therefore wrong to explain Medea's shifting psychological state in terms of the forward and backward motion of a pendulum: he does not consider the state of calm in which Medea's mental agitation culminates.[87]  Not only does the departing soul represent a kind of initiation for Medea, it also perhaps metaphorises – and possibly even foreshadows – her own death.  The verses which immediately follow provide support for this reading.

**The Negated Wedding Ritual**

After Medea's soul has left her body, she rests her cheek at an angle on her left hand and her eyes "remain languid" within her eyelids (λέχρις ἐρεισαμένη λαιῇ ἐπὶ χειρὶ παρειήν | ὑγρὰ δ᾽ ἐνὶ βλεφάροις ἔχεν ὄμματα, 3.1160–1161).  This same pose is commonly found in funerary sculpture.[88]  Further, Medea's room in Aetees' palace is exclusively referred to as a θάλαμος, a word which Seaford notes "is elsewhere exploited for its ambiguity between tomb (or underworld) and marriage chamber".[89]  When Medea decides to leave Aetees' palace once and for all, she cuts off a lock of her hair and leaves it behind for her mother (4.27–29), a gesture common to both pre-nuptial rites *and* funerary practice.[90]  Indeed, twice does Medea compare herself to a widow grieving for her dead husband (3.656–664; 4.1062–1067).  In this regard, then, the *Argonautica* functions as a mythological precursor to Euripides' *Medea*, a play in which "the language and circumstances of weddings often reveal a funereal after-image".[91]

What else can be made of this marital–funereal equation?  Seaford argues that maenadic behaviour in Attic tragedy often goes hand in hand with what he calls the "negated wedding ritual".[92]  This is where the playwright invokes and then either undercuts or reverses the process of marriage or marital ritual in order to underscore the incompatibility of maenadism with marriage – the former embodies a rush to the wild and a resultant physical, spiritual and sexual

---

[85] Cf. Hunter[3] *ad loc* comparing Hom. *Od*. 11.222, but not considering the phrase's initiatory significance.
[86] Seaford (2018) 373; cf. Seaford (1994) 285 *ad* Pl. *Phdr*. 246–247.  Cf. Fairbanks (1901).
[87] Barkhuizen (1979) esp. 36.  His analysis is restricted to less than 100 lines of the text.
[88] Hunter[3] 224.
[89] Seaford (1987) 121; cf. (1993) 124.
[90] Hunter[4] *ad loc*; cf. Redfield (1982) 190.
[91] Rehm (1994) 98, cf. 102–109.
[92] Seaford (1993) 125.

freedom, whereas the latter embodies restriction to the household and sexual restriction to one romantic partner. A common tragic example of the "negated wedding ritual" is the alignment of a wedding procession with a funeral procession.[93] Seaford argues that the Greeks associated death with marital separation from maidenhood, and that tragedy dramatises this theme by subverting marital ritual.[94]

I argue that Apollonius employs Seaford's "negated wedding ritual" to further align Medea with the aforementioned handful of tragic heroines who find themselves restricted to their households and inflicted with maenadic frenzy.[95] These tragic heroines also participate in a reversal of marital processes which ultimately bring about the destruction of their households. But the way in which Apollonius subverts Medea's 'marriage' is not limited to the marital–funereal equation described above: the 'faux-wedding' procession in Book 3 reappears with extensive, structural inversions in Book 4.[96] The status of the married woman, which ought to have been conferred on Medea after the Book 3 procession, is undercut: the wedding procession is negated by its inverted form.

In Book 3, Medea approaches Jason in a chariot (θοῆς ἐπεβήσατ᾽ ἀπήνης, 3.870) and drives through the city's large and "well-built streets" (ἐυδμήτους […] ἀγυιάς, 3.887). In Book 4, she does not have that same luxury, but is barefoot (γυμνοῖσιν δὲ πόδεσσιν, 4.43) – as bacchants in literature and art traditionally are[97] – and runs down a narrow (στεινὰς, 4.43), hidden path (ἀίδηλον ἀνὰ στίβον, 4.47). Earlier, in Book 3, the Colchian people fill the streets and hide *their* faces (ἀλευάμενοι βασιληίδος ὄμματα κούρης, 3.886), and Medea' maidens lift up *their* chitons (χιτῶνας | λεπταλέους λευκῆς ἐπιγουνίδος ἄχρις ἄειρον, 3.874–875). But in Book 4, the streets are empty, Medea hides *her* face (χερὶ πέπλον ἐπ᾽ ὀφρύσιν ἀμφὶ μέτωπα | στειλαμένη, 4.44–45) and lifts up *her* chiton (ἄκρην ὑψόθι πέζαν ἀερτάζουσα χιτῶνος, 4.46).[98] The inversions do not stop there: in Book 3, Medea is likened to Artemis (3.876–886) – the

[93] Seaford (1993) 119–121. Cf. Redfield (1982) 188–191; Rehm (1994).
[94] Seaford (1987) 108.
[95] Seaford (1993) esp. 132–133, citing all known examples.
[96] Cf. Rose (1985) 37 who notes the differences between the two passages but overlooks the broader thematic significance of these differences.
[97] Eur. *Bacch.* 665 (λευκὸν κῶλον), 863–864 (λευκὸν | πόδ᾽); cf. Dodds 160 *ad loc.*
[98] This description is curiously similar to Theocritus' of the bacchants lifting up their kirtles as they chase Pentheus (πέπλως ἐκ ζωστῆρος ἐς ἰγνύαν ἐρύσαισαι, *Id.* 26.17).

*hunter* – but in Book 4 she is likened to a fawn – the *hunted* – who has escaped frightening dogs and reached "the thickets of a dense wood" (βαθείης | τάρφεσιν ἐν ξυλόχοιο, 4.12–13).[99]

Apollonius' subversion of 'marriage' in the Colchian episode extends to his variation of the traditional marriage gesture of the groom grasping the bride's wrist (χείρ ἐπὶ καρπῷ).[100] This gesture usually occurs at the end of the wedding ceremony, symbolising the groom's control over the bride and marking the bride's incorporation into her new marital household. But in Book 3, the gesture is enacted by Medea on Jason (3.1067–1068). In Book 4, Jason does not grasp Medea's wrist, but rather her hand (καὶ χεῖρα παρασχεδὸν ἤραρε χειρὶ | δεξιτερήν, 4.99–100; χειρὸς δέ ἑ χειρὶ μεμαρπὼς, 4.1663). In a poem which so frequently alludes to these marital gestures,[101] the point is perhaps that the usual bride–groom power disparity finds no place in Jason and Medea's relationship, and that Medea is not completely submissive to Jason in the way that a traditional bride would otherwise be. This is an important aspect of Medea's maenadic characterisation: she emerges as someone wholly incompatible with the institution of marriage: a maenad.

Of course, Jason grasping Medea's hand is hardly the 'opposite' of Medea grasping Jason's wrist. There is no neat dichotomy between the Book 3 'faux-wedding' procession and the Book 4 'inverted wedding' procession. The Book 3 procession is already infected with disturbingly untraditional elements, indicating that Medea never really left behind her maenadism, even as she attempts to play her woman's role in the world of men. The procession's full inversion in Book 4 comes as Medea again slips fully back into the role of the bacchant, reactivating the potential for Dionysiac frenzy which was latent in the Book 3 procession.

When Medea and Jason eventually do marry on Drepane (4.1128–1169) it should then come as no surprise that they do so unenthusiastically. The ceremony is one of necessity and must be performed in secret, with armed guards and an enemy fleet looming nearby: "[t]he marriage scene itself […] provides an inauspicious beginning for their marriage and allows the possibility that the eventual failure of their marriage can be traced to as far back as its origins".[102]

---

[99] This simile may also find resonance with the third stasimon of the *Bacchae* in which the maenads rejoice in Pentheus' capture and compare themselves to a fawn which has finally escaped chasing hounds and reached "the thickets of the shady-foliaged woods" (σκιαρο- | κόμοιό τ᾽ ἔρνεσιν ὕλας, 875–876).
[100] Cf. Ojennus (2006) 259–262.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Cassidy (2019) 443.

# ❧ CHAPTER III ☙

---

## THE DIONYSUS IN JASON

⚜

In this chapter, I argue that Apollonius characterises Jason in line with the god Dionysus, and that Jason's distinctly Dionysiac personality in the *Argonautica* is reminiscent of both the polarising Euripidean Dionysus of the *Bacchae*, and the wine-god 'Philadelphean' Dionysus upon which Ptolemy Philadelphus based his mode of political authority. Jason's Dionysiac portrayal, in other words, is the product of two conflicting but complementary forces: the pull of Classical literature versus the pull of contemporary political ideology.

The Dionysus of the *Bacchae*, namely, the complex figure which embodies the polarities of god–man, man–beast, male–female, sanity–madness, joy–terror, and foreign–indigenous "began with Euripides, was revitalised by Nietzsche and Walter F. Otto, and continues to flourish under the social structuralism of Jean-Pierre Vernant or Marcel Detiennne and the literary structuralism of Charles Segal".[1] This Dionysus is markedly different in kind to the Dionysus whose principal association is with wine.

Dionysus the 'jolly wine god' is an Alexandrian innovation,[2] and one which flourished under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Importantly, the Dionysus which appeared in Philadelphus' grand procession was *not* the Euripidean Dionysus but rather "a Dionysus who signifie[d] licence and freedom through wine from daily cares".[3] This new, Alexandrian Dionysus was "the least martial of Greek gods",[4] and no doubt came as a contrast to the earlier,

---

[1] Henrichs (1990) 258.
[2] Dodds xii.
[3] Fraser, *Ptol. Alex*. I 202.
[4] Hazzard (2016) 70.

Euripidean Dionysus who, in the *Bacchae*, was associated with Ares (Ἄρεώς τε μοῖραν μεταλαβὼν ἔχει τινά, 302) and elsewhere endowed with the epithets of ἐνυάλιος ("war-like") and ἀρήιος (also "war-like").[5]

It has been argued that the very reason for Philadelphus' association with this (later, Alexandrian) Dionysus was to justify his absence from the field of war.[6] Philadelphus never led his army into battle, never won an important victory, and perhaps felt inferior given the military successes of his contemporaries and his royal predecessors, Alexander and Ptolemy I.[7] Philadelphus' coin portraits suggest that he was somewhat overweight,[8] and the focus of his public image was never war but rather the promotion of wealth, luxury and international arbitration.[9]

Jason's distinctly 'unmartial' heroism and aversion to conflict in the *Argonautica* coincide with certain qualities of this 'Philadelphean' Dionysus.[10] Jason does not want to fight (4.340, 4.396), but wishes to obtain the Golden Fleece "through friendship" (φιλότητι, 3.180). He does not want to use force (μηδ' […] ἀλκῇ, 3.185), but rather, words and speech (ἐπέεσσι, 3.179, 3.185; μύθῳ, 3.187), and speaks to Aeetes with "gentle words" (μειλιχίοισιν, 3.385) and a "gentle voice" (ἀγανῇ ὀπί, 3.396). His penchant for diplomacy is largely why modern scholars question his status as a true epic hero.[11] Apollonius' Jason is characterised in explicit opposition to the two frontmen of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: he shies away from μῆνις (οὐ θήν τοι ἀδευκέα μῆνιν ἀέξω, 1.1339), Achilles' defining quality, and his epithet of ἀμήχανος (1.460, 2.410, 2.885) directly negates Odysseus' πολυμήχανος.[12]

We must, however, reconcile these qualities with his sudden and unexpected murder of Apsyrtus. When Jason murders Apsyrtus, his otherwise diplomatic personality takes on a new dimension of complexity and unpredictability that is typical of the polarising Euripidean Dionysus, who is described in the *Bacchae* as "the most terrible and yet most kind to men" (δεινότατος ἀνθρώποισι δ᾽ ἠπιώτατος, 861).[13] Indeed, Dionysus' personality was one of

---

[5] Dodds 109–110.

