POETIC PROGRAMMES IN THE ORPHIC *CORPUS*

Giuseppe Giangrande

Un análisis histórico-literario, practicado dentro del marco del género épico, permite identificar los tópicos que los autores de las *Líticas* y las *Argonáuticas Orficas* utilizaron en la composición de sus respectivos programas poéticos.

A literary-historical analysis conducted within the epic genre brings to light the *topoi* which the authors of the Orphic *Lithica* and *Argonautica* utilized in order to compose their respective poetic programmes.

The two groups of epic poems attributed respectively to Homer and Orpheus have two main characteristics in common: in both cases, each corpus contains works written by different authors, at different times; within each corpus, many a poem (e. g. the *Iliad,* the *Lithica*) is not one *einheitlich* work but a conglomerate of parts, which were produced by different poets and which were cobbled together, in the form in which they have reached us, by one final elaborator.

Leaving aside the obvious case represented by the *Iliad*, it is worth remembering that the *Lithica* are the result of the work done by an elaborator who has stitched together two originally independent *lapidaria*: this is proved by the fact that the *Lithica* have two different *prooemia*, and that there are in the poem

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not one, but «deux maîtres de révélation» [1]. As regards the Orphic *Argonautica*, nobody, I believe, would maintain that they were written *di getto* by one poet: certain scholars believe that this work is the «remaniement d'un poème antérieur à Apollonios» [2], whilst others maintain that «le poète tardif des Argonautiques Orphiques» has utilized «des Argonautiques antérieures à celles d'Apollonios» and poems «d'inspiration hellénistique» [3]. A pointer to the fact that our Orphic *Argonautica* are a «remaniement» of previous poems is found at the very beginning of the work: the Orphic *Argonautica*, exactly like the Orphic *Lithica*, have two *prooemia*. In the first of these, the author invokes Apollo (lines 1-6), whilst in the second (7 ff.) the poet addresses the divine Musaeus. The welding between the two *prooemia* is far from felicitous: after invoking Apollo, in the first person (Ὦναξ ... ἑκατηβόλε ... σὴν ἀρετὴν ... σὺ δέ μοι κ.τ.λ.), the poet, in lines 7 ff., continues using the vocative and the pronoun of the second person singular, so that the reader believes, at first sight, that the epithet λυροεργέ is taken to refer to Apollo in Bruchmann, *Epitheta deorum, s. v.* 'Απόλλων, p. 27. Then, in line 9, Apollo is mentioned in the third person, so that the reader understands that the words νῦν γάρ σοι, λυροεργέ are not addressed to Apollo; however, the reader is still left in the dark as to how to interpret and understand these lines, because it is only much later («plus loin»: Dottin, p. 3) that all is revealed: the poet, in line 308, makes it clear that his words in lines 7 ff. are addressed to Musaeus. In other words: the first *prooemium* is directed at Apollo, the second at Musaeus (we shall revert to this point later).

However, the problem which I wish to illustrate consists in explaining how the authors of such works as the Orphic *Lithica* and the Orphic *Argonautica* managed to insert their respective poems into the Orphic corpus. There is no doubt that the two poets, for evident reasons of prestige, wanted their artistic creations to be ascribed to no less an authority than Orpheus: but how did they contrive to achieve their aim?

Orpheus was the well known author of poems in which he dealt with cosmogonic, religious and mysteric themes. These religious works by Orpheus are, in fact, listed in the Orphic *Argonautica*, lines 7-46. Now, neither the author of the Orphic *Lithica,* nor the author of the Orphic *Argonautica* found the religious themes in question congenial. The author of the *Lithica* decided to

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[1] Cf. R. Halleux-J. Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1985) 29, with bibliography.

[2] Cf. G. Dottin, *Les Argonautiques d'Orphée* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1930) CLIV. Now that textual criticism is guided by a historical (and consequently conservative) approach (cf. e. g. H. van Looy, *AC* 1986, 417 f.) the outstanding value of Dottin's work is becoming more and more evident.

[3] Cf. F. Vian, *Les Argonautiques d'Orphée* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1987) 28, with bibliography (Herter, Venzke). That the Orphic *Argonautica* are a «remaniement» of earlier poems is, amongst other things, proved by the fact that they contain many «contradictions» (Dottin, *op. cit.* XCIV f.) affecting the plot, i. e. «le développement».

devote himself to one particular branch of epic poetry, i. e. didactic epic[4]. In order to attain his intent, i. e. to write a didactic poem and, at the same time, to have it ascribed to Orpheus, the poet has two valid excuses. His two excuses are valid because they are supported by the autobiographical factor. The autobiographical element progressively gains importance, in the epic genre, as everybody knows: in the *Iliad,* Homer merely says, in his *prooemium,* Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, but in the *Odyssey* we already find, significantly enough, the personal pronoun: ῎Ανδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα. In Hellenistic epic (the Greeks, as is well known, assigned both hexametric poems and elegy to the epic genre[5]) the autobiographical factor came very much to the foreground: poets like Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius often talk about their own person and the cause of their poetic motivation[6].

