THE VOYAGE OF THE ARGO AND OTHER MODES OF TRAVEL IN APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA*

Brian D. McPhee

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Approved by:

William H. Race

James J. O'Hara

Emily Baragwanath

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ABSTRACT

Brian D. McPhee: The Voyage of the Argo and Other Modes of Travel in Apollonius' *Argonautica*
(Under the direction of William H. Race)

This thesis analyzes the Argo as a vehicle for travel in Apollonius' *Argonautica*: its relative strengths and weaknesses and ultimately its function as the poem's central mythic paradigm. To establish the context for this assessment, the first section surveys other forms of travel in the poem, arranged in a hierarchy of travel proficiency ranging from divine to heroic to ordinary human mobility. The second section then examines the capabilities of the Argo and its crew in depth, concluding that the ship is situated on the edge between heroic and human travel. The third section confirms this finding by considering passages that implicitly compare the Argo with other modes of travel through juxtaposition. The conclusion follows cues from the narrator in proposing to read the Argo as a mythic paradigm for specifically human travel that functions as a metaphor for a universal and timeless human condition.

parentibus meis

“Finis origine pendet.”

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I. Introduction

The narrator of Apollonius’ *Argonautica* announces his primary theme in the proem, in which he states his intention to recount the “famous deeds of men born long ago, who, at the command of King Pelias, sailed the well-benched Argo through the mouth of the Black Sea and between the Cyanean rocks to fetch the golden fleece” (1.1–4).[1] These “famous deeds” consist of all the adventures that the Argonauts undertake along their voyage to and from Colchis, and frequently throughout the poem they are divided into two broad types, episodes on land and on sea.[2] Thus, later in the proem, when Pelias conceives a plot by which to destroy Jason, he “arranged for him the ordeal of a very arduous voyage, so that either on the sea or else among foreign people he would lose any chance of returning home” (οἱ ἄεθλον | ἔντυε ναυτιλίης πολυκηδέος, ὄφρ’ ἐνὶ πόντῳ | ἠὲ καὶ ἀλλοδαποῖσι μετ’ ἀνδράσι νόστον ὀλέσσῃ, 1.15–17); and this doublet of both land and sea challenges characterizing Jason’s quest recurs elsewhere in the epic (2.628–630; 3.348–349; 4.1320–1321, 1359–1360; cf. 4.231–232). It is telling, however, that in the first lines of the proem, it is the strictly maritime challenge of passing through the Symplegades that emblematizes the Argonauts’ quest.[3] Likewise, when the narrator states his theme again at the end of the proem, the doublet characterizing the Argonauts’

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[1] παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν | μνήσομαι, οἳ Πόντοιο κατὰ στόμα καὶ διὰ πέτρας | Κυανέας βασιλῆος ἐφημοσύνῃ Πελίαο | χρύσειον μετὰ κῶας ἐύζυγον ἤλασαν Ἀργώ. Text and translation of Apollonius come from Race 2008.

[2] Cf. *Od*. 1.3–4, Clare 2002: 25–26.

[3] Likewise, this is the only incident that Homer mentions in connection with the Argonauts (*Od*. 12.69–72).

adventures has been reduced such that the sea predominates: "But now I wish to relate the lineage and names of the heroes, their journeys on the vast sea, and all they did as they wandered" (νῦν δ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ γενεήν τε καὶ οὔνομα μυθησαίμην | ἡρώων, δολιχῆς τε πόρους ἁλός, ὅσσα τ᾽ ἔρεξαν | πλαζόμενοι, 1.20–22).[4] There is thus a sense in which the proem declares sea-travel on the Argo the most fundamental or representative theme of the poem.[5]

The characterization of the Argo as a vehicle is therefore a matter of considerable importance for the interpretation of Apollonius' "epic of travel."[6] If the divinely-wrought vessel is such that the Argonauts' sailing is miraculously easy, then the *Argonautica* should be a relatively pleasant story of divine beneficence with little real danger: the heroes go sightseeing, as it were. If, conversely, the Argo is portrayed more like an ordinary ship, with credible deficiencies in the face of marine obstacles of mythical proportions, then the poem would presumably foreground human struggling, endurance, and at times even helplessness. And more nuanced, intermediate possibilities between these extremes would exist as well. The goal of this

[4] The Argonauts' wandering is thrice associated specifically with the sea (2.11; 3.1066; 4.1321), once with land and sea (3.348–349).

[5] Cf. Rostropowicz 1990: 107, who argues that the proem announces that the Argo is "one of the heroes of the work," in a manner of speaking. Indeed, in an oracular manner of speaking, the Argo is even the "mother" of the Argonauts, conveying the heroes in her "womb" and thereby suffering trials of her own on their journey (4.1372–1374).

On the predominance of the sea in the land-sea doublet, cf. Murray 2005: 90 on 1.16–17: "The digression [on Pelias' motives and expectations] closes with emphasis on the dangers posed by the sea. In fact, the quest is defined as a sea voyage full of cares (ναυτιλίης πολυκηδέος, 16), whereas the reference to the hostile foreigners seems to be an afterthought—'Plan B', as it were. The inference is that Pelias has a greater expectation that Jason will lose his *nostos* in a shipwreck than in a battle." A similar argument can be made for the reckoning of the men of Iolcus, who suppose that the Argonauts could burn Aeetes' palace in one day if he refused to yield the fleece to them, but that "the voyage [to and from Colchis] cannot be avoided, and the task is beyond accomplishment for those who go" (ἀλλ᾽ οὐ φυκτὰ κέλευθα, πόνος δ᾽ ἄπρηκτος ἰοῦσιν, 1.246). Strictly speaking "the voyage" involves obstacles on both sea and land (cf. 1.16–17), but since Aeetes already represents the hostile foreigners of the land-sea doublet—indeed, the most important hostile foreigner of the poem—the κέλευθα here may refer particularly to the challenge of *sailing* to Colchis and back (cf. 2.628–630).

[6] So labeled by Hunter 2015: 19 and Race (forthcoming) ad 1.1–4.

paper is to delineate the nature of the Argo as a means of travel, the better to understand the *Argonautica* itself.

To this end, I first conduct a survey of the many other modes of travel portrayed in the poem in order to establish the context within which the Argo's travel should be situated. In particular, Greek epic narratives are populated by characters of different ontological "types," such as god, demigod, and ordinary mortal. Their natures typically differ from one another in consistent ways along a more or less explicitly articulated hierarchy of power. A straightforward example of all three types quite easily organized into a simple hierarchy occurs in *Iliad* 5. When Diomedes wounds Ares, the god roars in pain as loudly as the cry of nine or ten thousand warriors joining battle (*Il*. 5.858–861). Here the basis of comparison is vocal volume, and plainly the god dwarfs his human counterparts in baldly quantifiable terms. In fact, even an exceptional human like Stentor, mentioned some seventy lines earlier, is only as loud as fifty men (5.786), so that it is possible to derive the ratio: Ares' cry is equivalent to that of 180 to 200 Stentors or nine to ten thousand generic warriors.[7] In context, the comparison throws the irregularity of the theomachy episode into relief by highlighting the difference between gods and mortals at precisely the point at which Diomedes transgresses that boundary by wounding a god. The *Argonautica*'s construction of a hierarchy of power centered on the variable of travel—especially how fast and how difficult it is—is much subtler and certainly not quantifiable in this way, but my argument will proceed along broadly similar lines by establishing this hierarchy, considering the place of the Argo within it, and interpreting the significance of the comparison between the Argo and the other modes of travel in the poem.

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[7] Kirk 1990 ad *Il*. 5.784–786 compares Stentor's ability to Ares' cry without noting the difference in scale between their volumes, but cf. Janko 1994 ad *Il*. 14.147–152. Notably, the A scholiast ad *Il*. 5.785 records a tradition in which Stentor was killed when he competed with Hermes in a literal shouting match. This tradition stages a direct contest between the voices of Stentor and a god that is only implicit in *Iliad* 5.

I proceed first with a review of the types of travel employed by the poem's gods, by its ordinary mortals, and by its "heroes," who fall somewhere in between these ends of the spectrum. Then, in the second section of this paper, I consider the characterization of the Argo itself as a means of travel. Finally, I compare the Argo to the other modes by examining several passages that juxtapose the Argo with representatives of different modes of travel in the poem, because the salient features of each mode of travel appear most starkly in contrast. I conclude that there is a tension between divinity and humanity in the Argo's depiction, but that ultimately the Argonauts are closer to suffering mortals than to the surpassingly mobile gods and heroes like Phrixus and Heracles. In particular, the narrator points the way to a reading of the poem in which the Argonauts are paradigms of human travelers and exemplify the human condition more broadly.

II. Other Modes of Travel

Divine Beings

I begin the taxonomy of travel in the poem at the top of the hierarchy of mobility, with gods and other divine creatures, who are generally characterized by the superhuman ease with which they can reach their various destinations. Divine travel is essentially unlimited, and one way in which this characteristic manifests is the multiplicity of different means of travel available to the gods. Flight through the air is a typically divine form of transit, well-represented in the *Argonautica* by the Harpies (2.187, 276), Iris (2.286–300, 4.758, 4.770–779), Apollo (2.684), the Caucasian eagle (2.1251–1259), Eros (3.158–166), and the Keres, who roam through the air hunting mortals (4.1665–1667).[8] In addition, many passages are not explicit about how a god travels from one place to another, but in several instances, flight is almost certainly in play,

[8] The migrations of the monstrous birds of Stymphalia and the island of Ares (2.1056–1057, 1088–1089) are perhaps comparable.

as in Boreas’ rape of Orithyia (1.213–216).[9] In a related vein, several gods fly through the air in vehicles—ordinarily chariots, such as Helius (3.233–234, 307–313) and Night drive (3.1193), but in one exceptional case, Athena rides on a swift cloud (2.538–548). But divine chariots also run on land and sea, as shown by Artemis (3.876–884) and Poseidon (1.1157–1158, 3.1235–1245).[10]

Related to flight and not always distinguishable from it are the gods’ superhuman leaps to and from heaven. A particularly clear example of a leap occurs in the Celtic episode, when “Hera leapt forth from heaven and shouted from the Hercynian peak” (Ἥρη σκοπέλοιο καθ’ Ἑρκυνίου ἰάχησεν | οὐρανόθεν προθοροῦσα, 4.640–641; cf. 4.842).[11] But Iris twice blurs the distinction between leaping and flying: on one occasion, she seems to take off from Olympus with a leap and then to begin flying to the Aegean (Ἶρις ἀπ’ Οὐλύμποιο θοροῦσα | τέμνε, τανυσσαμένη κοῦφα πτερά, 4.770–771);[12] on another, she distinctly leaps down from heaven (κατὰ δ’ αἰθέρος ἆλτο | οὐρανόθεν, 2.286–287), but she does so in order to check the Boreads’ airborne pursuit of the Harpies, so their conversation probably takes place hovering in mid-air.[13]

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[9] N.b. Boreas’ sons’ ability to fly as well as the prepositional prefix in ἀνερείψατο (1.214). The same verb is used for Apollo’s rape of Cyrene (2.503) and Aphrodite’s rescue of Butes (4.918), and probably Zeus’ abductions of Sinope (2.946–947) and Ganymede (3.115–117) should be understood to involve flight as well. Notably, the description of Poseidon’s rape of Corcyra uses the verb ἁρπάξας instead (4.569), so perhaps he is envisioned carrying her not “up” through the air but rather over the sea.

[10] Artemis and Poseidon only ride their chariots in similes, but the Argonauts actually encounter a horse from Poseidon’s chariot in the Syrtis (4.1364–1368).

[11] The scene is reminiscent of the Iliadic Hera’s leaping from mountaintop to mountaintop as she travels from Olympus to Lemnos (14.225–228).

[12] Iris does the reverse at *Iliad* 24.77–79, flying between Samos and Imbros and only then leaping into the sea.

[13] The action in this episode is vague and must be reconstructed from certain cues in the narrative. It seems that the Boreads catch (κιχόντες, 2.285) the Harpies and must restrain them, because the Harpies do not leave the scene until Iris does (Ἅρπυιαι τ’ Ἶρίς τε διέτμαγον, 2.298). The Boreads are then presumably stationary in mid-air over the

In any case, in several passages it is impossible to say whether a god flies or leaps between heaven and earth, so non-descript is their movement, as when Apollo simply "came swiftly down from the sky to the Melanteian rocks" (κατ᾽ οὐρανοῦ ἵκεο πέτρας | ῥίμφα Μελαντείους, 4.1706).[14] It seems, however, that flight unassisted by vehicles is largely the preserve of winged divinities in the *Argonautica*,[15] which insight is at least suggestive in the unclear cases. The key consideration for a god in determining whether to leap to or from earth or, for example, to fly in a chariot is probably the urgency of the situation. Thus Hera seems to leap to the Hercynian peak because time is of the essence if she is to save the Argonauts from making a wrong turn toward Ocean (4.636–639),[16] whereas preparing a chariot is a much more involved process (cf. *Il.* 5.720–723, 729–732).

Besides leaping, the gods can also travel through another exaggerated form of human movement, walking. Thus at Thynias the Argonauts encounter Apollo walking from Lycia to the

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Plotae/Strophades (νήσοισιν ἔπι Πλωτῇσι, 2.285—the plural and vague preposition indicate that they do not land *on* the islands) when Iris arrives and persuades them not to harm the Harpies (κε . . . διεδηλήσαντο . . . εἰ μὴ . . . Ἶρις . . . παραιφαμένη κατέρυκεν, 2.284–287). She thus seems to leap to their position over the islands, arrest her downward trajectory in mid-air, and remain hovering beside them for the ensuing dialogue. After Iris swears her oath with a Stygian libation (2.291), the Boreads must release the Harpies and *then* turn around in mid-air (the etiological moment, 2.295–297) and take off in flight. Finally, the Harpies and Iris fly off themselves, going their separate ways.

[14] Cf. 1.1100; 2.938; 3.587; 4.57–59 (especially if κίον is read in line 59), 615.

[15] Apollo at Thynias (2.684) is the one exception, unless βῆ ῥ᾽ ἴμεναι πόντονδε δι᾽ ἠέρος is interpreted as a gigantic leap over the Black Sea. This interpretation is hardly necessary, however, because the gods are traditionally capable of "wingless flight" (e.g., *Il.* 5.866–867, Aesch. *Eum.* 250), simply moving through the air without wings, vehicles, or devices like Hermes' sandals.

[16] Hunter 2015 ad 4.641; cf. Thetis' brusque leap into the sea (4.842), which is, however, also traditional (*Il.* 1.532). Notably, when Zeus asks Athena to betake herself to the Achaeans and Trojans post-hate (αἶψα μάλ᾽ ἐς στρατὸν ἐλθὲ, *Il.* 4.70), she *leaps* from Olympus to the earth like a shooting star (1.74–79).

land of the Hyperboreans (2.674–684; cf. 4.611–618), but his are no ordinary steps.[17] Rather, "beneath his feet the whole island shook, and waves washed over the dry land" (ἡ δ᾽ ὑπὸ ποσσὶν | σείετο νῆσος ὅλη, κλύζεν δ᾽ ἐπὶ κύματα χέρσῳ, 2.679–680). These shockwaves indicate that Apollo is here probably gigantic in form in order to take enormous steps, which serve to shorten his journey considerably.[18] The epic model is *Il*. 13.17–22, where Poseidon walks from Samothrace to his underwater palace at Aegae in just four strides, "and the high mountains and the woodland trembled beneath the immortal feet of Poseidon as he went" (τρέμε δ᾽ οὔρεα μακρὰ καὶ ὕλη | ποσσὶν ὑπ᾽ ἀθανάτοισι Ποσειδάωνος ἰόντος, 13.18–19). Probably Pind. *Pyth*. 3.43 is also relevant, in which Apollo goes from Delphi to Thessaly "with his first stride" (βάματι δ᾽ ἐν πρώτῳ).[19] Then, a few lines later, Apollo is on his way: "he proceeded far out to sea through the air" (τηλοῦ | βῆ ῥ᾽ ἴμεναι πόντονδε δι᾽ ἠέρος, 2.683–684). Evidently, Apollo begins to fly here (Green 2007 ad 2.678–680), but this transition raises a question—why does the god not fly the entire way from Lycia to the Hyperboreans?