[6] Hazzard (2016) 70.

[7] Ibid. 38–39.

[8] Green (1990) 145, fig. 57. Welch (2006/7) 186 argues that Ptolemaic displays of τρυφή ("luxurious magnificence") "frequently appealed to Alexandrian and Egyptian sensibilities in modes that could be and were re-interpreted by pro-Roman authors".

[9] Mori (2008b) 154; Goyette (2010) 11 n. 69.

[10] Rostropowicz (1983) 61 traces diplomatic parallels between Jason and Philadelphus' modes of leadership.

[11] For a useful summary of scholarship on Ap.'s characterisation of Jason, see Mori (2008a) 83 nn. 132–133.

[12] Hunter (1993) 9 defines Ap.'s engagement with archaic epic a "stylistic parody".

[13] Cf. D. in Val. Flac. as both military exemplum (*Arg.* 1.567–568, 3.538–540, 6.137), and the cause of disorder and madness (*Arg.* 7.301–306, 8.446–450).

ambivalence as early as the seventh Homeric *Hymn*. In that poem, Dionysus smiles (μειδιάων, 14), unleashes complete destruction (44–53), feels pity (ἐλεήσας, 53) and then attempts consolation (μιν ἔθηκε πανόλβιον, 54).

 Apsyrtus' murder, therefore, demonstrates that Jason's heroism does not simply reflect that of a diplomatic Ptolemaic king, but also a leader with an otherwise unexpected capacity for violence and destruction.[14] Jason, like the Euripidean Dionysus, is a man of divine–mortal lineage who travels to distant lands in order to carry out a religious function. He throws his host community into a state of disorder and responds to ensuing resistance by slaughtering a young, hot-headed member of the royal family. In my first chapter I noted that Mac Góráin observes a similar overlap between the narrative arcs of the *Bacchae* and Virgil's *Aeneid*.[15] Weber supports Mac Góráin's narratological analysis by examining the Dionysiac aspects of Aeneas' character in the *Aeneid*.[16] It is hard to resist extending these analyses to Apollonius' *Argonautica*, a text which was of important poetic influence upon the *Aeneid*.[17] The *Argonautica*, therefore, should be studied as the intermediate point between the *Bacchae* and Virgil's later, occasionally Dionysiac poetics.

 In this chapter, I argue that Apollonius' Jason embodies aspects of both the Euripidean and 'Philadelphean' Dionysii. The concurrent diplomacy and savagery of any epic hero are obviously not in and of themselves 'Dionysiac' qualities, but I argue that their projection onto Jason within the *Argonautica*'s larger Bacchic pattern justifies the 'Dionysiac' label.

<div align="center">

Τhe ἔξαρχος

</div>

Demosthenes emphasises the superiority of the *choregos* and/or *coryphaeus* and says that "if one takes away the leader, the rest of the chorus is done for" (Dem. *Med*. 60).[18] The dramatic leader of the chorus in the *Bacchae* is importantly not Dionysus himself but rather a single, indistinguishable member of Euripides' chorus, known in Attic drama as the *coryphaeus*. Given the functional equivalence of Apollonius' Argonauts and a 'chorus',[19] it seems most fitting to give Orpheus that title; Orpheus possesses by far the greatest musical ability out of

---

[14] Apsyrtus' slaughter also resonates with Pentheus' in the *Bacchae* – see my Chapter 1: 'Jason as βουτύπος'.
[15] Mac Góráin (2013).
[16] Weber (2002).
[17] See generally Neils (2001).
[18] Trans. Wilson (2000) 133; see also the similar sentiment at Arist. *Pol*. 1277a11–a12.
[19] See my Chapter 1: 'The Chorus of Argonauts'.

all of the Argonauts (indeed, he is the crew's only musician), and the *coryphaeus* remained "in principle undifferentiated from the choral collective, despite his higher level of skills".[20]

How, then, might we characterise the choral leadership of Jason, a man who does not possess nearly the same musical abilities as Orpheus but nonetheless remains an important leader of this 'chorus'? In the *Bacchae*, Dionysus functions as a leader of Euripides' chorus, but one entirely different in kind to the *coryphaeus* – a leader who stands separate from the chorus, without the musical ability of the *coryphaeus*, but with an important level of authority over the chorus *and* the *coryphaeus*. He is given the title of ἔξαρχος (141). The ἔξαρχος is to be distinguished from the *coryphaeus*: the two can appear in the same choral and, by extension, artistic context simultaneously.[21]

ἔξαρχος literally means "the one who leads off" or "the one who begins", and is a cult title of both Dionysus and Sabazius.[22] The word is used most commonly as a formal term for a song-leader, and its related verb ἐξάρχομαι accordingly describes the activity of "leading out" a song.[23] The verb appears with this meaning in Homer and tragedy,[24] and notably also in a poem of one of Apollonius' Alexandrian contemporaries (ᾠδὰν οὗτῶς ἐξᾶρχε, Theoc. *Id*. 8.62).

If the Argonauts resemble a 'chorus', then it is Jason who functions as their ἔξαρχος. Csapo argues that in literature and art there emerges a symbolism and iconography associated with the ἔξαρχος.[25] The ἔξαρχος will often appear at the head of a "recognisably Dionysiac"[26] procession; is distinguished in appearance in some way from other members of the chorus; faces the chorus; and makes hand gestures which suggest communication with the chorus. Moreover, the superiority of the ἔξαρχος "in fiction [...] extends to other hierarchical distinctions. The [ἔξαρχος] is frequently imagined as a god among mortals".[27] Although Jason's relationship with the Argonauts is complex, he is still chosen as their leader (1.348–349). His absence from the catalogue of heroes (1.23–233) marks him as someone separate, and he importantly uses the verb ἐξάρχομαι (1.362) to commemorate the beginning of the

---

[20] Foley (2003) 11. Orpheus is, in other words, a 'member of the band' rather than the 'leader of the show'.

[21] Csapo (2005) 56.

[22] Dodds 87, citing Dem. *De Cor.* 260 (ἔξαρχος [...] προηγεμὼν). The word was associated with Dionysiac cult as late as the fourth century: *SEG* 43 (1993), no. 1186 (*c*. 335); cf. *SEG* 9 (1944), no. 21 (also fourth century).

[23] D. is also very often considered the leader of ritual dance: fr. Adesp. 109d [1027d] *PMG*; Soph. *Ant*. 152–154; Pl. *Leg*. 654a.

[24] Davidson (1968) 9–16; cf. Williams (2013) 144–146.

[25] Csapo (2005) 56.

[26] Ibid. 58.

[27] Ibid.

voyage, the very word from which the title ἔξαρχος derives and one frequently used to initiate a cultic procession.[28]

ἐξάρχομαι can also mean "to take over the lead".[29] In the *Iliad*, for example, after Andromache has lamented her husband's death (ἦρχε γόοιο, 24.723), Helen and Hecuba "take over" her lead in lamenting (ἐξῆρχε γόοιο, 24.747, 24.761). Earlier in the *Iliad*, Odysseus is praised as βουλὰς ἐξάρχων ἀγαθὰς (2.273), which Davidson suggests "may imply that Odysseus does not speak out of turn in council, but allows others to 'lead the way'".[30] The connotations of ἐξάρχομαι in the *Argonautica*, then, likely lie not only in the realm of song but also in that of vocal utterance: not only does Jason "lead off" his chorus of Argonauts and the 'song' of the *Argonautica*, but he has also "taken over the lead" of Heracles in being delegated as the leader of the Argonautic voyage (1.336–350).

The only other word in the *Argonautica* that is semantically related to ἐξάρχομαι is ἐξάργματα (4.477), used of Apsyrtus' extremities at the moment of his mutilation. The word here perhaps emblematises the ἔξαρχος' capacity for destruction, or may otherwise associate Apsyrtus' mutilation with Jason's status as an ἔξαρχος.

## THE FEMININE

Zeitlin argues that Dionysus' association with the feminine is the very source of his power.[31] In Dionysiac myth, Dionysus and his bands of female followers challenge the implicit values of a male-oriented *polis*; we see this in the myths of King Proteus of Tiryns, the Minyades of Orchomenos, King Lycurgus of Thrace, and Pentheus of Thebes.[32] Pentheus in the *Bacchae* is an autocrat and insists upon maleness, intimidation, and hierarchical distinctions. The moment he puts on the "womanly attire" (γυναικομίμῳ στολᾷ, 981) given to him by Dionysus, he surrenders not only himself but also the entire *polis* to Dionysiac cult.

I have discussed earlier the way in which Jason similarly forces Apsyrtus to adopt a feminised identity when he gives him the robe in an episode reminiscent of Euripides' cross-

---

[28] There may also be a second, metapoetic reading here: not only does Jason "lead off" his 'chorus' of Argonauts, but so too does Ap. also "lead off" his own 'song', the *Argonautica*. Ἀπόλλωνος in the preceding clause (1.360) is just one letter short of our poet's name.

[29] Davidson (1968) 10.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Zeitlin (1989) esp. 63–69.

[32] Segal (1978) 187–188.

dressing scene.[33]  Much like Jason and Apsyrtus, Dionysus and Pentheus are in a "masculine contest for supremacy" in which "one gains mastery by manipulating a feminised identity, and the other is vanquished when he finally succumbs to it".[34]

## Outward Appearance

The external manifestations of Jason and Dionysus' femininity are remarkably similar.  From the fifth century onwards, Dionysus was no longer depicted in art as a fully clothed, bearded adult, but rather a beardless, androgynous youth, either completely nude or only partially clothed.[35]  He is called a "womanish man" (γύννις) and "counterfeit man" (ψευδάνωρ) by Aeschylus, and a "woman-shaped man" by Euripides (θηλύμορφος, *Bacch*. 353).[36]

Apollonius' Jason is equally youthful and effeminate in appearance.  He struggles to grow facial hair and only manages to sprout some "downy growth" (ἴουλοι, 1.972), failing to match the traditional image of the bearded Homeric hero.[37]  The *ekphrastic* description of Jason's richly embroidered purple cloak (1.721–767) occurs in place of an arming scene and is almost certainly meant as a counterpart to Homer's *ekphrasis* of Achilles' shield (*Il*. 18.478–490).[38]  Apollonius thus constructs a new form of anti-Homeric, unmartial, feminised heroism.

Like Jason (ὤμοισι […] δίπλακα πορφυρέην, 1.721–722), the Dionysus of the seventh Homeric *Hymn* wears a purple cloak that sits atop his shoulders (φᾶρος […] ὤμοις | πορφύρεον, 5–6),[39] as does the statue of Dionysus which appeared in Philadelphus' grand procession (περιεβέβλητο […] ἱμάτιον πορφυροῦν, Ath. 5.198c).  We may suspect that Apollonius' description of Jason's patterned purple cloak might, to an Alexandrian audience, have signified Dionysian prosperity.  Multiple scenes in Attic pottery depict Dionysus wearing a richly

---

[33] See my Chapter 1: 'Jason as βουτύπος'.

[34] Zeitlin (1989) 64.

[35] On this artistic change, see Burkert, *GR* 167.  See generally Carpenter (1993).  However, D.'s youth is hinted at earlier, in *Hymn Hom. Bacch*. 3–4: νεηνίῃ ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς | πρωθήβῃ.

[36] Zeitlin (1989) 66 *ad loc*.  Cf. Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.4.3 for the tale of Hermes giving the infant D. to Ino and asking her to raise him as a girl.

[37] Cf. the similar description of Pollux's facial hair in the Bebrycian boxing episode (ἰούλους | ἀντέλλων, 2.43–44), a figure whom Campbell (1974) 39 argues Ap. characterises in line with Euripides' D.