Let us examine the first excuse employed by the author of the *Lithica.* He cleverly uses the autobiographical factor by explicitly stating that he, Orpheus, wrote his didactic poem, the *Lithica*, because he was ordered to do so by the god Hermes (lines 58 ff.; note κελεύσας in line 59) and, for good mesure, by the god Apollo as well (through the intermediary of Theiodamas or Helenos: lines 763, 768). Apollo ordered the poet's «maîtres de révélation», Theiodamas and Hellenos, to reveal the virtues of mineralogy to the mortals, and to always tell the truth[7]. The author bases his excuse on a universally accepted principle: every poet writes his work as a result of a «divine order» (cf. *Scr. Min. Alex.* IV, 526): the most celebrated example of this motif is, of course, in Callimachus, who tells us that he produced one particular type of poetry because Apollo has ordered him to do so. The poet, as Apollonius Rhodius tells us, is merely the mouthpiece of the Muses (ὑπακουὸς...Πιερίδων: 4. 1381 f.), because the Muses are those who provide his song[8]. Probably, the statements to the effect that the poet was ordered to write his *Lithica* by Hermes *and* by Apollo may well have been caused by the fact that the Orphic *Lithica* are the result of the merger of two poems; in other words, it could well be that in one of the poems in question the author was ordered to write his didactic work by Hermes, whilst in the other of the two said poems the author received such an order from Apollo. Of course, this hypothesis is not absolutely certain, because we know that epic poets could be ordered to write their work by more than one god[9]. The important point is to note that the first of the

4   Cf. my observations in «On the text of the Orphic *Lithica*», *Habis* 20 (1989) 39, where I quote Giannakis. There seems to be no doubt that the author of the *Lithica* wanted to pass himself off as Orpheus: cf. Giannakis' edition (Ioannina 1982), 9 ff.

5   Cf. E. Meillier, *Callimaque et son temps* (Lille 1979) 349 n. 141.

6   Cf. E. Eichgrün, *Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodius* (Diss., Berlin 1961); on the events in Callimachus' life which conditioned his poetic production cf. my *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, I, 235 ff., and IV, 526 ff. Cf. Lapp, *De Callimachi tropis* (Diss., Bonn 1965) 145 ff.: «poeta de se ipso loquitur»; R. Petroll, *Die Aeusserungen Theokrits über seine Person* (Diss., Hamburg 1965).

7   On all this cf. *Habis* 1989, *art. cit.* 67. On the *vexata quaestio* as to who speaks in lines 771 ff. (the poet, Theiodamas or Helenos?) cf. E. Abel, *Orphei Lithica* 110 f.

8   Cf. *CR* N. S. 21 (1971) 356, for Apollonius' phrase -1.22- ὑποφήτορες ἀοιδῆς.

9   Cf. G. B. Mocker, *De Musis a poetis graecis...invocatis* (Diss. Leipzig 1893), and G. Engel, *De antiquor. epicorum...prooemiis* (Diss. Marburg 1910). On a more general level, cf. also W. F. Otto, *Die Musen und der göttliche Ursprung des Singens und Sagens* (Düsseldorf 1955).

two excuses employed by the author of the *Lithica* is cogent: one cannot disobey an order imparted by a god. If Hermes and Apollo had ordered Orpheus to write a didactic poem instead of mysteric, cosmogonic poetry, Orpheus could not but obey such a divine order. It may be asked: why was the order, as stated in lines 58 ff., imparted by Hermes? Such orders are normally, as everybody knows, given by Apollo or the Muses. The fact is that Hermes was doubly qualified to issue his order to the author of the *Lithica*. First of all, Hermes was traditionally the «maître de révélation» (Halleux-Schamp, p. 84), and the *Lithica* are intended to reveal to mankind the miraculous properties of stones and gems. So, just as Artemis is qualified to request Oppian to write a poem on hunting (*C.* 1.17), and just as Hermes, in his capacity as «magister piscationis» (Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 39) can be invoked by Oppian to inspire him in *H.* 3.9 f., Hermes can certainly order the author of the *Lithica* to reveal the properties of stones to mortals. Secondly, Hermes has certainly not usurped the place of the Muses or Apollo in ordering a work of poetry to be written: Hermes was regarded in antiquity as one of the patrons of poetry, Ἑλικώνιος [10]. As is well known, Hermes states that Apollo, by playing the lyre, will *ipso facto* bestow on him the κῦδος, the fame of being the inventor of this instrument (cf. *h. Hom. Merc.* 477). Manetho invokes, in his *prooemium* to Book 6, Apollo, the Muses and Hermes (cf. Engel, 40 f.).