Once again, Apollo's procedure can be illuminated by Apollonius' Homeric model. It is noteworthy that even though Poseidon begins *Iliad* 13 sitting on Ida, which is very near the shore (ἔνθ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐξ ἁλὸς ἕζετ᾽ ἰών, 13.15), and although his destination is his underwater palace at Aegae (δώματα βένθεσι λίμνης, 13.21), nevertheless, Poseidon does not elect to travel directly

[17] Dionysus' travels from India to Thebes may represent a case of a god traveling on foot in the fashion of a wandering hero like Heracles, but the text is not explicit on how he traveled (2.905–910).

[18] For the immensity of form that the gods can assume, cf. *Il*. 4.441–443 (description of Eris), 21.407 (Ares stretches out over seven πέλεθρα).

[19] Text and translation of the *Iliad* come from Murray 1999; of Pindar, from Race 1997.

through the sea.[20] Rather, he seems to prefer to walk on land for as long as he can before plunging into the sea—hence the rumbling of mountains and woods left in his wake. In the same way, it seems that Apollonius' Apollo has walked overland from Lycia up to the edge of the Black Sea, where he then takes an enormous step onto the island of Thynias, and only then, when a great expanse of sea lays ahead to the north, does he begin to fly through the air; presumably he will touch down on the northern shore of the Black Sea and continue walking until he reaches the land of the Hyperboreans. If this interpretation is correct, it appears that Apollonius has taken great care in this passage to follow his Homeric model closely.[21]

In any event, a much more straightforward example of a giant figure taking enormous steps is Talos, who makes three circuits of the whole of Crete on his daily patrol (4.1644). Hecate, too, appears to walk when she rises "from the deepest depths" (κευθμῶν ἐξ ὑπάτων, 3.1213) to receive Jason's sacrifice, since "all the watery meadows shook at her footstep" (πίσεα δ' ἔτρεμε πάντα κατὰ στίβον, 3.1218).

The gods also frequently swim in this poem, especially marine divinities. Glaucus emerges from the sea to stop the Argo off Mysia (1.1310), and Triton's manual guiding of the Argo out of his Libyan lake receives an intricate description (4.1588–1591, 1602–1618). Most elaborately, Thetis leaps from Olympus into the sea (4.842–843; cf. 4.865, 878), assembles her sisters (4.843–845), swims rapidly through the water from off Olympus to Aeaea (4.847–850), and meets her sisters at the Planctae, where the Nereids swim about the Argo, darting out of the sea here and there like dolphins (4.933–938). Then, once the Wandering Rocks are cleared, the

[20] For example, he might have chosen to swim through the sea like a Nereid, or even to wade through it like Vergil's gigantic Orion (see *Aen*. 10.763 with Servius ad loc.).

[21] Apollonius may also be interacting with Pind. *Pyth*. 10.29–30, which asserts that a mortal could not reach the assembly of the Hyperboreans by ship or on foot (ναυσὶ δ' οὔτε πεζὸς ἰών κεν εὕροις | ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυμαστὰν ὁδόν). For a god, conversely, such a journey can even be made semiannually (although, it should be noted, Pindar elsewhere represents Apollo traveling there in his chariot [*Ol*. 8.46–47]).

Nereids disappear into the sea, having "plunged into the depths like diving birds" (κατὰ βένθος ἀλίγκιαι αἰθυίῃσιν | δῦνον, 4.966–967). But even non-marine divinities appear to be adept swimmers when the need arises, as when, at the beginning of this sequence, Iris plunges into the sea to deliver Hera's summons to Thetis (4.771; cf. *Il.* 24.77–83). Likewise, marine divinities are not limited to swimming, as the next stage in this narrative shows: Thetis then "went up from the sea to Olympus to the goddess Hera" (ἐξ ἁλὸς Οὔλυμπόνδε θεὰν μετεκίαθεν Ἥρην, 4.781). As often, the means of divine travel is kept vague, but evidently Thetis can also leap or perhaps fly in addition to swimming.

The gods enjoy a multitude of options for traveling the world, but one characteristic that unites them all is speed: seemingly whatever the gods do, they do it fast.[22] The narrator can register this fact succinctly with the insertion of a single adjective or adverb, like "swift" (θοά, 4.779, of Iris' knees; cf. 2.300; 4.758) or "swiftly" (ῥίμφα, 4.1707, of Apollo's descent from heaven), but he can also develop this theme through picturesque circumstantial details and in similes. For instance, the narrator notes the way that Apollo's "golden locks <u>flowed</u> in clusters over both cheeks <u>as he went</u>" (χρύσειοι δὲ παρειάων ἑκάτερθεν | πλοχμοὶ βοτρυόεντες <u>ἐπερρώοντο κιόντι</u>, 2.676–677) during his epiphany at Thynias. Like robes flung backwards in artwork, these locks denote the god's speed.[23] Apollonius' similes on this score range from the straightforward to the complex. In the former category is the description of Thetis' angry departure from Peleus' home: "she herself, like a breeze in form, like a dream, went swiftly forth from the palace and leapt into the sea" (αὐτὴ δὲ πνοιῇ ἰκέλη δέμας, ἠΰτ' ὄνειρος, | βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐκ

[22] In fact, folk etymology related θεός to θέειν, with wordplay between these roots already visible in Homer; see Haywood 1984.

[23] Cf. Kirk 1985 ad *Il.* 1.529–530. By a similar token, details like foam, gushing water, and whirlpools mark the speed of Glaucus and the Nereids in the sea (1.1326–1328; 4.955); cf. 4.105–106.

μεγάροιο θοῶς, καὶ ἐσήλατο πόντον, 4.877–878). A much more elaborate simile, discussed further below, describes Athena riding on a cloud with the speed with which a traveler can visualize his home, the route there, and destinations along the way (2.541–546). In any event, celerity is one the defining characteristics of divine motion.

One consequence of this fantastic speed is that the gods' sense of time and distance can seem somewhat warped from a human perspective. Thetis illustrates this divine quirk nicely when she accedes to Hera's request to escort the Argonauts through the Planctae. To take her leave from Hera on Olympus, Thetis declares, "But now it is time to go on a long and immeasurable journey" (ἀλλ᾽ ὥρη δολιχήν τε καὶ ἄσπετον οἶμον ὁδεύειν, 4.838) to fetch her sisters and instruct Peleus on Aeaea of Hera's plan. But after she gathers the Nereids, the narrator describes her making this journey with amazing rapidity (4.845–850):

> Θέτις δ᾽ ἀγόρευεν ἐφετμὰς
> Ἥρης, αἶψα δ᾽ ἴαλλε μετ᾽ Αὐσονίην ἅλα πάσας.
> αὐτὴ δ᾽ ὠκυτέρη ἀμαρύγματος ἠὲ βολάων
> ἠελίου, ὅτ᾽ ἄνεισι περαίης ὑψόθι γαίης,
> σεύατ᾽ ἴμεν λαιψηρὰ δι᾽ ὕδατος, ἔστ᾽ ἀφίκανεν
> ἀκτὴν Αἰαίην Τυρσηνίδος ἠπείροιο.
>
> Thetis announced Hera's orders and quickly dispatched them all to the Ausonian sea. But she herself, more swiftly than a flash of light or rays of the sun when it rises above the distant horizon, sped rapidly through the water, until she reached the Aeaean shore of the Tyrrhenian mainland.

There is a marked disjunction between Thetis' (sarcastic?) characterization of the journey as "long and immeasurable,"[24] which accurately reflects a human perspective on the distance

[24] On Thetis' ambiguous tone here, see Hunter 1993: 100; 2015 ad 4.838. I am inclined to read 4.838 as comically petty after the model of the Homeric Hermes, who complains that he would have never flown out as far as Ogygia had Zeus not commanded him (*Od*. 5.99–101). Like Apollonius' Thetis, however, Hermes' journey had not seemed especially taxing (*Od*. 5.50–55). But Hermes' reluctance does not derive from any particular animosity toward Calypso; he rather complains that there are no human cities near her island, and hence no sacrifices or hecatombs for gods, either (*Od*. 5.101–102). Thetis' reluctance may have a darker edge, deriving from her continuing bitterness at Peleus. My thanks to William Race for drawing my attention to this parallel.

involved,[25] and the actual promptness with which the sea goddess accomplishes it. Whether sarcastic or not, Thetis' words effectively juxtapose a mortal outlook on distance with the gods' experience of the same.

This same sort of superhuman perspective may also inform certain assumptions made by Aeetes about the distance between Aea and Hellas. When the Phrixides return to Aeetes' palace with Jason and his men in tow, Aeetes disbelieves Argus' (true) account of how the two groups came together at the island of Ares and instead barks the accusation at them, "You [the Phrixides and Argonauts] banded together immediately and came here from Hellas, not for the fleece, but for my scepter and royal throne" (αὐτίχ' ὁμαρτήσαντες ἀφ' Ἑλλάδος, οὐδ' ἐπὶ κῶας, | σκῆπτρα δὲ καὶ τιμὴν βασιληίδα δεῦρο νέεσθε, 3.375–376). For Apollonius' readers, this charge is patently absurd, since it has taken the Argonauts half the poem already just to make it from Iolcus to Colchis. In fact, the Phrixides have only had time to sail to the Island of Ares and back, so to sail to Greece, recruit the Argonauts, and return to Aea in that time is simply out of the question.[26] Yet Aeetes himself seems surprised that the Phrixides have returned (3.306–307)[27] and claims to have warned his grandsons of the "immense distance of the trip" (ἀπείρονα μέτρα κελεύθου, 3.308)—has he been blinded to these simple considerations by his rage?[28]

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[25] δολιχός is elsewhere applied to the journeys of both the Argonauts (1.21; 4.586) and the Phrixides (3.602).

[26] That this accusation seems plausible to Medea (3.775–777) is in keeping with her characterization as untraveled and unworldly, which lends all the more gravity to her decision to elope with Jason. Cf. 3.1061, where she is uncertain of Hellas' location, and 3.1073–1074 with Green 2007 ad 3.1061–1076, where the only Western locations Medea seems able to name, Orchomenus and Aeaea, are those she has heard about from family members. Chalciope betrays a similar parochialism (3.266).

[27] Aeetes' question to the Phrixides, πῶς Αἶάνδε νέεσθε παλίσσυτοι (3.306), is nicely ambiguous, since the sense of "rushing" (σεύω) in παλίσσυτος is often but not always lost in Apollonius (Race 2009 ad 3.112): he may be wondering how they have returned *so quickly* (so Hunter 1989 ad loc.) or how they have managed to return *at all*, as in fact he had privately hoped they would perish on the journey, like Pelias vis-à-vis Jason (3.597–602; cf. 1.16–17; 4.549–550; Green 2007 ad 3.304ff.). Moreover, in his next question, ἦέ τις ἄτη | σωομένοις μεσσηγὺς ἐνέκλασεν (3.306–307), σωομένοις is ambiguous: Apollonius sometimes uses σώομαι to mean σεύομαι, sometimes to mean

Perhaps that is the case, but the accusation may equally betray Aeetes' godlike perspective on travel. Though not a god himself, the king is closely associated with divine travel through his father Helius. He has just revealed that he once rode in his father's chariot when he conveyed Circe from Aea to Aeaea (3.307–313); moreover, his own divine chariot team, "swift as blasts of wind" (πνοιῇσιν ἐειδομένους ἀνέμοιο, 4.221), represents Helius' gift to him. Both of these details serve to liken Aeetes to the gods, since Helius had also once transported Hephaestus in his chariot from the battle at Phlegra (3.233–234), and the narrator uses Poseidon's divine horses to exemplify incredible speed (1.1157–1158; cf. 4.1368, 1377).[29] If these are Aeetes' experiences of travel, then it only makes sense that he cannot appreciate how long it truly takes to sail between Greece and the eastern edge of the world. In just a single day, he had traveled even further—quite nearly Helius' entire circuit from the extreme East to the extreme West, in fact.

The Sun's daily course through the heavens exemplifies one last distinctive feature of divine travel in the poem, namely, its easy repeatability. Thetis might complain about her far-distant journey (4.838), and Iris may enjoy some rest after a long day delivering messages

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σῴζομαι (Hunter 1989 ad loc.). If the latter meaning is operative, then already in line 307, Aeetes is assuming that the Phrixides did in fact make it to Greece and back, as Hunter 1989 ad loc. translates: "Did some disaster frustrate you in mid-ocean as you were returning?" In view of Aeetes' prejudice against the Phrixides on the strength of his father's oracle, it is likely that already at 306–307 he has a premonition of the accusation that he vocalizes at 375–376.

[28] So Campbell 1983: 32, Hunter 1989 ad 3.375–376. For Green 2007 ad loc., these lines "could very well be Ap.'s way of indicating the degree of Aiëtés' paranoia."

[29] It is also worth noting that Aeetes in his chariot is compared to Poseidon with his team (3.1235–1245). Moreover, when Cronus wants to run away on being caught with Philyra by Rhea, he transforms into a horse (2.1236–1237). Cf. further the "swift deer" that pull Artemis' chariot (ὠκείαις κεμάδεσσι, 3.879).

(4.779),[30] but these trips are but minor inconveniences compared to the nigh-impossible quests that they would represent for mortals. As such, the gods do not much mind making the same journey twice, habitually, daily, or even multiple times a day. Thus when Apollo abducts Cyrene from Thessaly, he whisks her off to Libya (2.502–505), but when she gives birth to Aristaeus, he apparently thinks nothing of taking the child all the way back to Thessaly to be raised there by Chiron (2.509–510).[31] There are two similes that represent gods regularly traveling around the Greek world to visit their cult sites: Artemis drives off from the Parthenius or Amnisus to an indeterminate destination, "coming from afar to partake of a savory hecatomb" (τηλόθεν ἀντιόωσα πολυκνίσου ἑκατόμβης, 3.880), while in a much more expansive simile (3.1240–1244):

> Ἴσθμιον εἶσι Ποσειδάων ἐς ἀγῶνα
> ἅρμασιν ἐμβεβαώς, ἢ Ταίναρον ἢ ὅ γε Λέρνης
> ὕδωρ ἠὲ καὶ ἄλσος Ὑαντίου Ὀγχηστοῖο,
> καί τε Καλαύρειαν μετὰ δὴ θαμὰ νίσσεται ἵπποις,
> Πέτρην θ’ Αἱμονίην ἢ δενδρήεντα Γεραιστόν. . .
>
> Poseidon goes to the Isthmian games mounted in his chariot, or to Taenarus or Lerna's waters or to his precinct at Hyantian Onchestus, and often travels with his horses to Calaurea and Haemonian Petra or forested Geraestus. . .[32]

Apollo's seasonal travel between Lycia and the land of the Hyperboreans (2.674–675, 4.611–618) is an extreme version of the same phenomenon. Meanwhile, some gods go even farther

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[30] Iris has good reason to be tired: Hunter 1993: 96 n. 106 points out that her triple mission in Book 4 (Hera sends her to Thetis, Hephaestus, and Aeolus) does her double mission in *Iliad* 24 (to Thetis and Priam) one better.

[31] This back-and-forth is perhaps an acknowledgement of Chiron's important role in Pindar's treatment of the Cyrene myth in his ninth *Pythian*. Apollonius finds a way to smuggle Chiron back into the story.

[32] A similar idea is implicit in other lists of a god's cult sites in the poem, because a god is thought to "come" there to receive worship and sacrifice. Cf. 1.307–309, 418–419, 536–537; 4.1704–1705, all of Apollo. Clare 2002: 200–201 comments perceptively on these similes, which compare the way that human characters travel on certain *special* occasions to the way that gods travel *regularly*.

even more frequently. Hephaestus is a case in a point: despite his lame feet, somehow or other the smith god makes a regular commute from Olympus to his workshop among the Planctae (3.41–43; cf. 4.956–958).[33]

But with the possible exception of Talos, who circles Crete thrice daily (4.1644), the most regular travelers in the poem are the gods who represent celestial bodies in their daily courses. Order is typified in Orpheus' cosmogonic song by the way that "the stars and moon and paths of the sun always keep their fixed place in the sky" (ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἐν αἰθέρι τέκμαρ ἔχουσιν | ἄστρα σεληναίη τε καὶ ἠελίοιο κέλευθοι, 1.499–500), whereas it belongs to the subversive powers of the witch to "arrest the stars and the paths of the sacred moon" (ἄστρα τε καὶ μήνης ἱερῆς ἐπέδησε κελεύθους, 3.533).[34] The celestial expanses that these divinities traverse every day are so immense that the poet can use them to signify a distance all but unfathomable for human beings, as when in the Catalogue the deaths of Canthus and Mopsus in Libya are taken as proof of the following maxim (1.82–85):

> ὡς οὐκ ἀνθρώποισι κακὸν μήκιστον ἐπαυρεῖν,
> ὁππότε κἀκείνους Λιβύῃ ἔνι ταρχύσαντο,
> τόσσον ἑκὰς Κόλχων, ὅσσον τέ περ ἠελίοιο
> μεσσηγὺς δύσιές τε καὶ ἀντολαὶ εἰσορόωνται.
>
> Thus no evil is too remote for humans to encounter, seeing that they buried those men in Libya, as far from the Colchians as the distance that is seen between the setting and rising of the sun.[35]

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[33] The Caucasian eagle is also represented as "ever flying back" (παλιμπετὲς ἀίσσοντα, 2.1250) to consume Prometheus' liver, but whence it comes and whither it goes, the narrator does not say.