[38] Σ *ad* Ap. 1.721–722.  Cf. the description of Odysseus' cloak at Hom. *Od*. 19.225–235, and δίπλακα πορφυρέην of Jason's cloak at 1.722 and of Helen's garment embroidered with battle scenes from the Trojan War at Hom. *Il*. 3.125.

[39] A Hellenistic audience would been familiar with this hymn, at least judging by its use as a school text in Ptolemaic Egypt: Cribiore (1996) 223, no. 251 *ad P. Gen*. 432.

embroidered overgarment draped over his χιτών which depicts the silhoutes of fighting figures not unlike those appearing on Jason's cloak.[40]

## Sexuality

A useful intermediary figure for our study is Alcibiades, the well-known, flamboyant and cunning Athenian statesman who rose to prominence during the Peloponnesian war. Alcibiades liked to dress effeminately (θηλύτητας ἐσθήτων, Plut. *Vit*. *Alc*. 16.1), and has been labelled by modern scholars an "emissary of Dionysus" due in part to his to his drunken behaviour in Plato's *Symposium* (212c–e) and his attire of an ivy wreath and purple cloak.[41] Indeed, it has been argued that the setting and content of Plato's *Symposium* evokes that of the City Dionysia,[42] thus making it more likely that readers would have associated Alcibiades with Dionysus.

At the actual City Dionysia, Alcibiades was a *choregos* and wore his purple cloak much to the adoring gaze of both the men and the women.[43] His shield was engraved with Eros (a god more at home in the bedroom than in the military arena) and symbolised his sexual threat to the democratic *polis* through a combination of erotic and political power.[44] Alcibiades' life exhibits the way in which femininity, sexuality and an association with Dionysus go hand in hand.

It is precisely Jason's association with Dionysus and the feminine that characterises his sexuality and gives him his power as a male lover. An Anacreontic fragment celebrates Dionysus' relationship with Eros,[45] and in the *Bacchae* Dionysus has the "charm of Aphrodite in his eyes" (ὄσσοις χάριτας Ἀφροδίτης ἔχων, 236) when he forces the women of Thebes off into different directions "to serve the beds of men" (εὐναῖς ἀρσένων ὑπηρετεῖν, 223). Otto argues that Dionysus "celebrates his sublimest victory in the arms of a perfect woman. This is why heroism *per se* is foreign to him in spite of his warlike character".[46]

---

[40] Carpenter (1993) 187–188, 199–201.
[41] Scott & Welton (2008) 156.
[42] See generally Sider (1980).
[43] Wilson (2000) 98 *ad* Ath. 12.534c.
[44] Plut. *Vit*. *Alc*. 16.1–2. See generally Wohl (1999) on Alcibiades' sexual politics.
[45] Anacr. fr. 357 *PMG*.
[46] Otto (1965) 175.

Although scholars like Hunter reject Zanker's argument that an exploration of love and sexuality is Apollonius' great innovation upon the epic genre,[47] it cannot be denied that these themes remain a central focus of the poem.[48] On Lemnos, Jason is tasked with appeasing the "wrath of Aphrodite" which torments the island's women (χόλος […] | Κύπιδος, 1.614–615). The women are likened to "young brides" (νύμφαι, 1.776) and plead for Jason's love in a double entendre when they mention the depth of their island's soil (οὐδέ τί σ᾽ ὀίω | γαῖαν ὀνόσσεσθαι· περὶ γὰρ βαθυλήιος ἄλλων | νήσων, Αἰγαίη ὅσαι εἰν ἁλὶ ναιετάουσιν, 1.829–831). The ploughing metaphor is then taken up by Hercules (λιπαρὴν ἄροσιν Λήμνοιο ταμέσθαι, 1.868); he employs the adjective λιπαρός, a word notably used of human skin more commonly than it is of soil.[49] Indeed, the very name of the Lemnian princess literally means "high gates" (ὕψι–πύλη),[50] the palace of whom Jason and his men must enter to repopulate the island.

The invocation to Erato at the start of Book 3 (εἰ δ᾽ ἄγε νῦν, Ἐρατώ […] ἔνισπε, | ἔνθεν ὅπως […] ἀνήγαγε κῶας Ἰήσων | Μηδείης ὑπ᾽ ἔρωτι. σὺ γὰρ καὶ Κύπριδος αἶσαν | ἔμμορες, ἀδμῆτας δὲ τεοῖς μελεδήμασι θέλγεις | παρθενικάς, 3.1–5) marks the poem's perfect halfway point and links the poem's two halves: it establishes that the love theme will be a central focus of the latter half of the poem, and the word ἀδμῆτας (3.4) reminds readers of the theme's earlier treatment in the Lemnian episode (ἀδμῆτες, 1.672; 1.811).

When Jason finally grasps the Golden Fleece, he is likened to a girl who clutches her wedding gown (4.167–170). A simile of this kind is to be expected in the *Argonautica* – Apollonius frequently describes the conquest of virginity in terms analogous to a heroic triumph or the conquest of an enemy.[51] The traditionally 'heroic', therefore, has given way to a more androgynous, Dionysiac blend of masculine military with feminised sexual conquest.

**Dionysus–Heracles**

It is clear from a reading of the *Argonautica* Jason does not possess any traditionally Heraclean virtues like physical strength or mental courage: he is inexperienced (νῆις ἐὼν ἑτάροις ἅμα νήισιν, 2.417), unconfident (ὁ δὲ σῖγα ποδῶν πάρος ὄμματα πήξας | ἧστ᾽ αὔτως ἄφθογγος,

---

[47] Hunter (1993) 46 *contra* Zanker (1979). Cf. Nelson (forthcoming) 3, who suggests that early Hellenistic epicists tried to avoid well-trodden Homeric paths and instead "treat obscurer episodes from a hero's mythical career, especially those with a strongly erotic flavour".
[48] On love in Ap., see Beye (1969), (1982) 120–165; Hunter (1993) 46–74.
[49] LSJ s.v. λιπαρός.
[50] Cf. a similar double-entendre in Archil. fr. 198a 21–23 (West).
[51] Beye (1969) 54.

ἀμηχανέων κακότητι, 3.422–423; ἀμηχανίη βεβολημένος, 3.432) and in Book 4 follows in Medea's footsteps because he is "terrified" (πεφοβημένος, 4.149). Apollonius often contrasts Jason's mode of heroism is Heracles'; this is clearest on Lemnos when Heracles secludes himself and chastises Jason in a fiery speech for delaying the voyage by indulging in sex (1.865–874). We may wonder whether an Alexandrian reader might have detected in this opposition between 'Dionysian' and 'Heraclean' modes of heroism a contest between the two mythological ancestors of the Ptolemaic kings – namely Dionysus and Heracles.[52] It may be that Apollonius does not simply champion Jason's unmartial, sexualised heroic personality, but rather, displays on the same field for the reader's evaluation two contrasting but complementary heroic personalities which are set upon the same task but in markedly different ways.

For the Ptolemies, Dionysus and Heracles functioned as complementary forms of representation. In order to engage in dialogue and negotiations with subjects of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, the Ptolemaic kings adopted a multiplicity of personae – they needed to appear "as a strong and muscular Heracles, who wrestles down an adversary […] and also as a fat Dionysus in feminine, transparent dresses".[53] Notably, Philadelphus was the first to introduce emulations of both Dionysus *and* Heracles into Ptolemaic iconography.[54] Not only did Philadelphus cultivate a Dionysiac personality,[55] but he was elsewhere depicted with the club of Heracles,[56] and in Theocritus' encomium, Heracles stood as Philadelphus' model *par excellence* for a great hero (*Id*. 17.20–27).[57]

## DIONYSIAC ARRIVAL

Dionysus is the god who arrives. Seaford writes that "of all Greek deities it is [Dionysus] who most tends to manifest himself among humankind".[58] This is reflected in a number of festivals at which the god made his entrance in the flesh, that is, in the form of a plastic image.[59] Several cities in Asia Minor, for example, celebrated a festival of Dionysus known as the *katagogia*

---

[52] *OGI* 54.
[53] Pfeiffer (2016).
[54] Ibid.
[55] See my Chapter 1: 'Dionysus in Hellenistic Alexandria'.
[56] Hölbl (2001) 96.
[57] Hunter (2004) 116–117 *ad loc*.
[58] Seaford (2006) 39.
[59] Otto (1965) 82–83; Henrichs (1978) 146 with n. 82.

(literally "the bringing in (of the god)", echoed by Euripides' words in the *Bacchae*: Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι, 85) at which citizens would lead an effigy of Dionysus into town.[60]

Perhaps the best-known example of this festival practice is the Athenian Anthesteria, at which Dionysus was brought into town on a ship-cart.[61] The god's association with the sea is a recurrent motif in literature and art: he frequently departs *from* and returns *to* the sea because it is his home and place of refuge.[62] This explains his cult title of "God of the Sea" (Πελάγιος) in Pasgae and "God of the Sea Coast" (Ἀκταῖος) in Chios.[63]

In the *Argonautica*, Jason is a seagoing ἔξαρχος much like Dionysus. Upon his climactic arrival by sea at Colchis in Book 3, the Colchians are quick to label him an "outsider" (ξένος),[64] that is, a title also bestowed on Euripides' Dionysus.[65] The ξένος, in both cases, throws his host *polis* into a state of complete disorder.[66]

Associated with Dionysus' sudden arrival are the frenzied choruses of women who invoke his name.[67] The way in which the Colchian women respond to Jason's arrival is reminiscent of the way in which one of these choruses would respond to Dionysus' epiphany. The Colchian women throw their yarns and spindles at their feet (δμωαὶ δὲ ποδῶν προπάροιθε βαλοῦσαι | νήματα, 3.254–255) and rush out of the palace in "congregation" (ἀολλέες ἔκτοθι […] ἔδραμον, 3.255–256). A common literary trope of Dionysiac frenzy is the woman's abandonment of her weaving,[68] and central to Dionysiac worship is the collective, public celebration of the god outside the house and in the streets, with "everyone mixed together" (ἄμμιγα πάντας).[69] The Colchian women are not intoxicated,[70] but neither are the maenads in the *Bacchae* (οὐχ […] ᾠνωμένας, 686–687). Jason and Dionysus are both able to break social boundaries without intoxication, having not even uttered a single word.

---

[60] Burkert (1988) 84.

[61] Seaford (2006) 28–29.

[62] Otto (1965) 160–171; Beaulieu (2016) 167–187. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 6.130–137.

[63] Otto (1965) 163.

[64] 3.401; 3.619; 3.630; 3.638; 3.719; 3.905; 3.987; 4.33; 4.89. He is similarly a ξένος on Lemnos (1.784).

[65] Eur. *Bacch.* 233, 247, 353, 441, 453, 642, 1059, 1077.

[66] For D. and the disruption of the *polis* in Homer and tragedy, see generally Seaford (1993).

[67] Otto (1965) 80.

[68] Eur. *Bacch.* 117–119, 1236; Ael. *VH*. 3.42; Ant. Lib. 10; Ov. *Met*. 4.33–36, 4.390, 4.394–398. A simile which later describes Medea's love for Jason likens her to a weaving woman who is forced to abandon her spindle (3.291–298).

[69] Dem. *Meid.* 52, quoting the Delphic Oracle: μεμνῆσθαι Βάκχοιο […] εὐρυχόρους κατ᾽ ἀγυιὰς […] ἄμμιγα πάντας.

[70] We should hardly assume that they are intoxicated because Ap. does not say as much.