The arguments used by the writer of the *Lithica* not only justify the fact that Orpheus, the author of the *Lithica*, has turned to mineralogy, leaving behind cosmogonic and mysteric poetry: they also enable the poet to achieve one further aim, i. e. to attain literary fame and glory. By revealing to mankind the miraculous properties of stones, properties which are true and not false [11], the poet will offer to mortals a poem which is more precious than gold and which will be universally treasured and admired (lines 78-83). The principle whereby poets must only narrate what is true is well established in Hellenistic and later poetry [12]: Callimachus declared ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν ἀείδω (fr. 612 Pf., where Pfeiffer appropriately quotes *schol. Dion. Perieg.* 1: τὴν πίστιν ἐπάγει τὸ ἔπος), and Apollonius Rhodius underlined that what he narrated was νημερτές (4.555), indeed he took the Μοῦσαι, who were traditionally ἅγιαι, ἁγναί and θεῖαι, to be the guarantors of the veracity of what he wrote (4.984) [13]. Here in the *Lithica*, the obligation that the poet has to tell the truth redounds to the poet's advantage, because the author of the *Lithica*, by impressing upon his readers that the

[10] Cf. H. White, *Studies in Late Greek Epic Poetry* (Amsterdam 1987) 74, fundamental; cf. also Mocker, *op. cit.* 25.

[11] Cf. *Habis* 1989, *art. cit.* 64 ff. (ἐτήτυμον, line 516; ψευδέα μήποτε μῦθον ἐνισπεῖν, line 768, etc.).

[12] Cf. Fedeli, *Properzio, Il Primo Libro,* 468 f. The *topos* in question became frequent in Hellenistic and later poets, because they often narrated wondrous tales which their readers might find incredible or difficult to believe. The verb θαμβέω is frequent in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*: cf. e. g. 4.1363 f. Vd. below footnote 23.

[13] Further material in Bornmann, *Callim. Hymn. Dian.* (Firenze 1968) 88, on l. 186.

miraculous properties of the stones which he will reveal are true, aims at attaining fame: he will, that is, by revealing to humans secrets which are incredibly miraculous and yet of true efficacy, gain the admiration of his readers and widespread glory (lines 78-83). The author of the *Lithica* proclaims that his work is worthy of admiration and glory (*loc. cit.*): every respectable poet, of course, expresses the wish that he may gain fame and admiration. Apollonius Rhodius (4.1773 ff.) desires that his poem be more and more appreciated, in the years to come, by his readers, whilst Oppian hopes that his *Halieutica* will be highly esteemed by the most noble public of all, i. e. the Royal Family (*H.* 1.78 f.).

The second autobiographical excuse employed by the author of the *Lithica* is found in the second *prooemium* : the poet tells us that he, by the grace of the gods (lines 98 f.), met a mythical personage, Theiodamas, who patently had the ear of the gods, and who guaranteed to the poet (ἐγγυαλίξω, line 171) that he would see to it that the gods would grant the poet's prayers and reveal to him the miraculous properties of stones, so that the poet might, in his turn, reveal them, by means of his didactic poem, to mankind (lines 166 ff.). The personage called Theiodamas, one of the two «maîtres de révélation», is to a large extent mysterious [14], but there is no doubt that he was a heroic, mythical character, because he was a friend of «le devin troyen Hélénos» (Halleux-Schamp, *loc. cit.*). The first *prooemium* has been defined by scholars as «publicitaire», insofar as it aims at showing «le pouvoir infini» of mineralogical science (Hallex-Schamp -p. 10-, who follow Bernhardy). The second *prooemium* has a more important function: mineralogy is envisaged and presented by Theiodamas (Orpheus' «maître de révélation») to the reader not as an irreligious science (such was Theophrastus' view), but as a subject no less mysteric and religious than those dealt with by Orpheus in his religious poems (those listed in Orphic *Argon.* 7 ff.). Theiodamas reveals his «secret», i. e. the contents of mineralogy, to Orpheus in the course of «l'initiation suprême» (Halleux-Schamp, p. 19). Mineralogy, that is to say, is revealed by Theiodamas to Orpheus, and will be revealed thanks to the generosity of the gods [15], will benefit mankind. In other words: in the second *prooemium*, mineralogy is explicitly proclaimed to be a mysteric, religious subject, like all the other mysteric and religious subjects which Orpheus was known to have dealt with. The author of the second *prooemium*, thus, elegantly succeeds in explaining why, and how, Orpheus could turn his hand to mineralogy: the mysteric poems which Orpheus had written were ultimately «des révélations divines» which he offered «aux hommes» (Vian, *op. cit.*, p. 6); in exactly the same manner, mineralogy as presented and envisaged in the second *prooemium* of the *Lithica* (and throughout the *Lithica*, of course) is nothing but a series of divine revelations which Orpheus will give to humans.