[34] See Clare 2002: 231–260.

[35] This early passage presents an exemplary instance of juxtaposition between different modes of travel, and I will be returning to it in the final section of this paper.

Ordinary Humans

Thus divine travel can be characterized as formally diversified (walking, flying, riding, and swimming), speedy, and repeatable without difficulty—in a word, unrestricted. The experience of travel for most mortals, conversely, is almost completely opposite. In an epic explicitly set "in the time of the demigods" (μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἡμιθέοισιν, 4.1642), whose pages are populated by gods and the offspring of gods, at first sight there might appear to be little room in the poem for ordinary humanity. In fact, Apollonius manages to incorporate this class of character in a variety of ways: in some of the poem's supporting cast, in certain references to generic character types, in prolepses to Greek history closer to his own time, in similes, and most importantly, in certain asides in which the narrator relates his material to the experiences of contemporary humanity, in which category he includes himself. Through these various means, the poet can frequently be seen meditating on the nature of the human condition through the lens of travel. For instance, when Hera endeavors to assume human form to test men's righteousness, it is telling that she chooses to disguise herself as an old woman trying to cross a swollen winter stream on foot (3.67–73)—an image of utter helplessness (ἀμηχανία).[36] The picture of human travel that gradually emerges in the *Argonautica* is one of terrible hardship, in both physical and emotional terms, that is only undertaken out of compulsion or necessity.

[36] I owe this insight to Andrew Ficklin. Apollonius elsewhere shows interest in the labored movement of the elderly in the figures of Iphias (1.311–316), Polyxo (1.668–670) and especially Phineus (2.197–205). As Iphias shows when the crowd thronging around Jason passes her by, the elderly embody the limitations of human mobility at their most acute and can thus be considered representative of human feebleness in general. Cf. the example of Phineus, whose extreme debility is boldly juxtaposed with the Harpies' lightning-swiftness (e.g., 2.225–227) as yet another instantiation of the great gulf between humans and divine beings in the poem.

Apollonius never depicts the struggles of the lame to walk (though cf. Hunter 2015 ad 4.957), but the narrator's defensive justification of the decision to recruit Palaemonius, Hephaestus' son lame in both feet (1.202 – 206), presupposes the reader's objection to his inclusion on the grounds of his limited mobility.

The narrator all but equates human travel with suffering in one of the poem's definitive contemplations on travel, the simile describing Athena zooming through the air on her cloud (2.541–548):

> ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε τις πάτρηθεν ἀλώμενος—οἷά τε πολλὰ
> πλαζόμεθ᾽ ἄνθρωποι τετληότες—οὐδέ τις αἶα
> τηλουρός, πᾶσαι δὲ κατόψιοί εἰσι κέλευθοι,
> σφωιτέρους δ᾽ ἐνόησε δόμους, ἄμυδις δὲ κέλευθος
> ὑγρή τε τραφερή τ᾽ ἰνδάλλεται, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ ἄλλῃ
> ὀξέα πορφύρων ἐπιμαίεται ὀφθαλμοῖσιν·
> ὧς ἄρα καρπαλίμως κούρη Διὸς ἀίξασα
> θῆκεν ἐπ᾽ ἀξείνοιο πόδας Θυνηίδος ἀκτῆς.
>
> And as when a man roams from his homeland—as we suffering humans often must wander—and no land is distant but all routes are visible, and he thinks of his own home, and pictures at once the way by sea and land, and in his swift thoughts seeks now one place, now another with his eyes—so quickly did Zeus' daughter spring down and plant her feet on the inhospitable Thynian shore.

This rich simile presents the poem's most striking juxtaposition of the divine and human modes of travel, as Athena makes her trip in the time it takes a mortal merely to *imagine* his home and the route that will take him there.[37] Moreover, the contrast is effective because this difference has a marked emotional dimension as well.[38] The goddess probably thinks nothing of her near-instantaneous journey, but the traveler seems to long for home, envisioning his actual house (σφωιτέρους . . . δόμους) and planning his route there from out of several possibilities (πᾶσαι δὲ κατόψιοί εἰσι κέλευθοι). As if himself overcome, the narrator vocalizes these emotions in a dramatic breakoff in the first-person plural (πλαζόμεθ᾽) that encourages "us," the readers and

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[37] Klooster 2012: 65–66.

[38] The passage is based on an Iliadic simile (15.80–83), but as Garson 1972: 7 n. 6 notes, their emotional colorations are quite different: "Homer's traveler is eager for more travel and projects himself from one place to another in thought; Apollonius' has had enough, and he nostalgically projects himself homewards."

narrator, to empathize with the wanderer's situation from out of the store of our own experiences, which are summed up in the potent phrase ἄνθρωποι τετληότες.[39]

The suffering in this simile is primarily psychological in nature, referring to the wanderer's homesickness,[40] and resonates with several other passages in the poem. The Sirens are dreadful because they have "robbed many men of their sweet homecoming" (πολέων μελιηδέα νόστον ἕλοντο, 4.901; cf. 4.916)—the piteous epithet briefly focalizes this loss from the perspective of the victims.[41] A young bride in a simile "yearns for the young man who is away among foreign people" (γάνυται δέ τε ἠιθέοιο | παρθένος ἱμείρουσα μετ᾽ ἀλλοδαποῖσιν ἐόντος | ἀνδράσιν, 1.778–780), a detail that adds a touch of pathos to a simile comparing Jason to a star. Conversely, Medea is sick with grief as she leaves the only home she has ever known, comparable to a captive woman stolen from her homeland (4.26–40; cf. 4.106–108, 360–363, 1036–1041).[42]

Like the wanderer above, these figures long for what is absent or slipping away, but the separation engendered by travel is also the source of much anxiety about the traveler's safety. Chalciope's relief at the return of her sons is palpable (3.256–267), but primarily because she never expected them to survive the journey. Her anxieties point up the fact that human travel is dangerous and always potentially deadly; in fact, her sons had nearly perished in a storm that shattered their ship (2.1102–1121, 3.320–323, 341–343). In similes strong winds can "rip [a

[39] Cf. Asper 2008: 192: "the vehicle [of this simile] talks about imagining lands far away and thus directly illustrates the audience's activity when following the actual text the simile is meant to illustrate."
[40] Cf. 4.385–387, where Medea speaks of being driven from one's fatherland as a dreadful punishment.

[41] For this focalization, cf. 1.249; 4.381, 1600.

[42] Medea projects her sadness onto the sea itself with the figure of the halcyon, claiming to be "borne far away, all alone on the sea with the mournful kingfishers" (τηλόθι δ᾽ οἴη | λυγρῇσιν κατὰ πόντον ἅμ᾽ ἀλκυόνεσσι φορεῦμαι, 4.362–363).

ship's mast] from its stays, wedges and all" (ἱστὸν νεός . . . | αὐτοῖσι σφήνεσσιν ὑπὲκ προτόνων ἐρύσηται, 1.1201–1204), while a swift ship can barely survive rough waves through a skilled helmsman's piloting (2.70–73). In fact, according to the narrator, Megarian colonists of Acherusia will themselves only narrowly survive a violent storm in the future, when they will dub the Acheron the Soönautes after finding safe harbor there (2.746–749). The Dioscuri's similar salvific role as the patrons of sailors is forecasted both in Acherusia and the territory of the Celts (2.806–808, 4.650–653), but this future function of theirs assumes a world in which imperiled mariners must frequently look to the gods for aid.

Outside the excitement of crises such as these, Apollonius suggests that travel is long and wearisome for humans: in a time-setting device that marks the beginning of Medea's "dark night of the soul," the narrator notes that as night falls and the rest of the world sleeps, sailors are busy looking to the stars as navigation aids (3.744–746), while "by now the traveler and gate-keeper were longing for sleep" (ὕπνοιο δὲ καί τις ὁδίτης | ἤδη καὶ πυλαωρὸς ἐέλδετο, 3.746–747).

One reflex and index of the difficulty of human travel is the wish or fantasy of instantaneous travel, the miraculous ability to teleport, as it were, from Point A to Point B. For instance, at one point Medea wishes that if Jason ever forgets about her, storm winds may carry her to Iolcus, so that she may appear unexpectedly at Jason's hearth, in order to reproach him face-to-face (3.1113–1117). Similarly, Chalciope is so concerned about Aeetes' wrath that she wishes that she dwelt far, far away, not in Colchis but at the ends of the earth (3.678–680).[43] These daydreams and the impossibility of their fulfillment highlight the human characters' frustrations with their limited mobility.

[43] More negatively, at 4.384–385, when Medea thinks that Jason has foresworn his oath to her, Medea wishes that the fleece would vanish into Erebus. At 4.181–182, Jason in his paranoia experiences a nightmarish counterpart to the instantaneous travel wish, afraid that some man or god would suddenly come and take the fleece away from him.

The difficulties of human travel raise a question rarely asked of the gods—if the process is so arduous, why do humans travel at all? The answer to be found in the *Argonautica* is a familiar one in Greek thought: irresistible necessity.[44] The gods travel for many reasons, some of which relate to the duties associated with their particular τιμαί (e.g., Helius, Iris), but much of divine travel in the epic is elective in nature, whether undertaken to aid favored heroes, receive worship, or take pleasure from mortal lovers.[45] Among the humans of the poem, however, Apollonius never represents travel for pleasure, such as tourists traveling to athletic games or explorers indulging their ethnographic interest, even if both of these subjects capture the poet's imagination.[46] Instead, in an important and early aside following closely on the heels of the Catalogue, the narrator explains the circumstances in which mortals travel over the sea (1.234–238):[47]

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δμώεσσιν ἐπαρτέα πάντ᾽ ἐτέτυκτο,
> ὅσσα περ ἐντύνονται ἐπήρεες ἔνδοθι νῆες,
> εὖτ᾽ ἂν ἄγῃ χρέος ἄνδρας ὑπεὶρ ἅλα ναυτίλλεσθαι,
> δὴ τότ᾽ ἴσαν μετὰ νῆα δι᾽ ἄστεος, ἔνθα περ ἀκταὶ
> κλείονται Παγασαὶ Μαγνήτιδες
>
> But when everything had been made ready by the servants,
> everything that oared ships stock on board when need compels
> men to voyage over the sea, then the heroes went through the town
> toward the ship, where the shore is called Magnesian Pagasae.

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[44] On the *topos* of sailing as dangerous and reluctant in Greek literature, see West 1978 ad Hes. *Op*. 236–237, 618; *Od*. 15.343–345 and *HH* 3.167–168 can be added to the passages cited there. On the elaboration of this theme in Roman literature, see Smith 1913 ad Tib. 1.3.37–40.

[45] Rarely, there is also the phenomenon of divine exile, as of Ophion and Eurynome (1.506) or Apollo (4.615–616), or travel undertaken out of shame, as of Philyra (2.1238–1240).

[46] Cf., e.g., the boxing match between Amycus and Polydeuces and the series of ethnographic digressions on the Amazons, Chalybes, Tibarenians, and Mossynoecians (2.987–1029) before the Island of Ares episode.

[47] Regular human travel takes only three forms in the *Argonautica*: travel on foot (1.8–11, 4.43–53, 66–74), in wagons (3.869–889, 1152–1155), and in ships. This last category is by far the commonest in the poem and can be considered largely representative of all human travel.

In lines 235–236, the narrator sketches the specific preparations of the Argo by appealing to a universal truth about all ships, switching to generalizing plural nouns (νῆες, ἄνδρας) and an omnitemporal present tense verb (ἐντύνονται) in a present general temporal construction (ἐντύνονται . . . εὖτ᾽ ἂν ἄγῃ). The universal truth in question, that need is what compels voyages on the sea, recurs throughout the poem at varying degrees of explicit articulation. For example, this assumption underlies one of Jason's questions to the shipwrecked Phrixides, which is posed in terms reminiscent of the passage just cited: "But come, tell me truthfully in what country you live, <u>what sort of necessity compels you to travel on the sea</u>, and what famous names and lineage are your own?" (ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε μοι κατάλεξον ἐτήτυμον, ὁππόθι γαίης | ναίετε, καὶ <u>χρέος, οἷον ὑπεὶρ ἅλα νεῖσθαι ἀνώγει</u>, | αὐτῶν θ᾽ ὑμείων ὄνομα κλυτὸν ἠδὲ γενέθλην, 2.1137–1139; cf. 2.1127; 3.388–389, 429–431; 4.555–556). Only necessity could explain the Phrixides' near-fatal decision to entrust their lives to the wind and the waves.

What circumstances does χρέος entail? The *Argonautica* offers many hints in its scattered references to different sorts of human travelers. At 1.602–603, the narrator uses the rate at which a "well-equipped merchant ship" (ἐύστολος ὁλκάς) can travel to indicate the distance from Athos to Lemnos, in the process calling to mind men who earn their livelihood from sailing. But piracy and imperialism provide a more common motivation in the poem, which depicts several peoples engaged in such practices against one another;[48] and such fighting not only requires soldiers and raiders to travel to their enemies' or victims' territory, but slaves taken prisoner in the process must relocate under harsh compulsion indeed (4.35–39; cf. 1.1251–

[48] These include the men of Lemnos (1.613–614, 800–801), the Thracians (1.632, 636–637), the Taphians (1.747–750), the Macrians (1.1023–1024), the Mariandynians (2.138–140), the Amazons (2.387), the Bebrycians (2.792–795), the Colchians and Sauromatae (3.352–353), the Egyptians (4.272–275), the Mentores (4.550–551), and the Celts and the Ligyans (4.646–647).

1252, 1259). There are several instances of colonization in the narrative, past, present, and future.[49] When a motive is ascribed to them, these efforts are either the result of the direction of a god (2.519–521), displacement by other peoples (4.1212–1213, 1760), or political discontent (4.546–550, 511–521, 1210–1215). Individuals may also have to travel in order to marry (1.997, 3.621–622),[50] to care for aged relatives (1.906–907), to consult an oracle (1.209, 413; 4.530–531), on a quest to reclaim their inheritance (2.1153, 3.266)[51] or find a lost relative (3.1179), or in exile for kin-murder (1.91–94, 865–866).[52]

Heroes

Between the extremes of divine ease and human suffering, Apollonius depicts a broad, intermediate category of travelers who are in some ways extraordinary, and yet do not to rise to the level of divine beings. For convenience, I will label this mode of travel "heroic." I have saved it for last in my analysis because this category is more loosely defined than the two categories that demarcate its upper and lower limits. A hero like Perseus, for instance, can appear virtually indistinguishable from a god in his cameo in the *Argonautica*, where he is briefly pictured flying over Libya (4.1513–1518). Likewise, some figures that I have included in

[49] In addition to the passages about to be mentioned, see 1.958–960; 2.746–749, 846–850; 4.1757–1764. An exceptional (and fictitious) case would be the Lemnian men, whom Hypsipyle claims the Lemnian women forced to emigrate to Thrace when they refused to give up their spear-brides (1.795–796, 820–826). Cf. the repeated suggestion that Jason and/or the other Argonauts settle in Lemnos for its rich farmland (1.694–696, 827–831, 867–868, 893–894).

[50] At 1.866–867, in a list of rhetorical questions about the Argonauts' reason for coming to Lemnos, Heracles asks, "Did we come here from there [our homeland] in need of wives because we scorn our native women?" (γάμων ἐπιδευέες ἐνθάδ' ἔβημεν | κεῖθεν, ὀνοσσάμενοι πολιήτιδας;). The question is wonderfully ironic, because Heracles has unwittingly come close to the cause of the Lemnian men's slaughter, the actual reason that the gods seem to have arranged for the Argonauts to stop here (cf. 1.850–852).