## Colchian Cockaigne

Upon arrival at Colchis, the Argonauts enter Aetees' palace and are confronted with Hephaestus' four springs of milk, wine, fragrant oil and water, all flowing beneath a tall maze of thick green vines (3.219–229). An important question is why Apollonius credits Hephaestus with the creation of these springs. Hephaestus is the god of craft and is associated with smiths and metalworkers. Almost all of his works involve smelting, hence his epithet Χαλκεύς. [71] Apollonius does mention some of the bronze Hephaestus used to construct Aetees's palace (χαλκέῃσιν ἐπὶ γλυφίδεσσιν, 3.218; χάλκεα […] στόματ', 3.230–231), but springs of various liquids are alien to Hephaestus' craft, and nowhere else do we hear of similar creations by the god in Greek literature. [72]

As noted earlier, the miraculous flow of choice liquids and beverages *ex nihilo* (particularly milk, honey and wine) is frequently associated with Dionysus. [73] In the *Bacchae*, for example, the chorus sings of milk, wine and nectar gushing forth across the land at the appearance of Dionysus (142–143), and later a messenger tells of maenads who can seemingly call forth water, wine, milk and honey from both the ground and their *thyrsoi* (704–714). This is an aspect of Dionysiac epiphany with which an Alexandrian audience would have been familiar, especially given that Philadelphus' grand procession featured a mechanically operated statue of Nysa which magically poured a milk libation from a *phiale*. [74]

Hunter argues that Apollonius' description of Aetees' palace is modelled on Homer's description of Alcinuous' palace (*Od*. 7.81–135). [75] This may well be true, but it does not account for the miraculous Hephaestian springs in Apollonius' account: in Homer, there are only two springs of water (much less remarkable in kind than the four of varying liquids described by Apollonius) and neither of them were built by Hephaestus (*Od*. 7.129–131).

---

[71] See Burkert, *GR* 167–168.

[72] Hom. *Il*. 1.605f, 14.166f, 14.388f (palaces and furnishings of the gods); Hom. *Il*. 14.327, Paus. 1.20.3 (thrones); Paus. 10.5.12 (the bronze temple of Apollo at Delphi); Mimn. fr. 12 (the golden boat of Helios); Nonnus, *Dion.* 29.193f (the chariot and metallic horses of the Kabeiroi); Hom. *Il*. 18.136f (jewellery of the gods); Hom. *Od*. 4.617f, 24.75f (bowls and jugs). See also Callim. *Hymn* 3.50 (ἱππείην […] ποτίστρην). One possible association Hephaestus might have with water is the fact that he lived with Thetis and Eurynome in a grotto surrounded by Ocean for nine years (Hom. *Il*. 18.394f).

[73] See generally Bonner (1910).

[74] Rice (1983) 62–68 *ad* Ath. 5.198f, providing a detailed account of this statue, its mechanical workings and its place in the procession.

[75] Hunter³ 121.

Hephaestus' only contribution to the palace is the pair of silver dogs guarding it (χρύσειοι δ᾽ ἑκάτερθε καὶ ἀργύρεοι κύνες ἦσαν, | οὓς Ἥφαιστος ἔτευξεν ἰδυίῃσι πραπίδεσσι (*Od*. 7.91–92).

It seems hard to avoid the conclusion that the four springs which Apollonius describes – and especially the detail of the vine overhanging them (ἡμερίδες […] καταστεφέες, 3.220) – evoke Hephaestus' connection with Dionysus.[76] Hephaestus was exiled from Olympus by Hera and then intoxicated by Dionysus to allow for his return and reintegration into the community of the Olympian gods. This story was extremely popular and remains the *only* identifiable myth depicted in Attic black-figure vase painting in which Dionysus played a central role.[77] Importantly, these vases consistently portray Hephaestus' return to Olympus with elements of Dionysiac processional ritual. Hedreen argues that the effect is to emphasise overlap between the myths of Hephaestus and Dionysus, namely, their reintegration into their respective communities following their initial rejection.[78]

These myths "symbolise the idea that excessive, unrestrained, uncivilised behaviour comes [to the *polis*] from the outside",[79] and are of key thematic significance at the point of Jason's arrival in Colchis. By again and again reminding the reader of these mythic dynamics, Apollonius insists that Jason is also to be understood as a basically Dionysiac outsider who seeks acceptance from a community to which he believes he has right of integration. The myths foreshadow the inversion of norms and disruption of hierarchy that will be fall that host community when the outsider is not accepted.


THE JOURNEY


Jason's Dionysiac associations are not confined to his role as an outsider penetrating the closed world of Colchis, but can also be detected throughout the Argonautic journey. In an Alexandrian footnote (φασι, 4.272–276), Argus tells the Argonauts that he knows of a (τινά, 4.272) great world-conqueror from Egypt whose steps the Argonauts are about to retrace. He is referring to Sesostris, the legendary Egyptian civiliser and pharaoh who straddled the human and the divine, and eventually became popular in the propagandistic imagery deployed by later Hellenistic kings.[80] Sesostris was a paradigm for current and future rulers because he looked

---

[76] On this connection, see Burkert, *GR* 168; Hedreen (2004); Seaford (2006) 30–32.
[77] Seaford (2006) 30.
[78] See generally Hedreen (2004). For another example of D.'s 'reintegration', see Csapo & Slater (1995) 110–111 *ad*. Σ Ar. *Ach*. 243.
[79] Hedreen (2004) 42.
[80] Murray (1970) 162–163; Stephens (2003) 34–36.

back to the Dionysus–Osiris model of a prototypical expedition for the purpose of world conquest.[81]  The Alexandrian footnote demonstrates that the Argonautic voyage is analogous to Sesostris' expedition and also to Dionysus' expedition to India – the leader of the Argonautic expedition, Jason, is analogous to Dionysus in this way.

The *Argonautica* is placed firmly within the ancient mythogeographical tradition which viewed the civilised, "inhabitable world" (οἰκουμένη) as completely surrounded by "Ocean" (Ὠκεανός).[82]  To leave the οἰκουμένη, cross the Ὠκεανός, and pass into the outer, unknown regions of the Earth represented the pinnacle of human daring and achievement.[83]  This is something that Dionysus dared to do as early as Homer (ἐς Ὑπερβορέους ἢ ἑκαστέρω, *Hymn. Hom. Bacch.* 29), although this aspect of his mythic personality was later emphasised by the Ptolemies through their Dionysiac mythologising: they retrofitted the Dionysus myth with details of Alexander's real-world career, specifically, his journey across the Ocean to India and his time spent in the Libyan desert.[84]  Apollonius' Colchis is comparable to India because it is located among these distant, unknown regions found at the "sea's farthest reaches" (ἔσχατα πείρατα πόντου, 2.1261) and at the "ends of the earth" (γαίης ἐσχατιῇσιν, 2.418).[85]  The Argonauts are therefore depicted retracing a basically Dionysiac journey; Jason, the leader of that journey, is therefore to be associated with Dionysus.

**Katabasis**

The Argonautic voyage is an Alexandrian reworking of the Homeric model of *katabasis*.[86] μυχός ("nook", or "innermost recess") commonly denotes the underworld and is used twice of Colchis (2.1246; 2.398).[87]  In Greek mythology the Clashing Rocks frequently represent an entrance point to the underworld;[88] Phineus' instructions to the Argonauts prior to their passage

---

[81] Hunter[4] 120.

[82] Ὠκεανός: 1.506, 3.244, 3.957, 3.1230, 4.282, 4.632, 4.638, 4.1414.  Cf. Hom. *Il.* 18.607–608, 21.195–197; *Od.* 10.508, 11.13; Hes. *Theog.* 133.  See Strab. 1.1.11 on Anaximander's γεωγραφικὸν πίνακα, but cf. Hdt. 2.23, 4.36.

[83] See Pind. *Nem.* 3.20–22, associating ἀνορέαις ὑπερτάταις with ναυτιλίας ἐσχάτας.

[84] Nock (1928) 22–30; Rice (1983) 84; Smith (1988) 37–38; Burkert (1993) 262; Bloedow (2004) 99; Seaford (2006) 37.

[85] Similar language is used elsewhere in Ap: 2.1089 (περάτης εἰς οὔρεα γαίης), 3.679–680 (ἐπὶ γαίης […] πείρασι), 4.280–281 (πείρατ' […] ὑγρῆς), 4.1227 (Λιβύης ἐπὶ πείρασιν), 4.1567 (γαίης ἐπὶ πείρασι τῆσδε).

[86] See Kyriakou (1995).

[87] For μυχός as underworld: Hes. *Theog.* 119, cf. West (1966) *ad loc*; Soph. *Aj.* 571 (μέχρις οὗ μυχοὺς κίχωσι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ).  Cf. (Ap.) 4.629–630 (γαίης | ἐκ μυχάτης).  For μυχός as a symbol of the separation and loneliness of female life as at 3.659 (μυχῷ δ᾽ ἀχέουσα θαάσσει), see Padel (1993) 8–12.

[88] Lindsay (1965) esp. 21–23.

through them (2.311–406) echo instructions appearing on Orphic tablets found in southern Italy which explain how to safely pass through Hades.[89] Once the Argonauts pass the Rocks unscathed, Apollonius explicitly refers to Hades (δὴ γὰρ φάσαν ἐξ Ἀΐδαο | σώεσθαι, 2.609–610) – one of many instances in the *Argonautica* where Hades is associated with the voyage.[90] Hunter has also argued that Virgil's much later portrait of the underworld in the *Aeneid* is greatly indebted to Apollonius' portrait of Colchis and the Libyan wasteland.[91] Virgil's use of Apollonian material in depicting the underworld indicates that ancient readers detected an association between Colchis and the extremes of the Argonauts' journey on the one hand, and Hades on the other.

*Katabasis* is also a *topos* of Dionysiac myth.[92] Dionysus has a close relationship with the underworld (ὡυτὸς δὲ Ἀΐδης καὶ Διόνυσος, Heracl. fr. 15) and a power over death that extends to cultic experience:[93] initiation into his cult involved a terrifying death-like experience which was followed by a new state of bliss, and the removal of all fear of dying.[94] Dionysus' ability to move seamlessly to and from Hades also typifies his ability to dissolve and transgress boundaries. From birth, he maintained a close relationship with Hermes (the crosser of boundaries), and "even in antiquity interpretation often seems unsure whether it is Hermes or Dionysus that is represented".[95]

In the *Argonautica*, representations of space, boundaries and their encroachment are of key poetic and political significance.[96] When Jason grasps the sceptre of Hermes upon his movement from sea to dry land (3.197–198), Apollonius characterises the Colchian shore as a liminal space, and Jason as the leading transgressor of that boundary. This anticipates multiple subsequent references to "threshold" (οὐδός), each imbued with liminal significance: the Argonauts' entry into foreign political territory (ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν […] ἔβαν, 3.219), Eros' infiltration of mortal affairs (οὐδὸν ἄμειψεν, 3.280), and Medea's desire to leave the secure, chaste environment of her bedroom and step into the outside world (οὐδὸν ἄμειψεν, 3.647).

But Dionysus' boundary-crossing does not only manifest itself in physical space: often associated with the god are the complementary disintegration of boundaries both between parts

---

[89] Beye (1982) 44; Harrison (1908) 659 pl. 1.
[90] 2.642–643; 2.735; 3.61; 4.1699. Cf. χάος (4.1697; Ar. *Nub*. 424; Ar. *Av*. 1218).
[91] Hunter (1993) 182–188.
[92] Paus. 2.31.2, 2.37.5; Ar. *Ran.,* on which see Santamaria (2015); Clem. Al. *Protr*. 2.30; Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.5.3.
[93] Cf. Seaford (2006) 80: D. is "not the ruler of the underworld but ensures the wellbeing of the initiate in the underworld".
[94] Seaford (2006) 49. Cf. Plut. fr. 178; Pl. *Phdr*. 244e.
[95] Burkert, *GR* 222.
[96] Mori (2008a) 46–48; Thalmann (2011) 147–167. Cf. Looijenga (2009).

of the self *and* between parts of the social and natural order.[97]  This is also true of Jason: his transgression of the voyage's physically marked boundaries corresponds to the disintegration of his personal identity (as I explained in the section titled 'The Feminine' above) and the disintegration of social structures (as I explained in 'Dionysiac Arrival' above, as well as in much of the preceding chapter).  Although Apollonius' language of transgression is to be distinguished from his *katabatic* colouring of the Argonautic voyage, the two are thematically complementary, just as they are in Dionysus' mythological and cultic identity, and thus form a central part of the voyage's Dionysiac association.