[14] Halleux-Schamp, *op. cit.* 30 ff.: «mage»? «héros»? «homme de dieu, cf. line 165? «Priamide»?.

[15] Cf. *Habis* 1989, *art. cit.* 52.

In sum: a momentous encounter between the poet and a hero, Theiodamas, which latter was in contact with the gods, prompted the writing of the *Lithica*. We shall revert to the motif of the momentous encounter soon.

What about the Orphic *Argonautica*? To achieve his aims, the author has adopted a method exactly parallel to the one chosen by the poet who wrote the *Lithica*. The author of the Orphic *Argonautica* does know that Orpheus had written cosmogonic, religious and mysteric poems, so much so that these works are overtly listed in lines 7-47 of the Orphic *Argonautica*. How come, then, that Orpheus has now suddenly decided to turn his back on cosmogony, religion and mysteries, and to devote himself to epic poetry in the manner of Homer and Apollonius Rhodius? The conversion of Orpheus to Homeric-Apollonian epic, and his having abandoned cosmogonic, mysteric and religious poetry is clearly indicated in line 49. Once again, the autobiographical factor is utilized. In the first *prooemium*, the author of the *Argonautica* states that he composed his poem because he was ordered to do so by the Muse (line 6), exactly as the author of the *Lithica* tells us, in the first *prooemium*, that he wrote his poem at the command of Hermes. The second *prooemium* of the Orphic *Argonautica* is, like the second *prooemium* of the *Lithica,* far more articulate and logically argued. In the second *prooemium* of the Orphic *Argonautica,* the poet relates that he had written all the cosmogonic, religious and mysteric poetry described in lines 7-46 under the frenzied inspiration imparted to him by Apollo. Such a kind of inspiration is described by the poet by means of two metaphors, namely κέντρον in lines 9 f., and οἶστρος in lines 47 and 103. Orpheus states that he was goaded by the κέντρον not only of Apollo, but also of Bakchos in lines 9 f.: this is a clear allusion to the fact that, as everybody knows, Bakchos played a very great role in the mysteric poetry produced by Orpheus, so much so that Orpheus was identified with Bakchos. The κέντρον is what produces literary works (in this case, the mysteric poetry produced by Orpheus) -cf. Longinus 2.2-; indeed, the κέντρον produces, as Plutarch puts it, inspired frenzy, ὁρμὴ ἐνθουσιώδης (*Mor.* 236 A), just the kind of frenzy needed to write mysteric, religious poetry. The οἶστρος is another metaphor denoting the «délire inspiré», as Vian (*op. cit.*, p. 175) notes, quoting *Or. Sib.* 11.323 f. That κέντρον and οἶστρος are two synonyms, two metaphors denoting the inspired frenzy which produces mysteric poetry is proved by Orph. *Hymn.* 32.6 f. οἰστροῦσα βροτῶν ψυχὰς μανίαισι, φρικώδη θυμὸν κ. τ. λ. (= φρικώδεα Orph. *Argon.* 10), and Orph. *Hymn.* 71.11 f. ψυχῆς...οἶστρον...μύσταις (= μύσταις Orph. *Argon.* 11). To conclude: κέντρον and οἶστρος are, as all scholars agree, two metaphors used by Orpheus, in lines 9, 47 and 103 of his *Argonautica*, to denote the divine goad which produces *enthousiasmos,* i. e. which produces mysteric, oracular poetry [16]. But let us now return to the autobiographical element as utilized by Orpheus, for his purposes.

[16]   Cf. Ziegler, *RE* , s. v. «Orpheus», XVIII 1 (1939) 1265, 9 ff.