[51] More specifically, the Phrixides are compelled to attempt the journey to Orchomenus for the sake of their inheritance by their father's dying command (2.1152, 3.263).

[52] Strictly speaking, some of these passages actually refer to "heroic" figures, but these motives are not marked as specifically heroic.

this category are arguably no more capable as travelers than ordinary mortals. In particular, there is a large group of migrating or wandering heroes, heroines, and founding figures mentioned in the poem who seem to travel in mundane fashion;[53] only their accomplishments and mythical status lead me to classify them here and not earlier with ordinary humanity. And some cases are simply miscellaneous, such as the two occasions on which humans are put out to sea enclosed in chests and live to tell the tale (Thoas: 1.622–625; Danaë: 4.1091–1092). In neither instance is the survival explicitly supernatural, but this means of travel is certainly out-of-the-ordinary nevertheless.

In the other cases, however, heroes represent a real midpoint between gods and mortals, enjoying more freedom of mobility than other humans but still running up against limitations that separate their kind from the gods. Phaethon is a fine illustration: the Eridanus still smolders from the Heliad's charred remains, the result of Zeus' thunderbolt checking his ill-starred attempt to drive his father's chariot (4.597–600). Aeetes' own trip in Helius' chariot illustrates another difference between the gods and their mortal offspring: Aeetes rode alongside his father once, whereas Helius drives his chariot himself along that same route every day. Likewise, Theseus and Pirithous were able to travel vertically down the cosmic axis to the underworld, a journey synonymous with exceptional difficulty and elsewhere in the poem a power held mainly

[53] These include Orpheus (1.28–31), the Aeacidae (1.90–94), Aristaeus (2.520), Minyas (3.1093–1095), Hyllus (4.546–550), Sesostris (4.272–281), Macris (4.1136–1140), and Cadmus twice over, once when he wanders to Thebes (3.1179–1182), once, to Illyria (4.517). It is unclear what, if anything, differentiates these travels from the wanderings of Dionysus (2.905–910). In addition to the figures just adduced, in a reversal of the usual trope of a raped heroine's divine abduction, the Oceanid Philyra (2.1238–1240) and Minos' daughter Acacallis (4.1491–1493) both wander to a new location *after* rape by a god because of shame and paternal persecution, respectively.

By a similar token, some heroes do not migrate, but their adventures still sometimes involve mundane travel, such as Theseus' apparently ordinary sailing to Crete and Dia (3.1000–1001; 4.433–434). The entire Catalogue is structured around heroes coming to Iolcus from their various homes, apparently engaging in ordinary travel.

by the gods;[54] but once they arrived in Hades, they found themselves unable to leave, which explains their absence from the ranks of the Argonauts (1.101–104).

Among the Argonauts, Euphemus, who is so swift that he can run on water (1.180–184), and the winged Boreads, who can fly swiftly through the air (1.219–223), stand out as exceptionally mobile—how quickly could any of these three have reached Colchis traveling separately from their crewmates?[55] And yet these same figures cannot keep up with Heracles in Libya (4.1459–1484), and the Boreads are normally slower than the Harpies, only able to gain on them because of empowerment by Zeus (2.274–276).

Phrixus, too, in his prototypical voyage from Hellas to Aea, belongs firmly to the middle ground of heroic travel.[56] Although the gods as much as escort him on his way via his

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[54] For a journey to Hades as a rhetorical *topos*, see 2.609–610, 2.642–643; 3.61–63; 4.1699, with Clare 2002: 85–87. Besides Hecate's ascent to receive Jason's sacrifice (3.1213), Persephone is able to send Sthenelus' soul up from Hades to view the Greeks passing his tomb before returning to the gloom (2.915–921); similarly, Aethalides' posthumous ability to pass back and forth between the underworld and the land of the living (1.644–648) represents the inheritance of his father Hermes, the psychopomp (Race forthcoming ad loc.). Cf. also the Keres, whom the narrator envisions flying through the air hunting for mortals, but whose appellation "the swift hounds of Hades" (Ἀίδαο θοὰς κύνας, 4.1666) suggests a chthonic provenance.

Another rare example of mortal "travel" beneath the earth while living is the fate of Caeneus (1.63), mentioned only a few entries before the Athenians' in the Catalogue.

[55] The Boreads in particular show off their mobility in the Harpies episode, flying from Thynia to the Strophades and back in no more than twenty-four hours (they begin to pursue the Harpies at an unspecified time during the day, and the Argonauts wait "all night" for their return [παννύχιοι, 2.308]). No wonder that the first thing Zetes tells the Argonauts with panted breath is "how far away" (ὅσσον ἄπωθεν, 2.431) they had driven the Harpies before Iris intervened—this great distance is a point of pride.

[56] How exactly did the ram convey Phrixus to Colchis? A flying ram is most familiar from modern handbooks on classical mythology, but as Robertson 1940 demonstrates, the ram was frequently envisioned swimming through the sea, as well. Apollonius, however, is silent on this controversy, never clearly representing the ram's movement either way. Robertson 1940: 7 considers it "almost certain" that Apollonius has swimming in mind, especially because the narrator once indicates a spot on the Colchian shore "where the ram first bent its knees in exhaustion from carrying the Minyan son of Athamas on its back" (ὅθι πρῶτον κεκμηότα γούνατ' ἔκαμψεν, | νώτοισιν φορέων Μινυήιον υἷ' Ἀθάμαντος, 4.116–117). Robertson (ibid.) comments that the place is near where the Argo is anchored, and the ram's tired legs suit swimming better than flying. But a ram flying over the sea is as likely to land on the shore as a ship is, and Iris also "rested her swift knees" (θοὰ γούνατα παῦεν ὁδοῖο, 4.779) after explicitly flying to Aeolus. Some (admittedly weak and circumstantial) arguments can be made for flight, as well: see Klein 1980–1981: 226, comparing Eros' golden ball flying through the air to the ram's golden fleece, and also the word πεπτάμενον applied to the fleece hanging in the oak tree (2.1270)—a subtle nod to the flying ram tradition? It is

miraculous ram,[57] the journey is not without danger, particularly for Helle (1.256–257, 927, 935). Neither is it conducted with godlike instantaneity, but, since Phrixus received hospitality at least once along the way (2.652–654), it likely involved several stops. It may be clear already from the foregoing survey that the journey of the Argo is "heroic" in a similar manner, elevated above the human norm, with some measure of the divine assistance that Phrixus and others received, but not without considerable risks and losses during the journey.

But before analysis of the Argo and her crew can begin, one last hero—himself briefly a part of that crew—deserves special attention. Among other traits, Apollonius' Heracles is defined by a sort of "hyper-mobility" that informs almost all of his appearances in the poem. He is relatively fast and seemingly always on the move, and yet what makes Heracles all the more incredible is that besides his superhuman stamina and strength, the son of Zeus has no special abilities like certain other heroes to account for the amazing distances that he traverses. Rather, when not on the Argo, Heracles exclusively travels on foot.[58] Already in the Catalogue, Heracles' special status in the domain of heroic travel comes into focus. Whereas every other Argonaut comes to Iolcus from his respective home, Heracles is the only hero represented as already engaged in another quest (1.124–127):

> ἐπεὶ ἄιε βάξιν ἀγειρομένων ἡρώων,
> νεῖον ἀπ᾽ Ἀρκαδίης Λυρκήιον Ἄργος ἀμείψας,
> τὴν ὁδόν, ᾗ ζωὸν φέρε κάπριον, ὅς ῥ᾽ ἐνὶ βήσσῃς
> φέρβετο Λαμπείης Ἐρυμάνθιον ἂμ μέγα τῖφος. . .

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also anyone's guess how the ram made it through the Symplegades if it swam—perhaps just such a consideration lay behind the invention of the flying variant. In any event, it is best to acknowledge that the *Argonautica* is not clear on this point.

[57] Like the construction of the Argo, the story of Phrixus' flight to Colchis is only told in scattered allusions, but for divine involvement in Phrixus' travels, see 2.1144–1145; 3.587–588; 4.120–121.

[58] Granted, Heracles presumably sailed to and from the island of Phaeacia (4.538–541).

> when he heard the report that the heroes were gathering, he had
> just crossed from Arcadia to Lyrceian Argos, on the road by which
> he was carrying the live boar that fed in the glens of Lampeia
> throughout the vast Erymanthian marsh.[59]

This layering of heroic quests already creates the impression that Heracles is exceptionally mobile among the Argonauts.[60] Indeed, when the heroes later compete to see who can row the longest on a calm sea, Heracles outlasts all his fellows until he alone is propelling the entire ship forward, even against newly adverse winds (1.1153–1163). It is only natural that an adventurer of this caliber would chafe at the Argonauts' needless delay on Lemnos, and indeed, it falls to Heracles to reprimand his fellows (1.861–874).[61] His reproaches make explicit the heroic ethos that may also underlie his unique Catalogue entry, namely, his preference for the pursuit of glory over the pleasures of domesticity: "We will surely not win fame cooped up like this for a long time with foreign women" (οὐ μὰν εὐκλειεῖς γε σὺν ὀθνείῃσι γυναιξὶν | ἐσσόμεθ' ὧδ' ἐπὶ δηρὸν ἐελμένοι, 1.869–870).[62] In fact, Heracles will never settle down—or at any rate, not until he has completed his Labors and earned the right "to dwell in the home of the immortals" (ναίειν δ' ἀθανάτοισι συνέστιον, 1.1319), as the oracle of Glaucus predicts.

After Heracles' separation from the Argonauts in Mysia, the true extent of his mobility is revealed through a series of allusions to his previous expeditions to the East and his ongoing

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[59] Allusions to other Labors indicate that Heracles has traveled around Greece extensively: he has driven the Stymphalian birds from Arcadia (2.1052), slain the hydra at Lerna (cf. ὕδρης Λερναίης, 4.1404), and, although Nemea is never named, the hero's trademark lion skin recalls his exploit there. Outside of his Labors, the narrator also mentions that Heracles has been to war with the Dryopians (1.1212–1219).

[60] Cf. Levin 1971: 22, Feeney 1987: 53–54.

[61] In fact, Heracles and "a few chosen comrades" (παῦροί . . . διακρινθέντες ἑταῖροι, 1.856) all elect to remain by the ship rather than couple up with Lemnian women. Nevertheless, the adjective διακρινθέντες serves to indicate that Heracles *leads* this abstinent faction, such that their isolation from the rest of the Argonauts represents his personal initiative first and foremost.

[62] The sentiment, if not the verbiage, is reminiscent of Pind. *Ol.* 1.82–83, cited by Race (forthcoming) ad 2.885–893.

travels in the West. In the palace of Lycus the Argonauts learn that Heracles had traveled through Acherusia many years prior, "when he came here on foot across the mainland of Asia on his quest for the belt of war-loving Hippolyte" (ὅτε δεῦρο δι᾽ Ἀσίδος ἠπείροιο | πεζὸς ἔβη ζωστῆρα φιλοπτολέμοιο κομίζων | Ἱππολύτης, 2.777–779; cf. 2.966–969).[63] In fact, the Argonauts encounter traces of this earlier adventure in the form of the shade of Sthenelus, who perished from an arrow wound on the return journey of this campaign (2.911–914), and the sons of Deimachus, who had been separated from Heracles during the same undertaking (2.955–957). In both cases, the fates of these men illustrate by contrast the hardihood of the traveling Heracles, who so far exceeds other mortals.[64] In Book 4, the Argonauts find themselves retracing Heracles' steps when they come to Phaeacia (4.538–541) and even to the far-flung garden of the Hesperides in Libya, to which Heracles had again come on foot (χθόνα πεζὸς ὁδεύων, 4.1441)—but more on this remarkable episode below. Even though in his final appearance in the poem Heracles is hazily glimpsed "all alone, far away in that endless land" (μοῦνον ἀπειρεσίης τηλοῦ χθονός, 4.1478), an earlier allusion to the hero's murder of the Boreads on Tenos after Pelias' death (1.1302–1305) guarantees that like the Argonauts, the solitary Heracles will somehow make it back to Hellas in relatively short order. The *Argonautica* also contains several allusions that may activate a reader's knowledge of future travels of Heracles outside the scope of the epic, which are similarly mind-boggling in their range. Before the time of the primary

[63] N.b. the emphatic enjambment of πεζός. To put this feat into context, in the *Iliad* no less a man than Ajax considers it impossible to travel to Greece from Troy on foot (15.504–505)—and this from the son of Telamon, who traditionally accompanied Heracles on his Amazonian labor!

It is also interesting to note that Lycus' speech reveals that Heracles had already been to Mysia before coming there with the Argonauts (2.786).

[64] Cf. Feeney 1987: 60–61, Foster 2007: 254–255. It is significant that the sons of Deimachus join the Argonautic crew and that the Sthenelus episode emphasizes his identification with the Argonauts ("men of his own kind" [ὁμήθεας ἄνδρας], 2.917). These details hint that the Argonauts may be closer in capability to Heracles' lost soldiers than to Heracles himself.

narrative, tradition has him playing an integral role in the Gigantomachy at Phlegra in Thrace, to which the narrator alludes in a few places (2.38–40; 3.234, 1227).[65] After the events of the *Argonautica*, tradition dictates that he will indeed one day reach Colchis when he frees Prometheus from his bonds (cf. 2.1251–1259),[66] and he will also liberate Theseus from captivity in Hades during his catabasis, another especially difficult journey (cf. 1.101–104, n. 54 above). No other figure in the *Argonautica* is so consistently portrayed traveling so widely as Heracles, the wandering hero par excellence.

III. The Argo

Analysis of the Argo itself can begin with its origins. The narrator ostensibly declines to treat the story of the ship's construction, only commenting that "the songs of former bards still tell how Argus built it according to Athena's instructions" (οἱ πρόσθεν ἔτι κλείουσιν ἀοιδοὶ | Ἄργον Ἀθηναίης καμέειν ὑποθημοσύνῃσιν, 1.18–19).[67] Nevertheless, the poet's repeated allusions to the construction amount to more or less complete coverage of this episode once the scattered references are collected. Murray 2005: 101 provides just such a reconstruction:

> In this account, the goddess cut the timbers from the peak of Pelion with a bronze axe (2.1187–8); she installed a holy oak of Dodona in the ship's cut-water (1.526–7 ≅ 4.582–3); she made the keel props (1.723–4); and she breathed divine strength into it (2.612–3). All of this defines what is meant by "Athena built (κάμε) the Argo." Her intellectual contribution (ὑποθημοσύνῃσι) involved skillfully designing the Argo (τεχνήσατο, 2.1187) and teaching Jason how to measure the thwarts (1.724). What Argus did as her

[65] In addition, Clauss 1991: 486–487 shows that the name of the Sarpedonian peak in Thrace where the Boreads were born may allude to an exploit of Heracles that can be credibly fitted into Apollonius' chronology for the hero's career. This allusion would add travel through Thrace to the Apollonian Heracles' résumé.

[66] Galinsky 1972: 112. Michael Keith Penich reminds me that at the end of Theocritus *Idyll* 13, the narrator certifies that Heracles will arrive at Colchis despite being abandoned at Mysia—and traveling on foot, no less.

[67] On Apollonius' subtle corrections of his predecessors in his treatment of the Argo's construction, see Murray 2005.

> assistant is also clear: he "assembled" (τεῦξεν) the Argo by fitting the timbers together with bolts (γόμφοισιν συνάρασσε, 2.613–4).

As Murray's analysis brings out throughout her paper, the most important fact of Apollonius' *naupactia* account is that, in design and manufacture, the Argo is primarily "the work of Itonian Athena" (ἔργον Ἀθηναίης Ἰτωνίδος, 1.551), although Argus and Jason each rendered some assistance.[68] The narrator and characters of the poem make repeated reference to the ship's divine origin (1.19, 111–114, 526–527, 551, 723–724; 2.612–614, 1187–1189; 3.340–346; 4.582–583),[69] and in the Catalogue, the narrator spells out the implications of this fact (1.111–114):

> αὐτὴ γὰρ καὶ νῆα θοὴν κάμε, σὺν δέ οἱ Ἄργος
> τεῦξεν Ἀρεστορίδης κείνης ὑποθημοσύνῃσιν·
> τῷ καὶ πασάων προφερεστάτη ἔπλετο νηῶν,
> ὅσσαι ὑπ' εἰρεσίῃσιν ἐπειρήσαντο θαλάσσης.
>
> For she [Athena] herself also fashioned the swift ship, and with her had Argus, son of Arestor, built it according to her instructions. That is why it was the most outstanding of all the ships that have challenged the sea with their oars.