## Libya

As noted prior, the Dionysiac mythic tradition *post* and *propter* Alexander features Dionysus' expedition across the Ocean to India.  On Dionysus' return, he and his army become lost in the Libyan desert and nearly die of thirst.[98]  A ram suddenly appears, leads the men to a pool of water, and vanishes.  It is at this location that Dionysus founds the temple of Zeus Ammon, which features a statue of Zeus with the horns of a ram.

So too in the *Argonautica* do Jason and the Argonauts nearly die of thirst in the Libyan desert while on their return home from the mythological 'ends' of the earth (4.1277–1317).[99] The Argonauts – much like Dionysus' army – were led to an oasis (the garden of the Hesperides) by a portent (τεράων, 4.1364).[100]  Orpheus' placement of tripods and altars on the Libyan seashore (4.1547–1549) which can be seen "to this day" (4.1620–1602) is reminiscent of Dionysus' establishment of the temple of Zeus Ammon: both are aetiological myths and both feature gratitude for a divine portent appearing in the Libyan desert.

In light of Jason's other Dionysiac associations, it is possible that the *Argonautica*'s Alexandrian audience would have recognised or understood a correlation between the Argonautic and Dionysiac myths in this instance, and seen Jason as an emissary of Dionysus (possibly one refracted through Alexander the Great) as he retraces his steps through Libya.

---

[97] Segal (1978) 193.

[98] Hyg. *Poet. Astr*. 2.20.3; Lactantius <Placidus> *ad* Stat. *Theb*. 3.476–477, in Sweeney (1997) 211–212; cf. Diod. Sic. 3.72.2.

[99] Cf. accounts of the Argonauts in Libya in Hdt. 4.179; Pind. *Pyth* 4.  For the Libyan desert as *topos*, cf. Leigh (2000); Maes (2009).

[100] Lake Triton contained saltwater and was undrinkable.

There is reason to believe that Apollonius indulged in some mythmaking in the Libyan episode: Hunter argues that it features our poet at his "most experimental".[101]

Dionysus' experiences in the Libyan desert only grew into a mythological *topos* after the death of Alexander the Great, but this *topos* was fully realised by Apollonius' time. Hermippus of Smyrna was a third-century Alexandrian biographer whose written work contains the earliest surviving account of Dionysus' struggles in the Libyan desert.[102] It is likely that Hermippus and Apollonius would have become acquainted at some point or another because they were both pupils of Callimachus. The trajectory of the Argonautic voyage, therefore, on both a literal and metaphorical level, finds clear associations with Dionysiac myth and establishes Jason as a Dionysiac transgressor of both physical and metaphorical boundaries.

THE KNUCKLEBONES

A final and curious addition to our line of Dionysiac comparisons occurs in the scene immediately preceding Jason's arrival at Colchis. In that scene, Hera, Athena and Aphrodite are in deliberation on Mount Olympus, and Aphrodite's young son, Eros, is playing a game of knucklebones (ἀστράγαλοι) with Ganymede (3.111–127).

There is more at play in this scene than an innocent children's game. In ancient times, ἀστράγαλοι had general social significance and were frequently identified with sacrifice, fate and the gods because they were used in the context of ritual.[103] Apollonius' ἀμφ᾽ ἀστραγάλοισι (3.117) echoes Homer's ἀμφ᾽ ἀστραγάλοισι (*Il.* 23.88) when Patroclus' ghost recalls his murder of Clitonymus[104] – Hunter proposes that this echo "amusingly suggests that the present game [in the *Argonautica*] might have dire consequences".[105] An Alexandrian play by Alexander Aetolus entitled *Astragalistai* ("Knucklebone Players") which pre-dated the *Argonautica* was based on this Homeric precedent and shows that a Hellenistic audience would have appreciated the general socio-symbolic significance of ἀστράγαλοι.[106]

---

[101] Hunter⁴ 12.
[102] Nock (1928) 28.
[103] See Kurke (1999) 288–289 on the religious practice of *astragalomanteia*, where the throw of the knucklebones "offered a fateful or numinous connection with the invisible world of the divine; the game of chance became an ordeal, revealing to the consultant his own special lot […] [they] opened up the prospect to *moira* or *klēros*, each man's particular fated allotment".
[104] Cf. the account of this story in Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.13.8.
[105] Hunter³ 110.
[106] On the play generally, see Spanoudakis (2005); Sistakou (2016) 87.

Zanker argues that the ἀστράγαλοι in the Argonautic episode are part of the established iconography of Eros in poetry and art and that Apollonius' use of the motif is "traditional rather than motivated by any specific work of art".[107] Kurke agrees and suggests that Apollonius exploits their erotic connotations.[108] I argue that the Dionysiac papyrus from Gurôb (*P. Gurôb: 1*) encourages a new interpretation of this scene and a further association between Jason and Dionysus.[109]

Dated (mid?) third century, *P. Gurôb: 1* is "a curious mixture of invocations and prayers and what appear to be instructions for a ritual based around the death (and rebirth?) of the infant Dionysus, which had important ritual and initiatory significance".[110] The highly fragmentary final two lines of the papyrus are of the most interest for our purposes: ]ωνοσ ροβμοσ αστραγαλοι | ] η εσοπτροσ. Hordern interprets these as some of the toys which the Titans use to lure the infant Dionysus away from the protection of the Kouretes to his dismemberment.[111] The toys mentioned in the papyrus include a (pine-)cone ([κ]ῶσσος), bull-roarer (ῥόμβος), mirror (ἔσοπτρον) and knucklebones (ἀστράγαλοι). Included also in Clement of Alexandria's second-century CE account of the dismemberment myth in his *Protrepticus* are a ball (σφαῖρα), apple (μῆλον) and fleece (πόκος).[112]

Apollonius may be inviting his readers to draw a comparison between the Titans of Greek myth and his own description of the deliberating Olympian gods in Book 3 of the *Argonautica*: that the Olympian gods are attempting to entice Jason in the same way that the Titans of Greek myth attempted to entice Dionysus. Of course, a crucial difference between the two myths is that the Olympian gods in the *Argonautica* are trying to help Jason and not kill him. But the toys were also associated with prayers and locutions used for *protection* in a dangerous state of contact with Dionysus.[113] Importantly, a sense of duplicity pervades both myths. Hera and Athena refer to their plan as a "trick" (δόλος, 3.12, 3.20), and Hunter suggests that πυκινοῖσιν (3.6), παραιφάμενοι (3.14), αἱμυλίοισιν (3.51) and παραβλήδην (3.107) all imply deceit and "cunning flattery".[114] When Aphrodite proposes her plan to Eros while he

[107] Zanker (1987) 105 n. 26.
[108] Kurke (1999) 294 n. 98.
[109] On the papyrus generally, see Hordern (2000).
[110] Hordern (2000) 131.
[111] Ibid. Seaford (2006) 58 claims that these are objects "that we know from later texts to have been symbols used in [D.'s] mystery cult".
[112] Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.15.
[113] Obbink (2011) 288, without further explanation. I presume he means that the same toys which the Titans used to deceive Dionysus were later used by his followers with a kind of apotropaic function *against* D. himself.
[114] Hunter[3] *ad loc.*

plays with the ἀστράγαλοι, she gives him a ball (σφαῖρα) as part of her deal – these are two of the same toys which appear in Dionysus' dismemberment myth. Clement's account contains the only other surviving account of the myth behind these Dionysian toys, and the account curiously shares multiple words with Apollonius' episode: ἀστράγαλοι, ἄθυρμα, σφαῖρα, and δόλος.[115]

Dionysus' dismemberment was importantly a theme in the poetry of Callimachus and Euphorion,[116] and there is no firm evidence that the myth was in circulation prior to that time.[117] The origin myths of Dionysus had a "contemporary significance" under Ptolemy Philadelphus,[118] and scenes of the god's childhood – including depictions of Semele's *thalamos* and the cave of nymphs in which Dionysus was reared – appeared in Philadelphus' grand procession.[119] The increasing deployment of and familiarity with these myths in the Hellenistic period, therefore, make it likely that the Orphic–Bacchic overtones of this episode would have resonated with a Ptolemaic audience. A Ptolemaic audience would have equated the Titans' deliberations preceding Dionysus' dismemberment with the Olympians' deliberations in the *Argonautica* and thus further associated Jason with Dionysus.[120]

---

[115] Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.15–18.

[116] Callim. fr. 643; Euphorion fr. 13.

[117] Burkert, *GR* 298 does not completely discount the possibility that the myth was of pre-Hellenistic origin; cf. Levianouk (2007) 165–166 nn. 2–3.

[118] Rice (1983) 67.

[119] Ath. 5.200b–200c, on which see Rice (1983) 66–67.

[120] Of course, Medea, rather than Jason, is the object of the gods' deliberations in this episode – she is the one who will be enchanted by Eros' arrows if Hera and Athena get their way. Nonetheless, the ultimate object of the gods' plot (the "victim", just as the baby D. was the victim of dismemberment) is Jason.

## ⚜ CONCLUSION ⚜

❦

In his monograph on Ptolemaic poetic patronage, Strootman writes:

> *"The court supplied poets and philosophers with a plethora of aulic topics and forms – etiology, dynastic history, pastoral fantasy, urban mime, panegyric, epigram, 'Fürstenspiegel'. And of course, mythological subjects that could be directly or indirectly associated with kingship or empire:* […] *Zeus, Apollo, and Artemis – though surprisingly hardly Dionysus, who figures so prominently in Ptolemy Philadelphus' Grand Procession"*.[1]

My aim in this thesis has been to suggest that Apollonius' *Argonautica* is in part concerned with the metaphorisation of Dionysus and aspects of his cult. Although the god does not appear once in the poem,[2] his presence is felt throughout. Dionysus and his transgressive qualities inhabit the characters and their behaviours, and inform the dynamic of their relationships. The result is that Dionysus emerges as a metaphor – one that is central to Apollonius' poetic strategy, and to the narrative patterns of his *Argonautica*.

I have argued that this metaphor manifests itself in a number of different ways. Orpheus is a choral leader and brings to his 'chorus' of Argonauts a Dionysiac psychic cohesion like that which is to be found among members of a Dionysiac *thiasos*; this is why there are verbal

---

[1] Strootman (2017) 120.

[2] Ap. only refers to D. in passing, as noted in my introduction: 1.116, 2.916, 4.424, 4.431, 4.540, 4.1134. Cf. 3.1002–3: μέσῳ δέ οἱ αἰθέρι τέκμαρ | ἀστερόεις στέφανος, τόν τε κλείουσ᾽ Ἀριάδνης (the bridal crown which D. gifted to Ariadne).

echoes of Dionysiac cultic dance and ritual which surround descriptions of his choral leadership.

Apollonius adopts the "Dionysiac pattern"[3] found in Attic tragedy which is used of the destruction of royal *oikoi* by outsiders (ξένοι). The ξένος in the *Argonautica* is represented by Jason; this is why female responses to his arrival are described in distinctly maenadic terms. Apsyrtus represents the "resister" of the ξένος who – just like other "resisters" of ξένοι in Dionysiac myth – meets a dire end at ξένος' hands.

But Jason is not merely representative of a Dionysiac ξένος: he is himself actively characterised in line with the god. Jason is a feminised ἔξαρχος much like Dionysus and assumes the god's outward appearance and personality. So too does Jason follow in the god's footsteps: he leaves the οἰκουμένη to cross the Ὠκεανός and pass into the outer, unknown regions of the Earth, only then to become lost and then saved in the Libyan desert, just as Dionysus and his army had been earlier.