Orpheus tells us, in the second *prooemium* of the *Argonautica*, that, at a late point of his life, when he had already written all the religious and mysteric poems he lists in lines 7-46, he was abandoned by the κέντρον, the οἶστρος which had caused him to write all such religious and mysteric poetry (line 47: ἀπέπτατο...οἶστρος). Precisely at that late point in his life, when the οἶστρος had left him, Orpheus had a momentous encounter with a heroic personage, Jason, as he reports in Orphic *Argon.* 70 ff., just as Orpheus had a momentous encounter with the hero Theiodamas in the second *prooemium* of the Orphic *Lithica*. Jason came to meet Orpheus, and caused him to join the expedition of the Argonauts. Orpheus explains to his readers that he could not refuse Jason's request, because it was dictated by Fate (lines 106 f.): therefore, just as the encounter the author of the *Lithica* had with Theiodamas caused the *Lithica* (a didactic, scientific poem) to be written, so the encounter Orpheus had with Jason caused the Orphic *Argonautica* to be composed: in both cases, the autobiographical element (a meeting with a mythical, heroic personage) justifies the choice of genre adopted by Orpheus (respectively, didactic epic and epic in the Homeric, Apollonian manner, instead of mysteric, religious poetry). By why did Orpheus *have* to write the Orphic *Argonautica*? Jason only asked him to join the expedition, not to produce poetry. Once again, the author of the Orphic *Argonautica* argues his case well, i. e. he explains flawlessly why he wrote an epic poem in the manner of Apollonius Rhodius. He took part in an epic expedition; now, according to a literary convention [17] Orpheus had the obligation to narrate to Museaus all that he, Orpheus, had done: *ergo*, now Orpheus will have to narrate his epic adventures to Musaeus. *Le jeu est fait*: Orpheus could not avoid what had been decreed by Fate, i.e. he could not avoid taking part in the expedition of the Argonauts; Orpheus was traditionally expected to narrate all his adventures to Musaeus (as Orpheus reminds his readers in lines 33 ἐδάης, 40 σοι κατέλεξα, etc.): now, he will have to narrate to Musaeus things which he, Orpheus, had never before told Musaeus (lines 7 ff.), when Orpheus was goaded by the κέντρον of Apollo and Bakchos to write mysteric, cosmogonic, i. e. non-epic poetry:

> νῦν γάρ σοι, λυροεργέ, φίλον μέλος ἀείδοντι
> θυμὸς ἐποτρύνει λέξαι τάπερ οὔποτε πρόσθεν
> ἔφρασ' ὅταν Βάκχοιο καὶ 'Απόλλωνος ἄνακτος
> κέντρῳ ἐλαυνόμενος φρικώδεα κῆλ' ἐπίφαυσκον.

In sum: Orpheus will now have to narrate to Musaeus his epic tale, i. e. the epic *Argonautica* as opposed to cosmogonic or religious poems. Now we can understand why the Orphic *Argonautica* have two *prooemia*, or, if we do not accept the theory of the already mentioned «remaniement», one *prooemium* clumsily addressed to two persons, that is to say, to Apollo and to Musaeus. It was

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[17] Cf. Dottin, *op. cit.* CLI, n. 2.

desirable [18] that any poet should invoke, in his *prooemium*, a deity presiding over poetry, and, accordingly, the author of the Orphic *Argonautica* invokes Apollo, in lines 1-6. But the invocation to Apollo did not enable Orpheus, i. e. the poet, to explain why he had deserted cosmogonic, religious and mysteric poetry in order to write epic in Homeric-Apollonian manner. The author of the Orphic *Lithica* utilized, as we have seen, two pretexts to justify his writing epic didactic poetry (instead of mysteric, religious or cosmogonic poems): in the first *prooemium*, he explicitly states that he has written his didactic poem upon the explicit order of Hermes (lines 58 ff.: ἐμὲ κηρύσσειν... 'Αργειφόντης ὄρινε...κελεύσας κ. τ. λ.). In the second *prooemium*, the poet narrates how his encounter with Theiodamas caused him to write his didactic work. The same process is visible in the Orphic *Argonautica*: in the second *prooemium*, we have just seen that the poet's momentous encounter with Jason caused the Orphic *Argonautica* to be written; in the first *prooemium*, the poet, after invoking Apollo, makes it clear that he will write his poem upon the order of the Muse (lines 5 f.: ἐφετμαῖς).

The first *prooemium* of the Orphic *Argonautica* does not overcome two major difficulties, which are surmounted in the second. The two difficulties can be summarized as follows. Since Apollo and Bakchos, as everybody knew, and as the poet explicitly admits in lines 9 f., had until then caused Orpheus to write mysteric, religious and cosmogonic poetry, how could the poet now, by asking Apollo to give him a poetic voice (line 4, αὐδήν) and by claiming that he was writing upon the order of the Muse (lines 5 f.), compose a poem which was not mysteric or cosmogonic, but epic in the manner of Apollonius and Homer? We have already seen how one of these two difficulties is neatly solved in the second *prooemium*: the invocation to Apollo, contained in the first *prooemium*, could not enable Orpheus to explain why he wrote an epic poem in the manner of Apollonius and Homer: it was necessary, if the poet was to explain why he wrote such a poem, that he should a) invent the request made to him by Jason, a request which the poet could not refuse because it was decreed by Fate that he should join the expedition of the Argonauts, and b) introduce Musaeus, the compulsory recipient of any poem produced by Orpheus: it was, in sum, compulsory for Orpheus to narrate to Musaeus his epic tale, i. e. the expedition of the Argonauts.