This strong claim made so early in the poem is liable to raise certain expectations about the ease of the Argonauts' journey.[70] Indeed, this is the reassuring conclusion that Jason draws when advertising the Argo to the shipwrecked Phrixides (2.1184–1189):

> πάρεστι δὲ τῆσδ' ἐπὶ νηὸς
> ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα νέεσθαι, ὅπῃ φίλον, εἴτε μετ' Αἶαν,
> εἴτε μετ' ἀφνειὴν θείου πόλιν Ὀρχομενοῖο.
> τὴν γὰρ Ἀθηναίη τεχνήσατο, καὶ τάμε χαλκῷ

[68] Argus' contribution is mentioned at 1.19, 111–112, 226; 2.613–614, 1188–1189; Jason's (somewhat surprisingly), at 1.724.

[69] In addition, it is presumably Athena's crafting of the Argo, or perhaps the beam of Dodonian oak that she fashioned for its mid-keel, that makes the Argo a "sacred ship" (νηῦς ἱερή, 4.1268).

[70] This is also the cumulative effect of the Catalogue itself, which presents such an impressive array of famous heroes and valuable skillsets. What obstacle could stand in their way? Cf. 1.238–245, 302, 548–549.

> δούρατα Πηλιάδος κορυφῆς πάρα, σὺν δέ οἱ Ἄργος
> τεῦξεν. . .
>
> On this ship of ours one can travel here or there, wherever he pleases, whether to Aea or to the wealthy city of divine Orchomenus. For Athena designed it and with a bronze ax cut its timbers from the peak of Pelion, and with her help Argus constructed it.

Argus the son of Phrixus continues in this vein in his speech to Aeetes, emphasizing the sturdiness and versatility of Athena's handiwork (3.340, 343–346):

> νῆα δ' Ἀθηναίη Παλλὰς κάμεν. . .
> . . . ἡ δ' ἐνὶ γόμφοις
> ἴσχεται, ἣν καὶ πᾶσαι ἐπιβρίσωσιν ἄελλαι·
> ἶσον δ' ἐξ ἀνέμοιο θέει καὶ ὅτ' ἀνέρες αὐτοὶ
> νωλεμέως χείρεσσιν ἐπισπέρχωσιν ἐρετμοῖς.
>
> But Pallas Athena built their ship. . . [which] holds firm in its wooden pegs, even when all the storm-winds bear down on it, and it runs equally well by wind as when the men themselves propel it unceasingly by rowing with their hands.

It may not rise quite to the level of Phrixus' miraculous conveyance to Colchis, but to judge from these passages, a voyage on the Argo must be smooth sailing indeed. Likely this is the force of Jason's exhortation to his mother to "take courage from the commitments of Athena" (θάρσει δὲ συνημοσύνῃσιν Ἀθήνης, 1.300),[71] as well as from Apollo's oracles and the help of the heroic crew: Jason's safe return is practically guaranteed.

What is more, even beyond its construction, the Argo is also superlative in its crew. The narrator makes this point well by pairing the ship and sailors as the object of the gods' gaze in the magnificent sequence of the Argo's launch: "on that day all the gods gazed down from the sky upon the ship and the race of demigods, <u>the best of men who then were sailing over the sea</u>"

[71] As per LSJ s.v. A.II, συνημοσύνη here refers to "*ties of friendship* or *relationship*," particularly as instantiated in Athena's gifts to Jason, the ship and the cloak. These are both referred to as works of the specifically "Itonian" goddess (ship: ἔργον Ἀθηναίης Ἰτωνίδος, 1.551; cloak: θεᾶς Ἰτωνίδος ἔργον, 1.721; δῶρα θεᾶς Ἰτωνίδος . . . Ἀθήνης, 1.768), stressing Athena's connection to Jason in this epichoric aspect. The epithet occurs nowhere else in the poem.

(πάντες δ᾽ οὐρανόθεν λεῦσσον θεοὶ ἤματι κείνῳ | νῆα καὶ ἡμιθέων ἀνδρῶν γένος, οἳ τότ᾽ ἄριστοι | πόντον ἐπιπλώεσκον, 1.547–549). These heroes' strength is such that when they exert themselves in rowing, not even Poseidon in his chariot could overtake them (1.1157–1158). Moreover, the Argo is blessed with superior pilots. Athena personally (αὐτή . . . Ἀθηναίη, 1.109–110) selected Tiphys to be the first helmsman of her ship, and he proves so invaluable in this capacity that when he dies, the Argonauts fear that they no longer have any hope of return (2.862–863, 889–893).[72] Fortunately, however, Jason's crew features considerable built-in redundancy,[73] and Hera, the other goddess patronizing the heroes, prompts Ancaeus, another expert sailor, to take Tiphys' place (2.865, 895). Similarly, two seers feature among the Argonauts, at least one of whom, Mopsus, is described as "expert at interpreting birds that appeared before him, and expert at giving good advice to fellow travelers" (ἐσθλὸς μὲν ἐπιπροφανέντας ἐνισπεῖν | οἰωνούς, ἐσθλὸς δὲ σὺν εὖ φράσσασθαι ἰοῦσιν, 3.917–918), talents that he exercises at 1.922–923, 1086–1097, 3.543–548.[74]

There is one area, however, in which Apollonius seems to have resisted the impulse to confer every advantage upon the Argo. Gaunt 1972 has argued convincingly that Apollonius dispenses with or downplays certain magical properties that may have been available to him in the Argonautic tradition. For instance, nowhere in the *Argonautica* is the vessel invulnerable to destruction by fire or rot by water, as in a tradition preserved by Pliny (*NH* 13.119). More importantly, as Gaunt stresses, Apollonius makes relatively little use of the Argo's talking beam from Dodona, whose "human voice" (ἀνδρομέῃ ἐνοπῇ, 4.581) represents the ship's most

[72] On Tiphys' characterization as an expert seaman, see Rostropowicz 1990: 110–112.

[73] See Foster 2007: 249.

[74] Race 2008: 289 n. 75. This is not to mention the prophetic beam from Dodona, to be discussed momentarily.

supernatural quality.[75] This ability only appears in two minor episodes: the Argo roars inarticulately before the launch (ἴαχεν, 1.525), and the ship also informs the Argonauts that they must seek purification from Circe and that the Dioscuri should pray for their journey there (4.580–591).[76] For an oracular beam that could communicate the will of Zeus, this seems like an underutilization. Presumably the advantage in having such a beam, and thus the reason that Athena included it in her design, lies in its ability to advise the Argonauts through their perils and direct them on their journey in unfamiliar territory, a sort of portable oracle.[77] Since elsewhere in the epic tradition Zeus communicates his will easily enough through messengers like Iris and Hermes (e.g., 3.587–588), Athena must have expected that the Argonauts would get good use out of the beam to install it as a permanent feature of the ship in this way. And yet rather than consult the ship itself, the Argonauts regularly depend on various guides and advisers, mortal and divine.[78]

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[75] Cf. just how marvelous the women of Iolcus consider the human speech of Phrixus' ram: "But that evil monster even emitted a human voice" (ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐδὴν | ἀνδρομένην προέηκε κακὸν τέρας, 1.257–258; cf. 1.763–767). N.b. the use of ἀνδρομέη for the voice of both the ram here and the Argo at 4.581 (Mooney 1912 ad 1.258).

[76] Gaunt somewhat understates the importance of this second episode for the narrative (1972: 118), since this warning is, after all, what sets the Argonauts on the "Odyssean" leg of their journey home. He is right, however, to note the distancing effect of the indirect speech in which the Argo's message is cast (ibid.).

[77] For example, Gaunt suggests that the Argo could have given Phineus' prophecy or Amphidamas' advice on dealing with the birds of Ares (1972: 120 n. 3, 125), and that perhaps in earlier poets, it did serve such functions.

[78] The Argonauts receive guidance from Phineus at length (2.310–407), Argus on three separate occasions (2.1260; 4.122, 282–293), an omen from Hera (4.294–297), the Hylleans (4.527), the prophetic beam of the Argo (4.590–591), Hera's cry (4.643–644), Thetis (4.856–861), Poseidon's horse (4.1375–1379), and Triton (4.1573–1583). Cf. 1.1112–1116, where the Argonauts preview the terrain ahead from atop Mt. Dindymum. The ship actually receives manual guidance by the Nereids (4.930–963, with 4.831–832) and Triton (4.1604–1618).

The crew's regular need of navigational guidance is actually its most persistent shortcoming[79]—and not only in wastes like the Syrtis or in the darkness on the Cretan Sea, where navigation is impossible.[80] Such is the upshot of the concern that Jason expresses to Phineus, for instance, over how he will manage his return from Colchis: "How can I do it, how shall I make such a long journey over the sea a second time, inexperienced as I am, with inexperienced comrades?" (πῶς ἕρδω, πῶς αὖτε τόσην ἁλὸς εἶμι κέλευθον, | νῆις ἐὼν ἑτάροις ἅμα νήισιν; 2.416–417). Since the narrator has certified the credentials of several of the crew in sailing (1.105–110, 1.185–189; cf. 2.896), and the narrative has shown them off at least once so far in action (2.169–176; cf. 1.560–562), Jason cannot mean technical inexperience; he must be referring to his crew's ignorance of the exotic geography beyond the Bosporus (cf. 1.982–984).[81] The Argonauts' weakness in this respect is well-illustrated by an episode in Book 4, in which Apsyrtus manages to cut off the fleeing Argonauts because of his superior knowledge of the region's geography (4.305–316), despite the fact that his Colchian ship must be technically inferior to the Argo (cf. 3.340–341).[82] The Argo's divine beam might have been quite useful in such situations; for that matter, so might the ship's seers, whose roles are similarly circumscribed, especially in comparison with Phineus and his detailed travelogue (cf. Green

[79] See 1.360–361, 412–416, 983–986; 2.416–418, 1194; 4.253–256, 1538–1547, 1564–1570.

[80] On the impossibility of navigation in these environments, see Clare 2002: 151–154, 159–160. The Argonauts would have encountered the same problem at the Planctae, too, had Hera not arranged for Hephaestus to stop his smith work, the smoke from which had been blocking out the sun (4.776–777, 925–928). That these mythical scenarios correspond to difficulties that ordinary sailors encounter is demonstrated by the similar darkness that blocks out the heavens when a storm shipwrecks the Phrixides (2.1102–1105; Clare 2002: 160).

[81] Indeed, Phineus' response takes this meaning for granted: "O my child, as soon as you escape through the deadly rocks, be confident, for a god will lead you by a different route from Aea, while on the way to Aea you will have guides enough" (ὦ τέκος, εὖτ᾽ ἂν πρῶτα φύγῃς ὀλοὰς διὰ πέτρας, | θάρσει· ἐπεὶ δαίμων ἕτερον πλόον ἡγεμονεύσει | ἐξ Αἴης, μετὰ δ᾽ Αἶαν ἅλις πομπῆες ἔσονται, 2.420–422).

[82] Hunter 2015 ad 4.306 explains the geography of this passage.

2007 ad 1.139–142). By limiting the Argonauts' use of such resources, Apollonius has elected to introduce some significant setbacks for his heroes.

The Argo possesses perhaps one other magical quality that should be considered. Tiphys once alludes to a supernatural dimension of the Argo's sturdiness, when he attributes their escape through the Symplegades to Athena, "who breathed divine strength into it [the Argo] when Argus fastened it with pegs" (ἥ οἱ ἐνέπνευσεν θεῖον μένος, εὖτέ μιν Ἄργος | γόμφοισιν συνάρασσε, 2.613–614). Although the narrator never endorses this idea and it does not recur in any other episode, Murray 2005: 99 finds no reason to doubt the assertion. And yet there may be reason for skepticism, especially because in this passage Tiphys is the victim of considerable dramatic irony. In particular, he is right to thank Athena for their salvation, but not because she built the Argo; in fact, Phineus had earlier said that the Argonauts "could not escape a terrible death from the rocks, not even if the Argo were made of iron" (οὐ γάρ κε κακὸν μόρον ἐξαλέαισθε | πετράων, οὐδ' εἴ κε σιδηρείη πέλοι Ἀργώ, 2.339–340). The crew's survival had nothing to do with the ship's construction and everything to do with the goddess's timely physical intervention, literally pushing the ship through the rocks just in the nick of time (2.598–602). Tiphys' ignorance on this score tends to undercut his appraisal of the Argo's "divine strength" as well.

In any case, it is noteworthy that in this emblematic episode, highlighted in the proem and in the *Odyssey* as perhaps *the* Argonautic adventure, the Argonauts are powerless and would have perished if left to their own devices, even in the best of ships and with an ideal crew exerting themselves to the utmost. Although the Argonauts are evidently unaware of Athena's aid in this episode, the heroes' dependence on the gods for salvation is woefully obvious in the poem's two other major "Argo-centered" episodes (Gaunt 1972: 120), in which Nereids pass the

Argo through the air over the Planctae and Triton manually escorts the Argo out of his lake in Libya.[83] As Gaunt 1972: 125–126 points out, a more magical Argo might have managed these challenges, but Apollonius evidently chooses to foreground his heroes' helplessness and dependency in these episodes instead.

The foregoing analysis has shown that despite its several advantages, Apollonius' Argo still has weaknesses, particularly in navigation and in its vulnerability to certain physical threats like the Clashing and Wandering Rocks. This latter deficiency illustrates the fact that even as exceptional a ship as the Argo, the greatest of all time, is still subject to the limitations facing all ships. For example, absent Tiphys' careful steering, enormous waves would have ended the expedition on two occasions (2.169–176, 577–587). Likewise, Aeetes plans to burn the Argo with fire (3.582), an action that would doom the Argonauts as surely as the Iliadic Achaeans when Hector menaced their ships.[84] And despite Argus' confidence to the contrary (3.343–344), an angry Zeus can threaten the Argo with grievous storms (θυέλλας | ἀργαλέας, 4.586–587; cf. 4.834–835). On Cyzicus, the earthborn men attempt to trap the Argo by damning the Chytus with boulders (1.989–991); later on, the ship actually is cut off from the sea when it washes into a harbor surrounded by the shoals of the Syrtis, "where there is no getting back out again for

[83] Feeney 1991: 86 questions whether the Argonauts "actually see the nymphs who twirl their ship through the rocks," since their reaction is never indicated. But see Hunter 2015 ad 4.862–864: Thetis' instructions to Peleus had implied that the Nereids would be visible to the Argonauts and that Thetis herself would be particularly recognizable to her erstwhile husband. In any event, the Argonauts can easily be forgiven for failing to notice Athena's one-time pushing them through the air (μετήορος, 2.600), especially in the turbulent confusion of the Symplegades, in which a tremendous wave had already taken them airborne just moments earlier (μεταχρονίη, 2.587). It is much harder to believe that the sailors could have missed the divine intervention in the Nereid episode, which lasts several hours (4.961–962 with Hunter 2015 ad loc.) and involves many passes of the ship through the air.

[84] Cf. 4.223 with Hunter 2015 ad loc., as well as 4.392. The flames from Hephaestus' forge would have also threatened the Argo in the Planctae episode had the god not stopped working beforehand (4.763–764, 818–819, 925–926); cf. also 4.787. Phaethon's smoldering remains in the Eridanus apparently do not threaten the Argo directly, but their nauseating fumes do represent a unique challenge to the Argonauts' constitutions (4.620–623).

ships" (ἵν᾽ οὐκέτι νόστος ὀπίσσω | νηυσὶ πέλει, 4.1235–1236)—not even the Argo.[85] Rather the Argonauts must carry their penteconter through these wastes for twelve days until they reach water deep enough to sail (4.1383–1392), an episode in which the Argo's size actually becomes a liability. But washing into the Syrtis is actually a piece of comparatively good luck for the Argonauts: Ancaeus mentions that had the Argo sailed into the shallows, the ship would have shattered (4.1267; cf. 2.348).[86]

But the most prominent limitation of the Argo in the poem is that, as Jason indicates before the launch (1.335; cf. 1.423–424, 520–522), the ship is very much subject to the wind. The heroes can row for short periods on windless waters if need be, but generally a lack of winds or the presence of adverse ones requires the Argonauts to put in as soon as possible if they are on the sea or to delay their departure if they are on land. In fact, most of the land episodes in the poem are the result of undesirable weather conditions forcing a landing at each locale. Thus the Argonauts stop at the tomb of Dolops (1.585–586), Lemnos (1.607), Bebrycia (1.1359–1360), Thynias (2.660–673), the Acherusian headland (2.727–728, 750–751), Sinope (2.944–946), the island of Ares (2.1032), and Carpathus (4.1624–1634).[87] Moreover, adverse winds also detain the Argonauts long enough for certain plot points to develop, as on Lemnos (1.652), Cyzicus (1.1078–1080), and Thynia (2.528–529).[88] A few times winds actually redirect the Argonauts

[85] Cf. the stream of Ocean, "from which [the Argonauts] would not have returned alive" (τόθεν οὔ κεν ὑπότροποι ἐξεσάωθεν, 4.639) had Hera not redirected their course.