MacDonald suggests six criteria for determining whether a claim for a mimetic or intertextual connection between texts is reasonable.[4] His study, of course, concerns the textual relationship between Homeric epic and the New Testament, but his criteria emerge from an interdisciplinary analysis of two (otherwise) disparate genres, and are for this very reason equally applicable to – or at least, illuminating in respect of – the mimetic and intertextual relationship between Euripides' *Bacchae* (an Attic tragedy) and Apollonius' *Argonautica* (a Hellenistic epic poem). In this thesis I have argued that the *Bacchae* and its deployment of the 'hospitality plot' functions as an important narratological and thematic backdrop for Apollonius' Dionysiac framework. Below, I summarise the findings of this thesis by applying MacDonald's six criteria to the *Bacchae* and the *Argonautica*.

(1) *Accessibility*: this concerns the geographic distribution of the textual model and the likely availability of the text to the author for imitation. The postclassical education system was largely based on the formalistic study of literature, and there is evidence that *Bacchae* and a number of other Attic tragedies were popular Alexandrian school texts. If manuscripts of this kind made their way into Alexandrian classrooms, I do not think that Apollonius – Chief Librarian of the Alexandrian Library – would have had any difficulties obtaining a copy of the *Bacchae*, especially under Philadelphus' cultural programme which involved the promotion of Attic drama.

---

[3] Seaford (1993) *passim*, esp. 138.
[4] Macdonald (2001) 1–9 provides a concise summary of these criteria.

(2) *Analogy*: it is more likely that the author is dependent upon the textual model if there are examples or imitations of the same story or subject matter of that textual model by other authors. The *Bacchae* enjoy sustained influence throughout antiquity and was a popular subject of Alexandrian court poetry. Two of Apollonius' contemporaries who also worked in Philadelphus' court allude to the play in their poetry.[5]

(3) *Density*: the greater the volume of parallels between the two texts, the more likely it is for there to be a mimetic or intertextual relationship between them. This has been a main focus of this thesis. Between the *Bacchae* and the *Argonautica*, we find poetic parallels not only on philological but also on broader structural and thematic levels. Apollonius' use of Euripidean–Bacchic material is far from sparing: it is pervasive, and central to his poetic method.

(4) *Order*: this concerns the similarity in the sequence of parallels; the more frequently the parallels between the two texts follow the same order, the less likely it is that the parallels are merely coincidental. The *Argonautica* and *Bacchae* have analogous narrative structures: both texts deploy the 'hospitality plot' in much the same way. Moments of intertextuality do not occur at random points in Apollonius' narrative but are plotted at decisive moments which draw attention to the poem's structural resemblance to the *Bacchae*.

(5) *Distinctive traits*: unusual echoes of the model text are more likely to point to a textual relationship between the two texts. We cannot really say what constitutes an "unusual" echo in the *Argonautica* given that the poem is our only surviving example of Hellenistic epic genre.[6] There are two other Hellenistic (or at least, pre-Apollonian) epic poems which detail the adventures of Dionysus,[7] and a scholium to the *Argonautica* reveals Apollonius' intertextual engagement with one of them.[8] This does, to some extent, limit our chances of fulfilling MacDonald's fifth criterion,[9] but the evidence still points to Apollonius' engagement with a Dionysiac vein of the Hellenistic epic tradition.

(6) *Interpretability*: this criterion involves an assessment of why the author may have targeted the textual model for imitation. To embark upon this assessment would require an entire, additional thesis in its own right, but I think the preceding three chapters have pointed

---

[5] Callim. *Epigr*. 48; Theoc. *Id*. 26.25–26.

[6] But cf. Nelson (forthcoming) esp. 2: "early Hellenistic epicists […] display an interest in key subjects and themes which are often regarded as typical features of later 'Callimachean' poetics".

[7] Deinarchos of Delos' *Dionysiaca* (*FGrH* 399 F 1A); Theolytus of Methymna's *Bacchic Epic* (Ath. 7.297a–297b).

[8] Σ *ad*. Ap. 1.623–626 = *FGrH* 478 F 2: εἴληφε τὴν ἱστορίαν παρὰ Θεολύτου.

[9] We are unable to assess how, if at all, the two (lost) epics engage with the *Bacchae*.

us in a helpful direction. Apollonius' motivation for targeting the *Bacchae* as a textual model appears to be the product of two conflicting but complementary forces: the pull of classical literature versus the pull of contemporary political ideology. Ptolemy Philadelphus exploited Attic tragedy and used it as a propagandistic tool to promote his cultural politics; Apollonius, a poet of Philadelphus' court, achieves precisely the same thing, only on the poetic level. The *Argonautica* is not merely concerned with the construction of political authority: it is through an Attic, tragic lens that Apollonius draws upon the biases of his audience and communicates messages, albeit allusively, which reinforce Ptolemaic political ideology.

But the *Bacchae* is merely the foundation of Apollonius' poetic framework. Dionysiac elements of other tragedies and comedies make themselves apparent throughout the poem, as do veiled aspects of Ptolemaic–Dionysiac royal iconography. Apollonius' *Argonautica*, as I hope this thesis has proved, hardly has 'nothing to do with Dionysus'.

# ❧ BIBLIOGRAPHY ❧

Aneziri, S. (2009). 'World Travellers: The Associations of Artists of Dionysus' in Hunter, R. L. & Rutherford, I. (eds.). *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture*. Cambridge University Press: 217–236.

Asper, M. (2008). 'Apollonius on Poetry' in Papanghelis, T. & A. Rengakos (eds.). *Brill's Companion to Apollonius Rhodius*. Brill: 167–197.

Bailey, D. M. (2007). 'A Snake-Legged Dionysos from Egypt, and Other Divine Snakes'. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 93: 263–270.

Barbantani, S. (2001). *Φάτις Νικηφόρος: Frammenti di elegia encomiastica nell'e delle Guerre Galatiche: Supplementum Hellenisticum 958 e 969*. Vita e Pensiero.

Barkhuizen, J. (1979). 'The Psychological Characterization of Medea in Apollonius of Rhodes, Argonautica 3, 744–824'. *Acta Classica* 22: 33–48.

Beaulieu, M. (2016). 'Dionysus and the Sea' in Beaulieu, M. *The Sea in the Greek Imagination*. University of Pennsylvania Press: 167–187.

Beye, C. R. (1969). 'Jason as love–hero in Apollonius' Argonautika'. *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 10: 31–55.

————— (1982). *Epic and Romance in the Argonautica of Apollonius*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Bloedow, E. F. (2004). 'Egypt in Alexander's Scheme of Things'. *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 77(2): 75–99.

Bonner, C. (1910). 'Dionysiac Magic and the Greek Land of Cockaigne'. *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 41: 175–185.

Bremer, J. M. (1987). 'Full Moon and Marriage in Apollonius' Argonautica'. *The Classical Quarterly* 37(2): 423–426.

Bremmer, J. N. (1984). 'Greek Maenadism Reconsidered'. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 55: 267–286.

Buckley, T. A. (1892). *The Tragedies of Euripides: Vol. 1*. Harper & Brothers.

Bukovec, P. (2015). 'Dionysos als Baumgott. Der Baum in der Dionysos-Überlieferung aus indogermanischer Perspektive'. Zinko, C. & M. Zinko (eds.). *Grazer Symposium zur indogermanischen Altertumskunde: Der antike Mensch im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ritual und Magie.* Leykam: 29–67.

Bulloch, A. W. (1985). 'Hellenistic Poetry' in Easterling, P. E. & B. M. W. Knox (eds.). *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Volume 1: Greek Literature*. Cambridge University Press: 541–621.

Burkert, W. trans. P. Bing (1983). *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. University of California Press.

————— trans. J. Raffan (1985). *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Blackwell.

————— (1988). 'Katagógia–Anagógia and the Goddess of Knossos' in Hägg, R., N. Marinatos & G. C. Nordquist (eds.). *Early Greek Cult Practice: Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26–29 June, 1986*. Svenska Institutet i Athen: 81–88.

————— (1993). 'Bacchic Teletai in the Hellenistic Age' in Carpenter, T & C. Faraone (eds.). *Masks of Dionysus*. Cornell University Press: 259–275.

————— (1994). 'Orpheus, Dionysos und die Euneiden in Athen: Das Zeugnis von Euripides' *Hypsipyle*' in Bierl, A. & P. von Möllendorff (eds.). *Orchestra: Drama, Mythos, Bühne*. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. 44–49.

Byre, C. (1996). 'The Killing of Apsyrtus in Apollonius Rhodius' "Argonautica"'. *Phoenix*, 50(1): 3–16.

Cameron, A. (1995). *Callimachus and his Critics*. Princeton University Press.

Campbell, M. (1974). 'Three Notes on Alexandrine Poetry'. *Hermes* 102(1): 38–46.

————— (1983). *Studies in the Third Book of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*. Hildesheim.

Carney, E. D. (1987). 'Olympias'. *Ancient Society* 18: 35–62.

Carpenter, T. (1993). 'On the Beardless Dionysus' in Carpenter, T. & C. Faraone (eds.). *Masks of Dionysus*. Cornell University Press: 185–206.

Carspecken, P. (1952). 'Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic'. *Yale Classical Studies* 13: 33–143.

Cassidy, S. (2019). 'Wedding Imagery in the Talos Episode: Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.1653–88'. *The Classical Quarterly* 68(2): 442–457.

Ceulemans, R. (2007). 'Ritual Mutilation in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica'. *Kernos* 20: 97–112.

Chaniotis, A. (2003). 'The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers' in Erskine, A. (ed.). *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. Blackwell: 431–445.

Clare, R. J. (2002). *The Path of the Argo: Language, Imagery and Narrative in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Cambridge University Press.

Cook, A. B. (1895). 'The Bee in Greek Mythology'. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 15: 1–24.

Collard, C., M. J. Cropp & J. Gibert (2004). *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays: Volume II*. Antony Rowe.

Collins, D. (2004). *Master of the Game: Competition and Performance in Greek Poetry*. Harvard University Press.

Cribiore, R. (1996). *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco–Roman Egypt*. Atlanta Scholars Press.

Cropp, M. (2003). 'Hypsipyle and Athens' in Csapo, E. & M. C. Miller (eds.). *Poetry, Theory, Praxis: The Social Life of Myth, Word and Image in Ancient Greece: Essays in Honours of William J. Slater*. Oxbow Books: 129–145.

Csapo, E. & W. Slater (1995). *The Context of Ancient Drama*. University of Michigan Press.

Csapo, E. (2003). 'The Dolphins of Dionysus' in Csapo, E. & M. C. Miller (eds.). *Poetry, Theory, Praxis: The Social Life of Myth, Word and Image in Ancient Greece: Essays in Honour of William J. Slater*. Oxbow Books: 69–98.

————— (2005). 'The Iconography of the "Exarchos"'. *Mediterranean Archaeology* 19/20: 55–65.

————— (2017). 'Imagining the shape of choral dance and inventing the cultic in Euripides' later tragedies' in Gianvittorio, L. (ed.). *Choreutika: Performing and Theorising Dance in Ancient Greece*. Fabrizio Serra: 119–156.

————— & P. Wilson (2020). *A Social and Economic History of the Theatre to 300 BC: Volume II: Theatre Beyond Athens*. Cambridge University Press.

Cuypers, M. P. (1997). (diss.). *Apollonius Rhodius: Argonautica 2.1–310: A Commentary*. Leiden.

Davidson, J. A. (1968). *From Archilochus to Pindar*. St Martins' Press.

Dodds, E. R. (1940). 'Maenadism in the Bacchae'. *The Harvard Theological Review* 33(3): 155–176.

——————— (1960). *Bacchae: Edited with Introduction and Commentary*. Oxford University Press.

Dowden, K. (1999). *European Paganism: Realities of Cult from Antiquity to Middle Ages*. Routledge.