What about the second difficulty? This, too, is not overcome in the first *prooemium*, and it is only in the second that it is surmounted. The difficulty boils down to this: how could Orpheus turn his back upon mysteric, cosmogonic poetry? We have just seen that he succeeds, in the second *prooemium*, in explaining how he came to write epic poetry: but how did he manage to get rid of the οἶστρος which had caused him to write mysteric, cosmogonic poetry? The reply to this question is given in the second *prooemium*. Orpheus says, in line 47,

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[18] Not, however, necessary: neither *prooemium* in the Orphic *Lithica* contains an invocation addressed to a god.

that, at the time when Jason came to visit him, the οἶστρος which had previously compelled him to write mysteric, religious poetry had gone away (line 47: ἀπέπτατο...οἶστρος). How could it have gone away? This is explained in lines 102 f.: Orpheus' mother, the Muse of epic poetry, Calliope, had freed him of the said οἶστρος (ἐξ οἴστρου ἐσάωσε). Apollo and other gods sent the οἶστρος in question to goad poets, so that they would compose mysteric, religious poetry, but the οἶστρος did not goad poets permanently: Apollo himself is asked in *Or. Sib.* 11.320 ff. to push away the οἶστρος (οἶστρον ἀπωσάμενος) from the θεόληπτον μάντιν, so that the poet may sing no more μανίην φοβεράν, but ἱμερόεσσαν ἀοιδήν. Here, it is Calliope, not Apollo, who has pushed the οἶστρος away from Orpheus, so that he may sing no more mysteric poetry, but an epic song. Calliope is not the only deity who could remove the οἶστρος: this task is performed in Orph. *Hymn.* 71.10 ff. by the goddess Melinoe:

> ἀλλά, θεά, λίτομαί σε, καταχθονίων βασίλεια,
> ψυχῆς ἐκπέμπειν οἶστρον ἐπὶ τέρματα γαίης,
> εὐμενὲς εὐίερον μύσταις φαίνουσα πρόσωπον.

In Orph. fr. 232 Kern, the task of liberating from the οἶστρος those who participate in the ὄργια is carried out by Dionysos-Lyseus (λύσεις ἐκ...οἴστρου = Orph. *Argon.* 103 ἐξ οἴστρου ἐσάωσε), as has long been known[19].

In sum: we may conclude that it is only in the second *prooemium* that the difficulties evaded in the first are satisfactorily overcome. It was because Orpheus had a momentous encounter with Jason, and because Calliope had liberated Orpheus from the οἶστρος, that the Orphic *Argonautica* could be written. Before we proceed to the analysis of two further elements in the Orphic *Argonautica* and in the *Lithica*, it is worth reaching a conclusion as regards the motif of the momentous encounter. The Hellenistic motif whereby a poet is motivated to write his verse by a deity whom he meets (Callimachus meets Apollo; Apollonius converses with the Muses, because he is their ὑπακουός, and they are the purveyors, ὑποφήτορες, of his song; Oppian converses with Artemis, in his *prooemium* to the *Cynegetica*) is modified in late epic, in the sense that such motivation is imparted to late poets by their meeting a mythical, or heroic, personage: Orpheus meets Theiodamas in the second *prooemium* of the *Lithica*, and Jason in the second *prooemium* of the Orphic *Argonautica*; Manetho decided to transform into verse (1.11 f.) the teaching of Petosiris, after meeting and befriending him (5.10)[20]. It is worth adding that the motif of the momentous encounter between a poet and a personage who validates the poet's literary

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[19] Cf. lastly Vian, *op. cit.* 175.
[20] On the magician and priest Petosiris, who was said to mix with the gods and who produced a «göttliche Offenbarung», cf. *RE* XIX, s. u. «Petosiris», and XVI, s. u. «Nechepso»; *Der Kleine Pauly*, s. u. «Nechepso»; Schmid-Stählin, *Gesch. Griech. Literat.* II 1 (sixth ed., München 1920) 310 f.

production is presented in Theocritus, *Idyll* 7, as scholars have long known[21]: in Theocritus the motif is of course satyrical[22].