[86] In addition, the poet labels Scylla, Charybdis, and the Wandering Rocks as all "destructive to ships" (ῥαιστήρια νηῶν, 4.921).

[87] A lack of winds also makes a stop at Electra convenient, although Orpheus directs the Argonauts to stop there anyway to be initiated into the Samothracian mysteries (1.913–918).

[88] In the last passage cited, the Etesian Winds detain the Argonauts at Thynia for fully forty days, but to what narrative end? Andrew Ficklin has proposed the following solution to me, which I find quite ingenious. When the

entirely, once for their ultimate benefit (4.576–580),[89] but with far worse results when storm winds return the Argonauts to Cyzicus (1.1015–1018) or blow them off course to Libya (4.1232–1234). On the other hand, Hera twice arranges for favorable winds to blow to promote some end: once, to speed Medea toward Pelias' eventual doom (4.241–243), once to hasten the Argonauts on their way to Phaeacia (4.764–769, 819–822, 994) and, it seems, to help save them from the Sirens (4.910 with 768, 821). Zeus, too, once sends suddenly favorable winds to save the Argonauts from war with the Amazons, who would have shortly attacked had they been forced to linger (2.993). But good winds are not always what they seem, since it is the desire to take advantage of favorable winds that causes the Argonauts to leave in such haste as to forget Heracles (1.1275). Thus winds are a major narrative device that Apollonius uses to structure his episodic plot, but they are also a device founded on an inherent limitation in the Argonauts' freedom of movement.[90]

It is worth mentioning that while the Argo faces many challenges of mythical proportions, a good deal of the narrative is devoted to relatively uneventful sailing past various geographic markers. Clare 2002: 66–67 has observed that "many extended narrative passages in the poem outlining the route of *Argo* frequently record a voyage verging on the mundane in its

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Argonauts arrive at Lycus' palace, the king welcomes them with an exceptionally warm reception because he has already heard the report that Polydeuces has slain Amycus (2.752–758). But Lycus himself had been raiding Bebrycia on the same day that the Argonauts had been there (2.139), so how did he get back to Acherusia in time to receive the Argonauts? He and his army should not be able to outpace the Argo, the foremost of all ships. The forty-day delay afforded by the Etesian Winds holds the solution to this puzzle, providing enough time for the Mariandyians to return home on foot before the Argonauts could arrive there by sea.

In addition to the passages cited here, the Argonauts appear to be delayed at the tomb of Dolops for two days (1.588–589), but to no obvious narrative end that I can see.

[89] Hera redirects the Argo toward Aeaea so that Jason and Medea may be purified by Circe.

[90] For a discussion of winds in the poem, see Williams 1991: 211–220, particularly 215–220 on wind as a plot-structuring device.

regularity," "with all of the precision of a ship's log."[91] In these passages, the excellence of the Argo and its crew fades from view, and their voyage is similar to that of any other ship.

Finally, it should be noted that the same emotions that attach to human travel often characterize the feelings of the Argonauts and their loved ones about the expedition as well. In the Catalogue, aged Aleus keeps his son Lycurgus from enrolling among the Argonauts in order to care for him in his old age (1.165–167), but when Lycurgus sends his son Ancaeus to take his place, Aleus hides his arms in a granary in a futile attempt to prevent him, too, from joining the expedition (1.168–171). It appears that the old man is anxious that he might lose his grandson if he goes.[92] Similarly, Jason's confidence in the success of his mission (1.265–266, 300–302) is tempered by the tears of the women of Iolcus, Jason's household, and especially Alcimede (1.247–293), who evidently does not expect Jason to return and foresees herself "miserably wasting away out of longing for [him]" (σεῖο πόθῳ μινύθουσα δυσάμμορος, 1.286; cf. 3.994–996, 1122–1127). The reaction of the Lemnian women and Hypsipyle to the Argonauts' departure is similarly tearful (1.878–898). For his part, Jason betrays no emotion in Iolcus, but the narrator offers a glimpse of the hero's wistfulness at the Argo's launch with the poignant notice, "But Jason, in tears, turned his eyes away from the fatherland" (αὐτὰρ Ἰήσων | δακρυόεις γαίης ἀπὸ πατρίδος ὄμματ᾽ ἔνεικεν, 1.534–535).[93]

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[91] Cf. Hunter 1993: 94–95, Thalmann 2011: 11. These passages are commoner in Books 1–2, in which the Argo's voyage is "in essence as realistic as any περίπλους known to the Greeks" (Beye 1969: 52; cf. Rostropowicz 1990: 113).

[92] In addition, Pelias opposes the participation of Acastus and Argus on the mission (1.323), probably because he expects it to result in the Argonauts' destruction (1.16–17). Eurystheus, too, opposes Heracles answering Jason's call (1.130), but presumably for different reasons. Leda, conversely, favors her sons' pleas to join the glorious quest (1.146–150), Spartan matron that she is (Race [forthcoming] ad loc.); cf. the several fathers who send their sons on the expedition (1.69–70, 77–78, 97–100, 164; 2.802–805).

[93] The launching of the Argo also features the tender scene of Chariclo holding up the infant Achilles for the benefit of his departing father (1.557–588), though Peleus' reaction to this sight is left to the imagination.

Furthermore, the hardships of the Argo's journey also give rise to a couple of formulations of the characteristically human wish for instantaneous travel. Heracles uses the trope mockingly to exhort the crew to leave Lemnos, reminding them that there is no "fleece acting on its own for some god to seize and hand over to us in answer to our prayers" (οὐδέ τι κῶας | αὐτόματον δώσει τις ἑλὼν θεὸς εὐξαμένοισιν, 1.870–871). After his abandonment on Mysia, however, anonymous members of the expedition fantasize about exactly this sort of development vis-à-vis Heracles himself: "Imagine what [the Bebrycians] would have done in their cowardice if somehow a god had brought Heracles here too" (φράζεσθ' ὅττι κεν ᾗσιν ἀναλκείῃσιν ἔρεξαν, | εἴ πως Ἡρακλῆα θεὸς καὶ δεῦρο κόμισσεν, 2.145–146). This dreamy counterfactual underscores the helplessness that many of the Argonauts still feel in the absence of the mightiest among their number (cf. 2.152–153).

In sum, Apollonius' Argo represents an ambivalent form of travel. On the one hand, the narrator affirms the superlative qualities of both ship and crew, and at its best, the Argo is godlike in speed (1.1157–1158). Yet Apollonius has also refrained from making his Argo as miraculous as he could have by making relatively little use of the Argonauts' prophetic resources and leaving the ship vulnerable to several types of physical hazard. Thus the Argonauts frequently find themselves lost and in need of direction, and the Argo is under credible threat of destruction at several points in the epic—often saved only through divine intervention.[94] In less dramatic fashion, the ship's helplessness is illustrated by its subjection to the caprice of the winds and the gods who send them. In different ways and at different times, the Argo seems to partake both of divine and heroic ease of travel as well as the difficulty posed by travel for ordinary humanity. On the level of emotions surrounding the voyage, this double aspect is

[94] The most prominent examples are the Symplegades and Planctae episodes, but see also 4.636–648, 649–653, 1305–1309; cf. 2.993; 4.241–243, 509–510, 910 (with 768, 821), 1706–1710.

captured well by the juxtaposition of Jason's confidence and Alcimede's tears at Iolcus. In light of the Argo's ambiguous status as a mode of transportation, I now turn to passages that invite direct comparisons between the Argo and the different modes of travel in the poem by setting them side by side.

IV. Significant Juxtapositions

To begin, there are almost no juxtapositions with the gods that flatter the Argonauts. The one, partial exception, when the Argonauts row so powerfully that "not even Poseidon's storm-footed horses could have overtaken [the Argo] as it sped through the sea" (τὴν δ᾽ οὔ κε διὲξ ἁλὸς ἀίσσουσαν | οὐδὲ Ποσειδάωνος ἀελλόποδες κίχον ἵπποι, 1.1157–1158), is qualified by Heracles' disproportionate contribution to the effort, as the immediate sequel to these lines makes clear (1.1159–1163). Everywhere else, juxtaposition of the Argonauts and divine beings straightforwardly expresses the magnitude of difference between them in mobility, and not only in the several cases in which gods physically intervene to (re)direct the Argo's course (Glaucus, Athena, the Nereids, Triton).

The Argonauts' arrival in Colchis in particular is bookended by juxtapositions with two divine figures flying through the air. As they approach the Phasis, the Argo comes into palpable contact with the Caucasian eagle, who rattles its sails with the gusts from its flapping wings even as it flies overhead near the clouds (2.1251–1253). The Argo pales in comparison to the monster as it almost literally sails through the air on wing-feathers "like well-polished oars" (ἶσα δ᾽ ἐυξέστοις ὠκύπτερα πάλλεν ἐρετμοῖς, 2.1255).[95] Shortly thereafter, the Argonauts' arrival

[95] The comparison of a ship to a bird and vice versa is a commonplace in Greek literature (see West 1978 ad Hes. *Op*. 628), but here the narrator complicates the trope by specifically denying the eagle regular avian qualities (οὐ γὰρ ὅ γ᾽ αἰθερίοιο φυὴν ἔχεν οἰωνοῖο, 2.1254). The eagle is not so much a bird as a monstrous doppelganger to the Argo itself, a foreboding omen as the Argonauts reach Colchis.

finds another divine counterpoint in the flight of Eros from Olympus to the palace of Aeetes, described in a remarkable passage focalized from his "'god's-eye' view" (3.164–166):[96]

> νειόθι δ᾽ ἄλλοτε γαῖα φερέσβιος ἄστεά τ᾽ ἀνδρῶν
> φαίνετο καὶ ποταμῶν ἱεροὶ ῥόοι, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ αὖτε
> ἄκριες, ἀμφὶ δὲ πόντος ἀν᾽ αἰθέρα πολλὸν ἰόντι.
>
> And beneath him at times appeared life-sustaining earth and cities of men and divine streams of rivers, and then at other times mountain peaks, while all around was the sea as he traveled through the vast sky.

The narrative then immediately resumes with the Argonauts moored in the Phasis where the narrator left them at the end of Book 2 (3.167–168). Each of the features of the landscape over which Eros flies have figured into the narrative of the Argonauts' journey at one point or another thus far.[97] But whereas it has just taken Jason and his men two books to make their weary way through this array of obstacles between Greece and Colchis, Eros accomplishes what is essentially the same journey in a mere three lines.[98] Yet as the preceding scenes on Olympus make abundantly clear (3.91–155), Eros is, albeit divine, only a child![99]

[96] Thalmann 2011: 7. See also his comparison of Eros' perspective on the landscape beneath him with the Argonauts' more limited, but nevertheless unusually expansive panoramic view from atop Mt. Dindymum (ibid. 4–5).

[97] In discussing this passage's literary antecedents, Lennox 1980: 65–66 notes that each of these types of terrain also features in *HH* 2.380–383, which lists the obstacles that cannot impede the immortal chariot team of Hades as it flies through the air (cf. *HH* 5.122–125)—with the exception, that is, of the "cities of men," a phrase that rather recalls the wanderings of Odysseus and, thereby, the Argonauts.

[98] Eros departs from Olympus, which is among the earliest landmarks that the Argonauts pass after their launch (1.598). On Eros' mission to Colchis in order to acquire a golden trinket as a parody of Jason's quest for the golden fleece, see Klein 1980–1981. The travel juxtaposition in this passage underscores the larger juxtaposition in the narrative between the triviality of Eros' mission and the deadly serious consequences it will have in the human world (cf. Zanker 1987: 207, Feeney 1991: 82).

[99] For the outsized power of gods even in childhood, cf. the juvenile Apollo's conquests of Tityus "as a mighty youth, not yet fully grown" (βούπαις, οὔ πω πολλός, 1.760) and of the Pythian serpent "when he was still a naked boy" (κοῦρος ἐὼν ἔτι γυμνός, 2.707).

Probably the most effective juxtaposition of a god to the Argonauts occurs on Thynias in Apollo's epiphany at dawn. In setting the scene, the narrator is at pains to stress the Argonauts' exhaustion after a full day spent "exerting their strength in tireless rowing" (ἀκαμάτῃσιν ἐπερρώοντ' ἐλάτῃσιν, 2.661), elaborating upon their exertion with the simile of oxen plowing a waterlogged field day all day long (2.662–668).[100] In the early morning twilight, however, they find relief in the harbor of a desert island, where, "after their exhausting toil, [they] stepped ashore" (καμάτῳ πολυπήμονι βαῖνον ἔραζε, 2.673).[101] Immediately in the very next line, however, Apollo suddenly appears striding past them, completely unexpected. Understandably given their weariness and surprise, the Argonauts are seized with "helpless wonder" at the sight of the god (ἕλε θάμβος ἰδόντας ἀμήχανον, 2.681), who is so majestic and august that they even bow their heads to avoid gazing into his eyes (2.681–683). And then, within moments, Apollo is gone, flying through the air to the north as mysteriously as he arrived (2.683–684).

Feeney has commented perceptively on the "sense of estrangement" that this "tangential epiphany" instills (1991: 80).[102] Unlike the reader, the Argonauts do not know why Apollo has come or what consequences his coming may have, so that his appearance becomes "eerily random and puzzling" (ibid. 77). In fact, Apollo is on his way to the land of the Hyperboreans (2.674–675), and it is unclear from the text if the god even intends for the encounter to

[100] As Vian 1976: 208 n. 4 points out, the Argonauts have been rowing since they passed through the Symplegades the previous day (cf. 2.649), which was itself a monumental exertion all its own.

[101] The poet is playing with the senses of ἀκάματος: the rowing had been untiring (ἀκαμάτῃσιν . . . ἐλάτῃσιν, 2.661), i.e., without rest, and therefore most tiring (καμάτῳ πολυπήμονι, 2.673), i.e. exhausting.

[102] Cf. Danek 2009: 281: "Here we get two storylines which are not related either in time or space. . . . The reader senses that there exists an entire world of actions beyond that of the main narrative: Innumerable different storylines potentially intersect with one another in ways that are beyond our control; yet this entire cosmos remains hidden from the narrator's view and, therefore, the readers' perception, too."

happen.[103] What is more, there is a sense of danger amidst the confusion as the earth rumbles and violent waves wash over the shore where the Argonauts have disembarked (2.679–680)—will the god carelessly destroy them in his transcendent unconcern?[104] And yet this figure with his unshorn hair and silver bow is so recognizably Apollo, Jason's benefactor and the original cause of the voyage (cf. 1.360–361, 412–414; 4.529–532)! The incidental and mysterious nature of the epiphany, the seeming divine disregard for a favored mortal, and the juxtaposition of the weary Argonauts' helpless awe with the god's magnificent appearance all work together to create "the impression of the vast gulf between god and men which the passage conveys" (Feeney 1991: 76), as well as what is perhaps the most sublime episode in the poem.

Among heroes, the Argonauts' progress is most consistently juxtaposed against the travels of their onetime crewmate Heracles. I have already had occasion to note how he stands out from the rest of the Argonauts in several places in Books 1–2. Their most significant juxtaposition, however, occurs in Libya, when the Argonauts realize that Heracles had been through the Garden of the Hesperides only the day before (4.1436) and mobilize a search party of "those fit for this task" (οἵ τ' ἄρμενοι ἐς τόδε ἔργον, 4.1461) to find him. Yet despite deploying the swiftest Argonauts—the flying Boreads as well as Euphemus, the fastest man alive (ποδωκηέστατον ἄλλων, 1.180)—their efforts are frustrated (μεταμώνια μοχθήσαντες, 4.1484). In fact, the supernaturally keen-sighted Lynceus, whose vision is so strong that it can even penetrate the earth (cf. 1.153–155), only thinks that he *may* descry Heracles' eminently recognizable figure (cf. 1.1242, 1254–1255) impossibly far off in the distance (4.1477–1480),

[103] The narrator allows no insight into Apollo's thoughts, instead focalizing the episode from the crew's perspective. Apollo's provision of sacrifices to the Argonauts (2.698) will, however, indicate his endorsement of the new cult, though the Argonauts will not know he has intervened.