Dyck, A. (1989). 'On the Way from Colchis to Corinth: Medea in Book 4 of the Argonautica'. *Hermes* 117(4): 455–470.

Fairbanks, A. (1901). 'Souls in the Aether and Sophocles, Ajax 1192f'. *The Classical Review* 15(8): 431–432.

Fantuzzi, M. & R. Hunter (2005). *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry*. Cambridge University Press.

Faraone, C. (1993). 'Introduction' in Carpenter, T & C. Faraone (eds.). *Masks of Dionysus*. Cornell University Press: 1–10.

Ficuicello, L. (2013). *Lemnos: Cultura, Storia, Archeologia, Topografia Di Un'isola del Nord–Egeo*. Scuola Archelogica Italiana di Atene.

Finglass, P. J. (2011). *Sophocles: Ajax*. Cambridge University Press.

Finkmann, S. (2015). 'Polyxo and the Lemnian Episode: An Inter- and Intratextual Study of Apollonius Rhodius, Valerius Flaccus, and Statius". *Varia* 12 (https://doi.org/10.4000/ dictynna.1135)

Fitton, J. W. (1973). 'Greek Dance'. *The Classical Quarterly* 23(2): 257–274.

Foley, H. (2003). 'Choral Identity in Greek Tragedy'. *Classical Philology* 98(1): 1–30.

Fountoulakis, A. (2002). 'Herondas 8.66–79: Generic Self-Consciousness and Artistic Claims in Herondas' Mimiambs'. *Mnemosyne* 55(3): 301–319.

Fränkel, H. (1952). 'Apollonius Rhodius as a Narrator in Argonautica 2.1–140'. *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 83: 144–155.

Fraser, P. (1972). *Ptolemaic Alexandria*. Clarendon Press.

Fredricksmeyer, E. A. (1966). 'The Ancestral Rites of Alexander the Great'. *Classical Philology* 61(3): 179–182.

——————— (1997). 'The Origin of Alexander's Royal Insignia'. *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127: 97–109.

Friesen, C. J. (2013). (diss). *Reading Dionysus: Euripides' Bacchae among Jews and Christians in the Greco–Roman World*. University of Minnesota.

Gantz, T. (1993). *Early Greek Myth*. John Hopkins University Press.

Gentilli, B. & F. Perusino (2002). *Le orse di Brauron: un rituale di iniziazione femminile nel santuario di Artemide*. ETS.

Goff, B. (2004). *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*. University of California Press.

Goldhill, S. (1991). *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature*. Cambridge University Press.

Gould, J. (1996). 'Tragedy and Collective Experience' in Silk, M. S. (ed). *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*. Clarendon Press: 217–243.

Goyette, M. (2010). 'Ptolemy II Philadelphus and the Dionysiac Model of Political Authority'. *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2(1): 1–13.

Green, P. (1990). *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age*. University of California Press.

Grenfell, B. P. & A. S. Hunt. (1914). *The Oxyrynchus Papyri: Part X*. Oxford University Press.

Griffiths, F. T. (1979). *Theocritus at Court*. Leiden.

Guthrie, W. K. C. (1935). *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement*. Methuen.

Hamilton, J. R. (1965). 'Alexander's Early Life'. *Greece & Rome* 12(2): 117–124.

Harrison, J. (1908). *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*. Merlin.

Hartwell, K. (1922). 'Nature in Theocritus'. *Classical Journal* 17(4): 181–190.

Hazzard, R. A. (2016). *Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda*. University of Toronto Press.

Hedreen, G. (1994). 'Silens, Nymphs, and Maenads'. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 114: 47–69.

————— (2004). 'The Return of Hephaistos: Dionysiac Processional Ritual and the Creation of a Visual Narrative'. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 124: 38–64.

Henderson, J. (2014). (ed.). *Aristophanes: Attributed Fragments*. Harvard University Press.

Henrichs, A. (1978). 'Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina'. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82: 121–160.

———————— (1990). 'Between Country and City: Cultic Dimensions of Dionysus in Athens and Attica' in Griffith, M. & D. J. Mastronarde (eds.). *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honour of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer*. Scholars Press: 257–277.

Herrero de Jáuregui, M. (2012). *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*. De Gruyter.

Hölbl, G. (2001). *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*. Routledge.

Hollis, A. S. (2009). *Callimachus: Hecale*. Oxford University Press.

Hordern, J. (2000). 'Notes on the Orphic Papyrus from Gurôb (P. Gurôb 1; Pack$^2$ 2464)'. *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 129: 131–140.

Hunter, R. (1989). *Argonautica: Book III*. Cambridge University Press.

———————— (1993). *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies*. Cambridge University Press.

———————— (2004). *Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus*. Cambridge University Press.

———————— (2008). 'The Poetics of Narraitve in the Argonautica' in Papanghelis, T. & A. Rengakos (eds.). *Brill's Companion to Apollonius Rhodius*. Brill: 115–146.

———————— (2015). *Argonautica: Book IV*. Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, S. (1999). "Apollonius' "Argonautica": The Theseus / Ariadne Desertion". *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 142(2): 152–157.

Jameson, M. (1993). 'The Asexuality of Dionyusus' in Carpenter, T & C. Faraone (eds.). *Masks of Dionysus*. Cornell University Press: 44–64.

Jebb, R.C. (1917). *The Fragments of Sophocles: Volume II*. Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, I. (1983). 'Is there Life after Marriage? A Study of the Abduction Motif in Vase Paintings of the Athenian Wedding Ceremony. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 30(1): 137–145.

Karanika, A. (2010). 'Inside Orpheus' Songs: Orpheus as an Argonaut in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica'. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 50(3): 391–410.

Keuls, E. C. (1984). 'Male–Female Interaction in Fifth-Century Dionysiac Ritual as Shown in Attic Vase Painting'. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 55: 287–297.

Knight, V. (1991). 'Apollonius, Argonautica 4.167–70 and Euripides' Medea'. *The Classical Quarterly* 41(1): 248–250.

Koenen, L. (1993). 'The Ptolemaic King as a Religious Figure' in Bulloch, A., E. S. Gruen, A. A. Long & A. Stewart (eds.). *Images and Ideologies: Self–definition in the Hellenistic World*. University of California Press: 25–115.

Kotlińska-Toma, A. (2015). *Hellenistic Tragedy: Texts, Translations and a Critical Survey*. Bloomsbury.

Kurke, L. (1999). *Coins, Bodies, Games, and Gold: The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece*. Princeton University Press.

Kyriakou, P. (1995). 'ΚΑΤΑΒΑΣΙΣ and the Underworld in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius'. *Philologus* 139(2): 256–264.

Lawall, G. (1966). 'Apollonius' Argonautica: Jason as Anti–Hero'. *Yale Classical Studies* 19: 119–69.

Lattimore, R. (1939). 'Herodotus and the Names of Egyptian Gods'. *Classical Philology* 34(4): 357–365.

——————— (1951). *The Iliad of Homer*. University of Chicago Press.

Lefkowitz, M. R. (2008). 'Myth and History in the Biography of Apollonius' in Papanghelis, T. and A. Rengakos (eds.). *Brill's Companion to Apollonius Rhodius*. Brill: 51–71.

Leigh, M. (2000). 'Lucan and the Libyan Tale'. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 90: 95–109.

Le Guen, B. (1995). 'Théâtre et cités à l'époque hellénistique. Mort de la cité-mort du théâtre?'. *Revue des études grecques* 108: 59–90.

——————— (2007). 'Kraton, Son of Zotichos: Artists' Associations and Monarchic Power in the Hellenistic Period' in Wilson, P. (ed.). *The Greek Theatre and Festivals: Documentary Studies*. Oxford University Press: 246–278.

——————— (2016). 'Associations of Artists and Hellenistic Rulers: The Case of the Guild Established in Ptolemaic Egypt and its Cypriot Subsidiary', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 50(1): 231–54.

Levaniouk, O. (2007). 'The Toys of Dionysus'. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103: 165–202.

Levin, D. (1971). *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined: The Neglected First and Second Books*. Brill.

Lightfoot, J. L. (2002). 'Nothing to do with the technitai of Dionysus?' in Easterling, P. and E. Hall (eds.). *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*. Cambridge University Press: 209–224.

Lindsay, J. (1965). *The Clashing Rocks: A Study of Early Greek Religion and Culture and the Origins of Drama*. Chapman & Hall.

Looijenga, E. (2009). 'The Spear and the Ideology of Kingship in Hellenistic Poetry' in Harder, M. A. and R. Regtuit, G. Wakker (eds.). (2014). *Hellenistic Poetry in Context*. Peeters: 217–247.

MacDonald, D. M. (ed.). (2001). *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity*. Trinity Press International.

Mac Góráin, F. (2013). 'Virgil's Bacchus and the Roman Republic' in Farrell, J. and D. Nelis (eds.). (2013). *Augustan Poetry and the Roman Republic*. Oxford University Press: 124–145.

———————— & S. Perris (2019). 'The Ancient Reception of Euripides' Bacchae from Athens to Byzantium' in Góráin, F. M. (ed.). *Dionysus and Rome: Religion and Literature*. De Gruyter: 39–84.

Maes, Y. (2009). 'One but not the same? Cato and Alexander in Lucan's "Pharsalia" 9, 493–618 (and Caesar too)'. *Latomus* 68(3): 657–679.

March, J. R. (1989). 'Euripides' Bakchai: A Reconsideration in Light of Vase Paintings'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 36: 33–66.

Marchiandi, D. (2008). 'Riflessioni in merito allo statuo giurdico di Lemno nel V secolo a.c. La ragnatela bibliografica e l'evidenza archeologica: un dialogo possibile?' *Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente* 86: 11–38.

McKenzie, J. (2007). *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt*. New Haven.

Meuli, K. (1921). *Odyssee und Argonautika*. Weidmann.

Mooney, G. W. (1912). *The* Argonautica *of Apollonius Rhodius*. Longman.

Morgan, T. (1998). *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*. Cambridge University Press.

Mori, A. (2001). 'Personal Favour and Public Influence: Arete, Arsinoë II, and the *Argonautica*'. *Oral Tradition* 16(1): 85–106.

———————— (2008a). *The Politics of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*. Cambridge University Press.

———————— (2008b). 'Piety and Diplomacy in Apollonius' Argonautica' in Alcock, S. E., T. Harrison, W. M. Jongman, and H. S. Versnel (eds.). *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*. Brill: 149–170.

Murnaghan, S. (2006). 'The Daughters of Cadmus: Chorus and Characters in Euripides' Bacchae and Ion'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies: Supplement No. 87: Greek Drama III: Essays in Honour of Kevin Lee*. Oxford University Press: 99–112.

———— (2011). 'Choroi Achoroi: The Athenian Politics of Tragic Choral Identity' in Carter, D. M. (ed.). *Why Athens? A Reappraisal of Tragic Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Murray, J. (2012). 'Burned after reading: the so-called list of Alexandrian librarians in P. Oxy. X 1241'. *Aitia* 2 (https://journals.openedition.org/aitia/544).

Murray, O. (1970). 'Hecataeus of Abdera and Pharonic Kingship'. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 56: 141–171.

Neils, D. (2001). *Virgil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Leiden.

Neils, J. (2000). 'Others within others: An intimate look at hetairai and maenads', in Cohen, B. (ed.). *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art*. Brill: 203–226.

Nelson, P. (2016). 'Euripides' Alcestis and the Apollonius Romance'. *The Classical Quarterly* 66(1): 421–423.

Nelson, T. J. (forthcoming). 'Early Hellenistic Epic' in M. Perale, J. Kwapisz, G. Taietti & B. Cartlidge (eds.). *A Handbook to Hellenistic Poetry Before Callimachus*. Cambridge University Press. (https://www.academia.edu/34369977/Early_Hellenistic_Epic).