The Orphic *Argonautica* share two further elements with the *Lithica*. We have already underlined that, following the example of Hellenistic epic, the author or the *Lithica* insists upon the fact that he is telling the truth (516 ἐτήτυμον, 768 ψευδέα μή ποτε μῦθον ἐνισπεῖν, etc.). Such a *Leitmotiv* helps the author of the *Lithica*: what he expounds is miraculous to the point of appearing unbelievable, and yet it is true; because it is true, his readers will reap great advantage from it, and they will judge his poem worthy of the highest admiration, indeed more precious than gold (lines 77-83). The same canon whereby a poet must tell the truth is followed by the author of the Orphic *Argonautica*: he begs the god Apollo to make him sing an ἐτυμηγόρον αὐδήν (line 4), «a song speaking the truth». Apollo, as we have seen, is the god who ordered the poet of the *Lithica*, through the mediation of Theiodamas or Hellenos, to narrate only true facts. The author of the Orphic *Argonautica*, when asking Apollo to enable him to sing the truth, does so at the appropriate point, i. e. in the *prooemium* (lines 1-5): an assurance to the effect that the poet will tell the truth was suitable to the *prooemium* (cf. *schol. Dion. Perieg.* 1, already quoted), because such a pledge would captivate the attention of the reader. The function of the promise in question, in the case of the Orphic *Argonautica*, is the same as in Dionysius Periegetes and in Hellenistic poets: the author of the Orphic *Argonautica* will, in the course of his narration, relate many wondrous, incredible tales («éléments merveilleux»: Dottin, *op. cit.*, p. LXIV) which will amaze his readers[23], and which are nevertheless true. In other words: the attention of the reader, upon finding the phrase πέμπε...ἐτυμηγόρον αὐδήν, is captivated from the outset. The reader knew that such an assurance traditionally served the purpose of preparing him to find, after the *prooemium*, many marvellous tales.

The second element which I wish to examine is the poet's request that Apollo may grant him fame, glory, κλέος (line 3: μοι κλέος...ὀπάσσαις). Every poet, naturally enough, wanted to achieve glory and fame[24]: we have already seen that the author of the Orphic *Lithica* wanted to be admired by mankind, and that Apollonius expressed the wish that his poem be more and more admired in the years to come. Here in the Orphic *Argonautica* we find a specific motif, whereby the poet asks a god (Apollo) to grant him glory and fame. It was, of course, universally accepted that Apollo and the Muses had the power to bestow κλέος on

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[21]   Cf. Halleux-Schamp, *op. cit.* 13, quoting Keydell.

[22]   Cf. Williams in *Theokrit und die griech. Bukolik, Wege der Forschung*, Bd. 580 (Darmstadt 1986), 272 f., and especially H. White, in *SicGymn.* 42 (1989) 322 f., who demolishes *restlos* the thesis propounded by Palumbo Stracca, a thesis which is contradicted by Theocritus himself at every step.

[23]   The verbs θαμβέω and ἐθαμβέω occur no fewer than five times in the Orphic *Argonautica*: cf. Pompella, *Index in Orph. Argon.*, s. u.; cf. above, footnote 12.

[24]   Cf. *Scripta Minora Alexandrina* IV, 519.

a poet (cf. Theoc. *ep.* 21: Ἀρχίλοχον...μυρίον κλέος...Μοῖσαι καὶ... Ἀπόλλων
κ. τ. λ.). However, where do we find the specific motif which I have just
mentioned?[25] We find it attested in *Hymn. hom.* 25.6, where the poet asks Apollo
and the Muses to give glory to his poetry (χαίρετε, τέκνα Διός, καὶ ἐμὴν
τιμήσατ᾽ ἀοιδήν). This motif is ultimately of Hesiodic origin (*Op.*1, where,
however, the poet does not explicitly ask the Muses to bestow glory upon him); it
appears in an epic composition by Theocritus, i. e. an *epyllion* (22.214; cf. Gow in
his commentary on line 24). As regards late epic, we find the motif in Manetho
6.753, where the poet asks the Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο θύγατρες to give glory to him
(ἵλατε καὶ κλέος αἰὲν ἐμῇ πορσύνετ᾽ ἀοιδῇ)[26]. As is well known, the
prooemium and the conclusion («in fine carminum»: Mocker, p. 46), in epic
poems, often repeat the same motif, and it is not surprising to find that the motif
which appears in the conclusion of Manetho's book 6 (lines 753 ff.) is also
employed in the *prooemium* of Manetho's book 5, where we read (lines 9 ff.) that
Manetho's poetry deserves κῦδος, insofar as it is the result of hard work and much
study.

It is time to conclude. The first *prooemium*, in the *Lithica* and in the Orphic
Argonautica, is succinct and devoid of any argumentation: the author declares *tout
court*, following Callimachus' example (1.1.25 ἄνωγα)[27], that he will sing his
poem because he has been ordered to do so by a deity (respectively, Hermes and
the Muse). The second *prooemium,* in the two works under discussion, displays a
logically and cogently argued approach based upon autobiographical factors (the
autobiographical ingredient, ultimately derived from Hesiod, *Th.* 1-35, came to the
foreground in Hellenistic poetry): such an aproach persuasively accounts for the
choice of genre (respectively, didactic poetry in the *Lithica*, and epic in the
Homeric-Apollonian manner in the Orphic *Argonautica*) made by the poet, i. e. by
Orpheus.