[104] In addition, Green 2007 ad 2.678–680 notes the ominous undertones in Apollo's attributes of bow and quiver in this scene, which recall such passages as *Il.* 1.44–47 (cf. *HH* 3.1–4) that capture the terrible aspect of the Far-Shooter.

and he has the search called off (4.1481–1482). Heracles is apparently so preternaturally fast that, if he is given just one day's head-start, not even an all-star search party such as this can track him down, despite the fact that he has been, as usual, traveling on foot (χθόνα πεζὸς ὁδεύων, 4.1441).

But the search party also includes the conspicuously "ordinary" hero Canthus, who contrasts with Heracles on a different register than simple speed. Like Heracles (cf. 4.1478), Canthus sets out wandering in Libya alone, but whereas a prolepsis elsewhere guarantees that Heracles will somehow make his way back to Hellas (1.1302–1305), Canthus is destined to die in Libya, slain in a battle over a local shepherd's flocks. In fact, this is a further point of contrast between them: Heracles succeeded in slaying Ladon and stealing the apples he had been guarding (ῥύετο μῆλα, 4.1397), but Canthus dies in his attempt to steal the sheep defended by Caphaurus (μήλων πέρι . . . ἀλεξόμενος, 4.1487–1488).[105] By exploiting the common rationalization of the Hesperides' golden apples as flocks,[106] Apollonius suggests that Heracles so far surpasses an ordinary Argonaut that the latter could not even perform a bowdlerized version of his exploit.[107]

Finally, this dense episode features one last juxtaposition between the Argonauts and Heracles via a narratorial digression. Canthus joins the searchers intent on asking Heracles about

[105] Canthus wants to take the sheep for his "famished comrades" (ἑτάροισιν | δευομένοις, 4.1487–1488), and indeed, they will get to enjoy them on avenging Canthus' death (4.1498–1501). Heracles had provided water for the parched Argonauts in a similarly indirect fashion, though he managed to survive the experience.

For that matter, a generic Argonaut remarks that Heracles has saved them, even though far away, by slaking their thirst (4.1458–1459), but no one seems to consider the danger that Ladon might have posed had they stumbled upon the garden while its guardian yet lived.

[106] See Hunter 2015 ad 4.1412–1414.

[107] To a lesser extent the same is true of Mopsus, the other Argonaut doomed to die in Libya, poisoned by one of the land's earthborn snakes (cf. 4.1513–1517); Heracles, conversely, had used the poison of another serpent, the Hydra (4.1404), to slay a far mightier "serpent of the land" (χθόνιος ὄφις, 4.1398).

the fate of his friend Polyphemus, a cue which the narrator interprets as an opportunity to recall what in fact had already been substantially revealed much earlier by Glaucus (1.1321–1323): seeking to rejoin the Argonauts after being left behind in Mysia, Polyphemus had set out "far across the mainland" (τῆλε δι᾽ ἠπείροιο, 4.1474) of Asia, evidently toward Colchis, only to perish in the land of the Chalybes (4.1472–1477). To be sure, Polyphemus made it a considerable distance,[108] but the fact that the comrades with whom he had sought to reconnect are now themselves seeking Heracles on the opposite side of the world—the same man who had been abandoned in Mysia, too, right alongside him—is a testament to Heracles' overwhelming superiority as a traveler.[109] Indeed, Heracles has been busy since his abandonment at the end of Book 1. From Mysia, he had first traveled all the way to Trachis (1.1348–1357); then he probably returned to Mycenae to receive a new assignment from Eurystheus (cf. 1.1347–1348); and finally (assuming no other labors intervened) he made his way to the realm of Atlas at the end of the earth. As "standard" heroes and representative members of Jason's crew, both Canthus and Polyphemus exemplify the dangers of traveling through foreign lands, especially apart from the rest of the Argonauts. Heracles' super-heroism and exceptional mobility is apparent from his tremendous success in the same enterprise.

Rather closer to the voyage of the Argonauts is the journey of Phrixus, the "illustrious predecessor" in whose steps from Thessaly to Colchis they follow (Clare 2002: 105). The juxtapositions of their two journeys are allusive and not strongly marked; the most important are probably those near the beginning and end of the Argonauts' journey to Colchis. In the first place, the women of Iolcus strike an ominous note by recalling Helle's drowning and the dire

[108] Some 600 km (~375 miles), according to Hunter 2015 ad 4.1475.

[109] Foster 2007 is very good on the contrast between Heracles and Polyphemus.

circumstances of the Athamantids' flight from Orchomenus as the heroes proceed to the launching site at Pagasae (1.256–260; cf. 1.291, 927, 935). Then, shortly before the Argonauts arrive in Aea, Argus paints a rosy picture for Jason and his men of his father's departure from Orchomenus and arrival in Colchis (2.1143–1149), omitting the disturbing incidents that the women of Iolcus had dwelt upon in favor of emphasizing the aid of the gods and Aeetes' generous hospitality.[110] Any hopes that the story might raise for the Argonauts' own warm reception (cf. 2.1224, 1279; 3.179–193), however, are quickly undercut (2.1202–1206; 3.14–15, 584–588) and then flatly contradicted by Aeetes' murderous designs on the strangers in the succeeding narrative. Accordingly, when the narrator digresses to repeat the story of Phrixus' arrival in Aea at the end of the Argonauts' own time there (4.115–121), precisely when Jason and Medea are fleeing Aeetes' wrath and preparing to steal the fleece outright, the disjunction between the travelers' respective experiences is fully apparent. The altar to "Zeus, Protector of Refugees" (Διὶ Φυξίῳ, 4.119) that had once betokened Phrixus' acceptance by Aeetes now stands witness to the flight of Jason and Medea from the same (cf. 4.85–86: ἐπὶ νηὶ | φεύγωμεν).

The cumulative effect of these juxtapositions is rather muddled, much like the ambiguous status of the Argo itself, because different speakers underline different aspects of Phrixus' experience. It is safe to say, however, that in certain key respects, Phrixus' journey is much closer to the "divine" level of travel than that of his emulators, though not nearly so much as Heracles or actual gods. Whereas his journey is on the whole more overtly supernatural than the Argo's, the Argo particularly resembles the articulate ram with its speech-endowed beam from Dodona (see n. 75 above). Phrixus may receive more personal and direct aid from the gods,

[110] The only hint of the story of Athamas' sacrifice, which Jason shortly mentions (2.1194–1195; cf. 3.190–191), is Zeus' epithet, "God of Fugitives" (Φυξίῳ . . . Διί·, 2.1147). The sequence of events implies that Zeus favors Phrixus' sacrifice of the ram to him by assuring Aeetes' hospitality (cf. 3.584–588).

especially Hermes (2.1144–1145; 3.584–588; 4.120–121),[111] as well as consistent hospitality (cf. 2.652–654), but for their part the Argonauts also benefit from frequent, if mostly indirect or unrecognized divine aid, and they encounter their fair share of welcoming hosts. The Argonauts exert themselves far more than Phrixus, whose journey seems to lack physical toil,[112] but both of their travels are marked by danger and loss, as the name of the Hellespont attests to this day (1.256–257, 927, 935). And perhaps most importantly, both embark upon their journeys under compulsion (cf. 1.291; 2.654, 1147, 1194; 3.189, 584; 4.119). Although even he is a cut above them on the spectrum of travelers in the poem, Phrixus' ambivalent example makes him the closest model for the Argonauts' voyage.

The juxtapositions considered so far show the Argonauts falling short of the divine and heroic modes of travel. In fact, it is only when set against the backdrop of human travel that the Argo ever emerges as the superior form of travel, especially in the poem's two comparisons between the Argo and the wrecked ship that was conveying the sons of Phrixus.[113] In Jason's rhetorical strategy for recruiting these castaways to his crew, the contrast between his own free-roaming, god-wrought vessel and the recent destruction of the Phrixides' ship is central (2.1184–1191):

> πάρεστι δὲ <u>τῆσδ᾽ ἐπὶ νηὸς</u>
> ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα νέεσθαι, ὅπῃ φίλον, εἴτε μετ᾽ Αἶαν,
> εἴτε μετ᾽ ἀφνειὴν θείου πόλιν Ὀρχομενοῖο.
> τὴν γὰρ Ἀθηναίη τεχνήσατο, καὶ τάμε χαλκῷ
> δούρατα Πηλιάδος κορυφῆς πάρα, σὺν δέ οἱ Ἄργος

[111] Hunter 2015 ad 4.121 is probably right to see Hermes as the agent of Zeus in all of these passages, not just 3.584–588.

[112] At least for Phrixus himself—see 4.115–117 on the ram's fatigue. Argus indicates that Phrixus was already an old man at the time of his escape to Colchis (2.1150–1151), so the journey could not have been too taxing.

[113] The Phrixides' voyage is also juxtaposed to the divine level of travel in the form of Aeetes' ride in his father's chariot to Aeaea (3.304–313).

> τεῦξεν · ἀτὰρ κείνην γε κακὸν διὰ κῦμ᾽ ἐκέδασσεν,
> πρὶν καὶ πετράων σχεδὸν ἐλθεῖν, αἵ τ᾽ ἐνὶ Πόντῳ
> στεινωπῷ συνίασι πανήμεροι ἀλλήλῃσιν.
>
> On this ship of ours one can travel here or there, wherever he pleases, whether to Aea or to the wealthy city of divine Orchomenus. For Athena designed it and with a bronze ax cut its timbers from the peak of Pelion, and with her help Argus constructed it. But a vicious wave shattered that ship of yours before it came near the rocks that clash together all day long in the straits of the Black Sea.

In making his appeal to these potential allies, Jason somewhat overstates the simplicity of sailing "wherever [one] pleases" on the Argo, given the Argonauts' own difficulties on the voyage thus far. Nevertheless, his implications concerning the Argo's superiority are accurate, as is his covert suggestion that if a storm could best the Colchian ship, it certainly would not have made it through the Symplegades (cf. 2.319).[114] Argus repeats Jason's contrast explicitly in his introduction of the heroes to Aeetes (3.340–346):

> νῆα δ᾽ Ἀθηναίη Παλλὰς κάμεν, οὐ μάλα τοίην,
> οἷαί περ Κόλχοισι μετ᾽ ἀνδράσι νῆες ἔασιν,
> τάων αἰνοτάτης ἐπεκύρσαμεν· ἤλιθα γάρ μιν
> λάβρον ὕδωρ πνοιή τε διέτμαγεν. ἡ δ᾽ ἐνὶ γόμφοις
> ἴσχεται, ἢν καὶ πᾶσαι ἐπιβρίσωσιν ἄελλαι·
> ἶσον δ᾽ ἐξ ἀνέμοιο θέει καὶ ὅτ᾽ ἀνέρες αὐτοὶ
> νωλεμέως χείρεσσιν ἐπισπέρχωσιν ἐρετμοῖς.
>
> But Pallas Athena built their ship, one not at all like the ships found among the Colchian people—the worst one of which we happened to have, for the violent sea and wind completely demolished it. But theirs holds firm in its wooden pegs, even when all the storm-winds bear down on it, and it runs equally well by wind as when the men themselves propel it unceasingly by rowing with their hands.

Clare argues on the basis of four similarities between the proem and the introduction of the Phrixides (2.1093–1096) that their journey functions as a westward counterpart to the

[114] The Argonauts genuinely do not know that the rocks became rooted in place after their successful passage (2.604–606), as their comments elsewhere reveal (2.890–892; 4.1252–1255).

Argonauts' voyage to Colchis: both feature "a group of *heroes* (1) embarked upon a difficult *voyage* (2) in obedience to the *command* (3) of another and with a specific *purpose* (4) in view" (2002: 106).[115] But these similarities primarily serve to call attention to the major difference between these two groups, namely, that the Phrixides' journey is frustrated almost immediately thereafter. An ordinary ship can hardly make the voyage—it would rather take an entire fleet of ordinary ships, and even then, only after the Argonauts had neutralized the threat of the Symplegades (cf. 2.604–606; 4.303–304, 1001–1003).[116] Ultimately, the Phrixides *will* accomplish their mission to Thessaly, but only as Argonauts on the return trip of the Argo.

Elsewhere, however, the difference between the Argonauts and their ordinary counterparts in the mortal world seems to fall out of view. For example, in Jason's answer to Aeetes' accusations of treachery, he defends himself with a rhetorical question, which he proceeds to answer: "Who would willingly dare to cross so great a sea for someone else's possession? No, a god and the dire command of an insolent king urged me" (τίς δ᾽ ἂν τόσον οἶδμα περῆσαι | τλαίη ἑκὼν ὀθνεῖον ἐπὶ κτέρας; ἀλλά με δαίμων | καὶ κρυερὴ βασιλῆος ἀτασθάλου ὦρσεν ἐφετμή, 3.388–390; cf. 4.1566).[117] Jason's question implicitly leagues him with the rest of the human race, none of whom would elect to undergo his journey except under compulsion (cf. 1.235–236). He makes a similar point when agreeing to participate in Aeetes' terrible contest: "Nothing else more horrible will befall men than evil necessity, which compelled me to come here at a king's command" (οὐ γὰρ ἔτ᾽ ἄλλο | ῥίγιον ἀνθρώποισι κακῆς ἐπικείσετ᾽ ἀνάγκης, | ἥ με καὶ ἐνθάδε νεῖσθαι ἐπέχραεν ἐκ βασιλῆος, 3.429–431). Once

[115] Cf. Danek 2009: 282.

[116] Cf. Nishimura-Jensen 2000: 307.

[117] His verbiage (βασιλῆος . . . ἐφετμή) recalls the proem (βασιλῆος ἐφημοσύνῃ, 1.3), where the compulsory nature of the Argonauts' mission takes a prominent place.

again, Jason's journey is paradigmatic for a broad, human experience, in this case, subjection to Ananke,[118] and like ordinary mortals in the poem, the Argonauts travel for business, not pleasure.[119]

V. Conclusion

The nature of the Argo as a vehicle for travel is the site of considerable tension in the poem celebrating its epic journey across the known world. The Argo is elevated above the ships sailed by ordinary humans, and certain passages foster the expectation that Jason and his men will proceed through their mission as easily as Phrixus before them, if not more so. Yet the Argo also comes equipped with many shortcomings and vulnerabilities, which stand out especially clearly in passages contrasting its progress to the virtually unqualified freedom of movement enjoyed by gods and to the superior mobility of the Heracles and even Phrixus. In this respect, there are many affinities between the Argo and ordinary human travelers in the limitations and perils facing both and in the common set of emotional responses that their travels elicit. As such, the Argo cannot be straightforwardly classified in either the superhuman heroic mode or the feeble mode of common humanity. The journey of the Argo is poised somewhere on the edge between these categories, as Idmon prophesies to his crewmates at Pagasae (1.440–442):

> ὑμῖν μὲν δὴ μοῖρα θεῶν χρειώ τε περῆσαι
> ἐνθάδε κῶας ἄγοντας· ἀπειρέσιοι δ᾽ ἐνὶ μέσσῳ
> κεῖσέ τε δεῦρό τ᾽ ἔασιν ἀνερχομένοισιν ἄεθλοι.

[118] Cf. 4.1556–1557, where Triton compares the Argonauts to generic "men . . . traveling in a foreign land" (ἄνθρωποι . . . ἐπ᾽ ἀλλοδαπῇ περόωντες) as they seek a route to the sea.

[119] Klooster 2012: 75 notes the disjunction between the narrator's frequent indulgences in ethnographic and geographic digressions and the unremitting disinterest of "his disoriented, home-sick heroes," even as they find themselves in exotic new places. As per Jackson 1992: 158: "Jason is always the pragmatist; for him the one true god is *Anagke*."

The one exception to this rule may be Augeas, who "was very eager to see the land of Colchis and Aeetes himself, ruler of the Colchians" (μέγα δ᾽ ἵετο Κολχίδα γαῖαν | αὐτόν τ᾽ Αἰήτην ἰδέειν σημάντορα Κόλχων, 1.174 –175), probably because they are half-brothers, both sons of Helius (cf. 3.362–363).

> For you men, indeed, the fate of the gods and their oracle ordain
> that you will return here with the fleece, but countless are the trials
> in between, both on your way there and returning here.