Nishimura-Jensen, J. M. (1996). (diss). *Tragic Epic or Epic Tragedy: Narrative and Genre in Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

———— (2000). 'Unstable Geographies: The Moving Landscape in Apollonius' Argonautica and Callimachus' Hymn to Delos'. *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 130: 287–317.

———— (2009). 'The Chorus of Argonauts in Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica'. *Phoenix* 63(1/2): 1–23.

Nock, A. D. (1928). 'Notes on Ruler-Cult, I–IV'. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 48(1): 21–43.

Obbink, D. (2011). 'Dionysos in and out of the Papyri' in Schlesier, R. (ed.). *A Different God? Dionysos and Ancient Polytheism*. De Gruyter: 281–298.

Ojennus, P. (2006). 'Holding Hands in the "Argonautica"'. *The Classical Journal* 101(3): 253–270.

Otto, W. trans. R. B. Palmer (1965). *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*. Indiana University Press.

Padel, R. (1993). 'Women: Model for Possession by Greek Daemons' in Cameron, A. and A. Kuhrt (eds.). *Images of Women in Antiquity*. Routledge: 3–19.

Pàmias J. (2004). 'Dionysus and Donkeys on the Streets of Alexandria: Eratosthenes' Criticism of Ptolemaic Ideology'. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 102: 191–198.

Panoussi, V. (2019). 'Hypsipyle's Bacchic Pietas: Ritual, Exemplarity, and Gender in Valerius and Statius' in Panoussi, V. *Brides, Mourners, Bacchae: Women's Rituals in Roman Literature*. Johns Hopkins University Press: 147–167.

Papadopoulou, T. (1997). 'The Presentation of the Inner Self: Euripides' "Medea" 1021-55 and Apollonius Rhodius' "Argonautica" 3, 772-801'. *Mnemosyne* 50(6): 641–664.

Parker, R. (2000). 'Theophoric Names and the History of Greek Religion' in Hornblower, S. & E. Matthews (eds.). *Greek Personal Names: Their Value as Evidence*. Oxford University Press: 53–79.

Pavlou, M. (2012). 'Bacchylides 17: Singing and Usurping the Paean'. *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 52: 510–539.

Payne, M. (2014). 'The Natural World in Greek Literature and Philosophy'. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. (10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935390.013.001).

Peremans, W. (1987). 'Les Lagides, les élites indigénes et la monarchie bicèphale' in Lévy, E. (ed.). *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome: actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 19–22 Juin 1985*. Leiden.

Pfeiffer, R. (1968). *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*. Clarendon Press.

Pfeiffer, S. (2016). 'The Ptolemies: Hellenistic Kingship in Egypt'. *Oxford Handbooks Online.* (10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935390.013.23).

Phinney, E. S. Jr. (1963). (diss). *Apollonius Rhodius*. University of California.

Pickard-Cambridge, A. (1968). *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*. Oxford University Press.

Porter, J. R. (1990). 'Tiptoeing through the Corpses: Euripides' Electra, Apollonius, and the Bouphonia'. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 31(3): 255–280.

Prauscello, L. (2011). 'Digging up the Musical Past: Callimachus and the New Music' in Acosta-Hughes, B., L. Lehnus & S. Stephens (eds.). *Brill's Companion to Callimachus*. Brill: 287–308.

Race, W. H. (2008). *Apollonius Rhodius:* The Argonautica. *Edited and Translated by William H. Race*. Harvard University Press.

Redfield, J. (1982). 'Notes on the Greek Wedding'. *Arethusa* 15(1/2): 181–201.

Rehm, R. (1994). *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy*. Princeton University Press.

Rice, E. (1983). *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus*. Oxford University Press.

Riu, X. (1999). *Dionysism and Comedy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Roller, L. E. (1999). *In Search of the God Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele*. University of California Press.

Rose, A. R. (1984). 'Three Narrative Themes in Apollonius' Bebrykian Episode'. *Wiener Studien* 97: 115–135.

————— (1985). 'Clothing Imagery in Apollonius' Argonautica'. *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica, New Series* 21(3): 29–44.

Rostropowicz, J. (1983). *Odbicie rzeczywistości politycznej, społecznej i gospodarczej w poezji aleksandryjskiej*. Państwowe.

Sanders, L. (1991). 'Dionysius I of Syracuse and the Origins of the Ruler Cult in the Greek World'. *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 40(3): 275–287.

Santamaria, M. A. (2015). 'The Parody of the Katabasis-Motif in Aristophanes' Frogs'. *Les Études Classiques* 83: 117–136.

Scheinberg, S. (1979). 'The Bee Maidens of the Homeric Hymn to Hermes'. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 83: 1–28.

Schiller, F. trans. J. A. Elias (1966). *Naive and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime: Two Essays*. Frederick Ungar Publishing.

Schlesier, R. (1993). 'Mixtures of Masks: Maenads as Tragic Models' in Carpenter, T & C. Faraone (eds.). *Masks of Dionysus*. Cornell University Press: 89–114.

Schmakeit, I. A. (2003). (diss). *Apollonios Rhodios und die attische Tragödie: Gattungsüberschreitende Intertextualität in der alexandrinischen Epik.* Groningen.

Schüler, W. (2017). 'The Greek Tragic Chorus and its Training for War: Movement, Music and Harmony in Theatrical and Military Performance' in Emeljanow, V. (ed.). *War and Theatrical Innovation*. Palgrave: 3–21.

Scott, G. & W. A. Welton (2008). *Erotic Wisdom: Philosophy and Intermediacy in Plato's Symposium*. State University of New York Press.

Scott, W. (1984). 'The Splitting of Choral Lyric in Aeschylus' Oresteia'. *The American Journal of Philology* 105(2): 150–165.

Seaford, R. (1981). 'Dionysiac Drama and Dionysiac Mysteries'. *The Classical Quarterly* 31(2): 252–275.

————— (1986). 'Wedding Ritual and Textual Criticism in Sophocles' 'Women of Trachis'. *Hermes* 114(1): 50–59.

————— (1987). 'The Tragic Wedding'. *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107: 106–130.

————— (1988). 'The eleventh Ode of Bacchylides: Hera, Artemis, and the Absence of Dionysus'. *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108: 118–136.

————— (1993). 'Dionysus as Destroyer of the Household: Homer, Tragedy and the Polis' in Carpenter, T and C. Faraone (eds.). *Masks of Dionysus*. Cornell University Press: 115–146.

————— (1994). 'Sophokles and the Mysteries'. *Hermes* 122(3): 275–288.

————— (2006). *Dionysos*. Routledge.

————— (2018). 'The Fluttering Soul' in Seaford, R. (ed.). *Tragedy, ritual and money in ancient Greece: Selected essays*. Cambridge University Press: 370–377.

Segal, C. (1978). 'The Menace of Dionysus: Sex Roles and Reversals in Euripides' Bacchae'. *Arethusa* 11(1/2): 185–202.

Seidensticker, B. (1978). 'Comic Elements in Euripides' Bacchae'. *American Journal of Philology* 99(3): 303–320.

————— (1980). 'Sacrificial Ritual in the Bacchae' in Bowerstock, G. W., W. Burkert and M. Putnam (eds.). *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M. W. Knox on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*. De Gruyter: 181–190.

Sens, A. (1997). *Theocritus: Dioscuri (Idyll 22): Introduction, Text and Commentary*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Sider, D. (1980). 'Plato's "Symposium" as Dionysian Festival'. *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica, New Series* 4: 41–56.

Sistakou, E. (2016). *Tragic Failures: Alexandrian Responses to Tragedy and the Tragic*. De Gruyter.

Smith, R. R. R. (1988). *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*. Clarendon Press.

Soerink, J. (2014). 'Tragic/Epic: Statius' *Thebaid* and Euripides' *Hypsipyle*' in Augoustakis, A. (ed.). *Flavian Poetry and Its Greek Past*. Brill: 171–191.

Sommerstein, A. (2008). *Aeschylus: Fragments*. Harvard University Press.

————— (2010). *Aeschylean Tragedy*. Bloomsbury.

Sourvinou-Inwood, C. (1988). *Studies in Girls' Transitions: Aspects of the Arkteia and Age Representation in Attic Iconography*. University of Michigan Press.

———— (1990). 'Ancient Rites and Modern Constructs: On the Brauronian Bears Again'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 37: 1–14.

Spanoudakis, K. (2005). 'Alexander Aetolus' Astragalistai'. *Eikasmos* 16: 149–154.

Stephens, S. (2003). *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*. University of California Press.

———— (2008). 'Ptolemaic Epic' in Papanghelis, T. & A. Rengakos (eds.). *Brill's Companion to Apollonius Rhodius*. Brill: 95–114.

Steiner, D. (1986). *The Crown of Song: Metaphor in Pindar*. Duckworth.

Stoessl, F. (1941). *Apollonios Rhodios: Interpretationen zur Erzählungskunst und Quellenverwertung*. Bern.

Strootman, R. (2010). 'Literature and the Kings' in Clauss, J. J. and M. Cuypers (eds.). *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*. Blackwell: 30–45.

———— (2017). *The Birdcage of the Muses*. Peeters.

Sturgeon, M. C. (1977). 'The Reliefs on the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens'. *American Journal of Archaeology* 81(1): 31–53.

Sweeney, R. D. (ed.). (1997). *In Statii Thebaida commentum: Volumen I: Anonymi in Statii Achilleida commentum. Fulgentii ut fingitur Planciadis super Thebaiden commentariolum*. De Gruyter.

Thalmann, W. (2011). *Apollonius of Rhodes and the Spaces of Hellenism*. Oxford University Press.

Thomas, O. (2020). *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. Cambridge University Press.

Tondriau, J. L. (1948). 'Rois Lagides compares ou identifiés à des divinités'. *Chronique d'Egypte* 45/46: 127–146.

Trypanis, C. A., T. Gezler & C. Whitman (eds.). (1975). *Callimachus: Aetia, Iambi, Hecale and Other Fragments; Musaeus: Hero and Leander*. Harvard University Press.

Tsagalis, C. C. (2008). *The Oral Palimpsest: Exploring Intertextuality in Homeric Epics*. Harvard University Press.

Van Gennep, A., trans. M. V. Vizedom & G. Caffee (1960). *The Rites of Passage*. University of Chicago Press.

Weber, C. (2002). 'The Dionysus in Aeneas'. *Classical Philology* 97(4): 322–343.

Webster, T. B. L. (1964). *Hellenistic Poetry and Art*. Barnes & Noble.

Welch, K. (2006/7). '"Maiestas Regia" and the Donations of Alexandria'. *Mediterranean Archaeology* 19/20: 181–192.

West, M. L. (1966). *Hesiod: Theogony: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary*. Clarendon Press.

Williams, M. F. (1991). *Landscape in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Peter Lang.

Williams, M. H. (2013). *Jews in a Graeco–Roman Environment*. Mohr Siebeck.

Wilson, P. (2000). *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia*. Cambridge University Press.

Wohl, V. (1999). 'The Eros of Alcibiades'. *Classical Antiquity* 18(2): 349–385.

Zanker, G. (1979). 'The Love Theme in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica'. *Wiener Studien* 92: 52–75.

————— (1987). *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry*. Croom Helm.

————— (2004). *Modes of Viewing in Hellenistic Poetry and Art*. University of Wisconsin Press.

Zeitlin, F. (1989). 'Playing the Other: Theatre, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama' in Winkler, J. & F. Zeitlin (eds.). *Nothing to do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*. Princeton University Press: 63–96.

Ziegler, K. (1966). *Das Hellenistiche Epos*. Teubner.

Żybert, E. (2012). 'Two Marginal Goddesses: Rhea and Hekate in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica' in Harder, M. A. & R. Regtuit, G. Wakker (eds.). *Gods and Religion in Hellenistic Poetry*. Peeters: 373–392.