The two traditional *topoi* of epic poetry, whereby the poet promises to tell the
truth and hopes to achieve glory, are very deftly utilized by Orpheus. In the
Lithica, Orpheus' commitment to telling the truth yields a good result from the
utilitarian point of view, as befits the aim of didactic poetry: the teachings
contained in the *Lithica* are true, wherefore they will make the poem very popular
and greatly admired; the same utilitarian consideration is found in another

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[25] Cf. especially Mocker, *op. cit.* 46. For the *exitus* κλέος ... ὀπάσσαις in Orph. *Arg.* 3 cf.
Manetho 2.147, 2.344, 2.391, 3.48, etc. Everybody knew that the gods can grant prosperity and wealth
(cf. Manetho 2.221 Ζεὺς ὄλβον ὀπάζει). Poets ask a god to grant them prosperity (e. g. Thgn. 4,
where ἐσθλά means «good fortune: cf. Hudson-Williams *ad loc.*; Call. *Hymn. Jov.* 96: cf. McLennan
in his commentary), because enjoying prosperity entailed being virtuous. Cf. Hom. *h. Cer.* 225 θεοὶ
δέ τοι ἐσθλὰ πόροιεν. Theognis, in lines 3-4, asks the god to grant him prosperity as a reward for his
singing the god: the same motif is in Hom. *h. Cer.* 494 ἀντ᾽ ᾠδῆς βίοτον θυμήρε᾽ ὄπαζε, Hom.
hymn. 30.18, 31.18, etc.
[26] Cf. especially Mocker, *op. cit.* 46 f.
[27] On Callimachus' apologetic approach cf. *Scr. Min. Alex.* IV, 524 ff.

specimen of didactic poetry, i. e. in Manetho: Manetho will achieve glory not only because he asks the appropriate deities to grant it to him (6.753), but also because Manetho, by revealing in a true manner (ἀτρεκέως) the teachings of the great Petosiris (1.11-12; cf. 4.12), will enable his readers to acquire very precious and extremely useful knowledge about the influence of stars upon the affairs of mankind. The utilitarian *topos*, whereby the author of a didactic poem promises to tell the truth, so that his teachings will prove useful to mankind and make him famous, goes back, as everybody knows, to the earliest didactic poem of all, Hesiod's *Works and Days* (line 10 ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην).

In the Orphic *Argonautica*, the poet's promise that he will tell the truth pursues the same aim that we find in other specimens of non-didactic epic poetry: namely, the author of the Orphic *Argonautica*, like Apollonius Rhodius and Callimachus, will relate many wondrous stories in the course of his narration, and his pledge to tell the truth, aptly placed in the *prooemium*, serves to captivate the interest and the attention of his readers.

As Venzke, Dottin and I have emphasized, the late epic authors of the Orphic *Lithica* and of the Orphic *Argonautica* were very learned indeed. This is shown not only by their employment of the epic language (cf. *Habis* 1989, *art. cit.*, for details), but also by their way of composing and expounding their poetic programmes, which, as I hope to have shown in the present paper [28], skilfully utilize traditional motifs of epic poetry explained by Mocker, Engel, Eichgrün, etc. (divine order to write a poem, autobiographical element justifying the poet's choice of a literary genre, promise to tell the truth, hope for fame).

[28] The first *prooemium* of the Orphic *Argonautica* (lines 1-6), as everybody knows (cf. H. Venzke, *Die Orphischen Argonautika in ihrem Verhältnis zu Apollonios Rhodios* [Diss. Berlin 1939] 25 f.; Ziegler, *RE* , s. v. XVIII 2, 1351 f.; lastly Vian, *op. cit.* 8, with footnote 1) is modelled on the Orphic *prooemium*, Kern fr. 62. But, whereas in the Orphic *prooemium* fr. 62 Kern the poet asks Apollo to send him divine inspiration (lines 4 f.), the author of the Orphic *Argonautica* has, in his own *prooemium*, introduced the request that Apollo might grant him glory (κλέος, line 3). The author of the Orphic *Argonautica* has modified the content of his model, i. e. of the Orphic *prooemium* fr. 62, by introducing the notion of κλέος: the same procedure was employed by the author of Hom. *Hymn.* 25, who modified a traditional *topos* entailing the use of μνήσομαι (line 7; cf. Hom. *Hymn.* 19.49, 25.7, 27.22, 28.18, 29.14, 30.19, 33.19) by altering μνήσομ ' into τιμήσατ ', whereby he introduced the request to the Muses and Apollo that they may grant him glory. The *Versende* ὀπάσσαις (Orph. *Argon.* 3) is traditional, cf. footnote 14; phrases like σὺ δέ μοι (*ibid.*) also are traditional formulaic material, cf. Mocker, *op. cit.* 8, 16, 29, 43, 49, etc.