In this careful tension between the guarantee of the Argonauts' ultimate success on the one hand (μέν) and their inevitable suffering in the meantime on the other (δέ), Apollonius strikes an artful balance: epic grandeur coexists alongside the poet's reflections on the distress of the human condition.

And yet despite the Argo's liminal position between the heroic and human modes of travel, I will conclude by arguing that the Apollonian narrator models a style of reading his own narrative that centers on the human limitations of the Argo and its crew as opposed to its superhuman qualities. There are six passages in the *Argonautica* in which the narrator abstracts a truth of general significance for humankind from the developments of his heroic narrative.[120] These passages amount to the narrator's commentary on and interpretation of the developing plot, and they show him performing what might be called a "paradigmatic" reading of his own narrative.[121] In a word, this interpretive strategy seeks to find the contemporary relevance in mythic narratives by identifying timeless truths about human experience within them.[122] There

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[120] In addition, cf. 2.541–542, which abstracts a general truth from a situation in a simile (a traveler who is far from his homeland) that has obvious resonances with the main plot of the poem. 1.235–236 is also related, because it uses a general truth (what supplies sailors take on voyages) as shorthand for an element in the main narrative (what Jason brought on the Argo); cf. 1.332–333, 658–659.

[121] Several mythological paradigms of this sort occur in character-text as well; see 1.481–484 (the Aloeidae); 2.1052–1057 (Heracles), 1181–1182 (Phrixus); 3.190–193 (Aeetes' hospitality), 997–1004 (Theseus and Ariadne), 4.1090–1095 (Antiope, Danae, and Echetus' daughter).

Goldhill 1991: 301–321 examines the broader category of "exemplarity" in the *Argonautica*, under which heading he includes not only mythological exempla in character- and narrator-text but also similes, ecphrases, and the "models of behaviour provided by the heroes and the paradigmatic representation of divinity" (311).

[122] To my knowledge, the significance of these passages as a group has not been previously identified, although Cuypers 2004: 53 does label several of them as "narratorial comments [in] the form of gnomic utterances," including in this category 1.82, 458–459, 1035–1036; 2.541–542; 4.1165–1167, 1504 (cf. Morrison 2007: 281, Hunter 2015 ad 4.1165–1169).

is no single set of stylistic features that unify these paradigmatic passages, and in fact two of them are formally apostrophes to gods, Zeus and Eros. Nevertheless, their universal import is readily recognizable from nouns denoting generic humanity (θνητοί, ἄνθρωποι), broad temporal adverbs (οὔ ποτε, αἰεί), first-person plural verbs and pronouns (ἐπέβημεν, ἄμμε), and/or gnomic aorist (ἐπέβημεν) or omnitemporal present tense verbs (ἀντιάει, χαλέπτει). Excepting 1.82–85, which will be analyzed in depth below, these passages are:

1) 1.1035–1039, upon Jason's mistaken slaying of Cyzicus:

> τὴν γὰρ θέμις οὔ ποτ᾽ ἀλύξαι
> θνητοῖσιν, πάντῃ δὲ περὶ μέγα πέπταται ἕρκος·
> ὣς τὸν ὀιόμενόν που ἀδευκέος ἔκτοθεν ἄτης
> εἶναι ἀριστήων αὐτῇ ὑπὸ νυκτὶ πέδησεν
> μαρνάμενον κείνοισι.
>
> For mortals are never permitted to escape destiny, but its great net is spread all around them. And so, when he doubtless thought he was free of cruel destruction from the heroes, on that very night destiny snared him when he fought against them.

2) 4.445–449, as Medea is abetting her own brother's murder:

> σχέτλι᾽ Ἔρως, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν,
> ἐκ σέθεν οὐλόμεναί τ᾽ ἔριδες στοναχαί τε γόοι τε,
> ἄλγεά τ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπείρονα τετρήχασιν.
> δυσμενέων ἐπὶ παισὶ κορύσσεο, δαῖμον, ἀερθείς,
> οἷος Μηδείῃ στυγερὴν φρεσὶν ἔμβαλες ἄτην.
>
> Cruel Love, great affliction, great abomination for humans; from you come deadly quarrels and groans and laments, and countless other pains besides these are stirred up. May it be against my enemies' children, O god, that you rise up and arm yourself, being such as when you cast abominable madness into the mind of Medea.

Other techniques employed in the *Argonautica* to draw out the contemporary relevance of the myth include its ubiquitous etiologies, which show the Argonauts and others transforming an unrecognizable mythic past into the world familiar to the poem's narratees "today." On etiologies in the poem, see the bibliography in Fantuzzi-Hunter 2004: 92 n. 15. Another arresting and novel technique involves the apostrophized narratee in the action through empathic identification as one of the Argonauts, as it were (2.171–174; cf. 4.927–928); see Byre 1991: 223–224 and, for his construal of the Greek in 2.171–174, Cuypers 1997 ad 2.173–174; cf. Cuypers 2004: 56.

3) 4.1165–1169, when Jason and Medea are forced to consummate their marriage earlier than anticipated:

> ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὔ ποτε φῦλα δυηπαθέων ἀνθρώπων
> τερπωλῆς ἐπέβημεν ὅλῳ ποδί· σὺν δέ τις αἰεὶ
> πικρὴ παρμέμβλωκεν ἐυφροσύνῃσιν ἀνίη.
> τῶ καὶ τοὺς γλυκερῇ περ ἰαινομένους φιλότητι
> δεῖμ᾽ ἔχεν, εἰ τελέοιτο διάκρισις Ἀλκινόοιο.
>
> But so it is: we tribes of woeful humans never enter upon enjoyment with a sure foot, but always alongside our happiness marches some bitter pain. Thus, even though they melted in sweet love-making, fear gripped them both, as to whether Alcinous' decision would be carried out.

4) 4.1502–1504, when the seer Mopsus perishes in Libya:

> ἔνθα καὶ Ἀμπυκίδην αὐτῷ ἐνὶ ἤματι Μόψον
> νηλειὴς ἕλε πότμος· ἀδευκέα δ᾽ οὐ φύγεν αἶσαν
> μαντοσύναις· οὐ γάρ τις ἀποτροπίη θανάτοιο.
>
> Then, on that same day, ruthless fate also seized Ampycus' son Mopsus. He could not escape cruel destiny through his prophetic arts, for there is no averting death.[123]

5) 4.1673–1677, as Medea slays Talos with magic:

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ μέγα δή μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θάμβος ἄηται,
> εἰ δὴ μὴ νούσοισι τυπῇσί τε μοῦνον ὄλεθρος
> ἀντιάει, καὶ δή τις ἀπόπροθεν ἄμμε χαλέπτει,
> ὡς ὅ γε χάλκειός περ ἐὼν ὑπόειξε δαμῆναι
> Μηδείης βρίμῃ πολυφαρμάκου.
>
> Truly, Father Zeus, great astonishment confounds my mind, if in fact death comes not only through disease and wounds, but even from afar someone can harm us, just as he, though made of bronze, yielded in defeat to the power of Medea the sorceress.

In these passages Apollonius is tapping into a long tradition in Greek literature of interpreting myths as paradigms of human experience that still hold true even in the post-mythic

[123] The narrator comes close to this sentiment in recording Idmon's death ("But his prophecy did nothing to save him, since necessity was leading him on to be killed" [ἀλλά μιν οὔ τι | μαντοσύναι ἐσάωσαν, ἐπεὶ χρεὼ ἦγε δαμῆναι, 2.816–817]), but in this instance he does not generalize the seer's death into a paradigmatic case (cf. οὐ γάρ τις ἀποτροπίη θανάτοιο, 4.1504).

world. He is heir to Homer's epic *paradeigmata*, the illustrative myths of didactic and lyric poetry, and the gnomic pronouncements of tragic choruses commenting on the myth being staged. What is striking about Apollonius' paradigmatic passages, however, is the way in which his narrator posits a direct continuity between the heroes of myth and "us"—the narrator and his audience. In Homeric epic, the basic logic of the mythical paradigm had been the argument *a fortiori*; for instance, Achilles can accept his fate because "not even mighty Heracles escaped death" (οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα, *Il*. 18.117).[124] A fragment from a dirge of Simonides shows how this interpretive maneuver can be generalized to the entire heroic age (fr.523 Campbell):

> οὐδὲ γὰρ οἳ πρότερόν ποτ᾽ ἐπέλοντο,
> θεῶν δ᾽ ἐξ ἀνάκτων ἐγένονθ᾽ υἷες ἡμίθεοι,
> ἄπονον οὐδ᾽ ἄφθιτον οὐδ᾽ ἀκίνδυνον βίον
> ἐς γῆρας ἐξίκοντο τελέσαντες.
>
> for not even those who lived in olden days and were born the half-divine sons of the gods, our masters, reached old age without first passing a life of hardship, destruction and danger.[125]

Apollonius uses an *a fortiori* argument only once in these passages—Talos succumbed to Medea's far-working magic even though made of bronze (χάλκειός περ ἐών, 4.1676), a testament to "our" own vulnerability as creatures of flesh and blood. Arguably, an *a fortiori* argument is also implicit in the death of Mopsus—i.e., not even a seer who knows his fate in advance can escape it—though the idea is not marked verbally in 4.1503–1504 (cf. 1.79–81;

[124] On Homeric *paradeigmata*, see Willcock 1964. Strictly speaking, because the staid Homeric narrator limits paradigmatic reasoning like this to character-text, the narratee is not explicitly encouraged to view mythic heroes as paradigms for *their* lives. Nevertheless, the paradigms were often read in precisely this way, as illustrations of timeless or enduring truths; e.g., cf. *Il*. 24.525–542 with Pind. *Pyth*. 3.80–106, Plato *Rep*. 2.379d.

[125] Text and translation of Simonides come from Campbell 1991.

2.815–817).[126] Otherwise, however, there is no sense that "even" Cyzicus could not escape his fate or that "not even" the wedding of Jason and Medea was wholly good. In fact, the narrator assumes the continuity in the human experience of Eros over the centuries by praying that the god might afflict his enemies' children "being such as" (οἷος, 4.449) he was when he overcame Medea.[127] The paradigmatic passages thus model an approach to reading the main narrative of the *Argonautica* that flattens the difference between "men born long ago" (παλαιγενέων . . . φωτῶν, 1.1) and the contemporary narrator and narratee.[128] They, no less than "we," partake of a unified and timeless humanity, such that regardless of their antiquity or the larger-than-life scale of their adventures, their experiences can be regarded as paradigmatic for the human condition broadly conceived. To paraphrase Thucydides, this approach to the *Argonautica* can teach us "such things as happen and always will happen, so as long as human nature is the same" (γιγνόμενα μὲν καὶ αἰεὶ ἐσόμενα, ἕως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾖ, 3.82.2).[129]

It is therefore highly significant for the interpretation of travel in the *Argonautica* that the earliest of its paradigmatic passages occurs shortly into the Catalogue, in a brief, programmatic passage that features the densest instance of travel juxtaposition in the poem. The narrator anticipates that Canthus and Mopsus will perish in Libya, and from these facts he infers the following (1.82–85):

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[126] Though see Hunter 2015 ad 4.1503 on ἀδευκέα.

[127] Cf. Byre 1996: 10. The apostrophe to Eros also recalls the invocation of Erato at the beginning of the third book, where it is implied that because (γάρ, 3.3) of the Muse's omnitemporal powers of bewitching unwed maidens (ἀδμῆτας δὲ τεοῖς μελεδήμασι <u>θέλγεις</u> | παρθενικάς, 3.4–5), she is therefore fit to inspire the mythic story of "how Jason <u>brought</u> the fleece back to Iolcus with the aid of Medea's love" (ὅπως ἐς Ἰωλκὸν <u>ἀνήγαγε</u> κῶας Ἰήσων | Μηδείης ὑπ' ἔρωτι, 3.2–3) at a specific point in the past.

[128] Cf. Goldhill 1991: 288 on παλαιγενέων (1.1).

[129] Text and translation (adapted) of Thucydides come from Smith 1930.

ὡς οὐκ ἀνθρώποισι κακὸν μήκιστον ἐπαυρεῖν,
ὁππότε κἀκείνους Λιβύῃ ἔνι ταρχύσαντο,
τόσσον ἑκὰς Κόλχων, ὅσσον τέ περ ἠελίοιο
μεσσηγὺς δύσιές τε καὶ ἀντολαὶ εἰσορόωνται.

Thus no evil is too remote for humans to encounter, seeing that they buried those men in Libya, as far from the Colchians as the distance that is seen between the setting and rising of the sun.

On the level of the *Argonautica* narrative, the narrator is marveling at (and for the first time revealing) the tremendous scope of the Argonauts' travels, which will take them extremely far off-course from their intended destination of Colchis—to the opposite end of the earth, in fact! Simultaneously, the narrator presents their fate as just one instantiation of a bitter fact of life, that no evil, no matter how unlikely, is outside the realm of possibility for humans (ἀνθρώποισι). The spatial metaphor in which this compressed gnome is cast (κακὸν μήκιστον) evokes the "life is a journey" *topos*; in this case, the idea is that the road of life can take unexpected turns, just like the Argonauts' sudden detour to Libya (4.1225–1227, 1231–1234), and thence lead to troubles that once seemed unthinkably far away (μήκιστον). This nexus of ideas stands squarely within the thought-domain of human travel, which in the *Argonautica* is consistently portrayed as miserable and dangerous, a necessity over which helpless mortals have only limited control. But juxtaposed against human vulnerability and ignorance of what the future may bring are two final lines that define enormity on the human scale—and on the scale of the Argo's journey to the ends of the earth—with an image of divine regularity, the daily journey of Helius across the cosmos, whose frequency and even eternity are suggested by generalizing plurals and an omnitemporal present tense verb (δύσιές τε καὶ ἀντολαὶ εἰσορόωνται; cf. 1.499–500). This hazy perception of a vast and distant cosmic order that dwarfs one's own personal chaos, a private existence marked by powerlessness and nescience, captures what is arguably the defining mood of the epic. Moreover, read in light of the rest of the poem, this passage suggests a pair of

equations that hold great promise for the reading of the *Argonautica*, namely, that the voyage of the Argonauts is paradigmatic of human travel and that the nature of human travel is paradigmatic of the human condition.

The paradigmatic readings modeled by the narrator thus foreground the human and universal aspects of the Argonauts' journey: although the ship and her crew are in many respects larger-than-life, nevertheless, the narrator affirms that their heroic experiences are indeed a species of human experience. A paradigmatic reading of the poem can therefore interpret the journey of the Argo and the trials and tribulations of its crew as a representative example of and a metaphor for the nature of human life in all times and places—in the legendary past, in Hellenistic Alexandria, and even into the indefinite future that the narrator envisions for his song (4.1773–1775). The viewpoint that emerges from such a reading is the familiar pessimism of archaic and classical Greek poetry and which many critics have found in the poem:[130] life, like the voyage of the Argo, is full of hardships; its route is in doubt and constantly changing in the thrall of necessity; and even supreme native talent requires divine favor to avoid ruin, let alone to achieve success.

Read in this way, Apollonius can be seen modifying the traditional "ship of life" metaphor so common in his poetic predecessors. It was on ships that human vulnerability was most keenly felt in the ancient world, because in what other situation was a person so utterly subject—and with such high stakes—to fortune, fate, and the will of the gods as they manifested in the caprice of the weather, waves, and wind? It is therefore quite understandable that maritime imagery is a traditional metaphor for the instability of human life in Greek literature, which Steiner 1986: 70, in a survey of the theme in Pindar, summarizes as follows:

[130] On the poem's pessimism, see, e.g., Feeney 1991: 94 with n. 130, Byre 1996: 4–5, each with further references.

> On the maritime journey of life, man faces the uncertainty of his condition, the overwhelming influence of the gods, the necessity of danger and toil and the rapid shifts between rough and smooth passage which all human experience involves.

This sentence might have been written apropos of the voyage of the Argo as fittingly as of the literary *topos*, and indeed, that is a testament to Apollonius' achievement in the *Argonautica*. The poet inherited this commonplace and responded by casting the Argonauts in the role of the generic sailors of the metaphor: not "life is a voyage" but "life is *the* voyage of the Argo." Apollonius' genius was to transfigure a literary cliché into a paradigmatic epic narrative, and what myth could have been better suited to this treatment than the nautical adventure par excellence, Jason's quest for the golden fleece? In more ways than one, the Argo proved the ideal vehicle for the poet's theme.

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