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REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

While the planets move around and human beings drive themselves in their humble condition –closely tied by their temporal, limited nature–, History seems to be a good place to sit down, avoid the stressful requirements of the fast life of our modern world, and look at what can we expect about our own days and the near future. Indeed, History can be just a way to justify the present reality, of course, and that is how our discipline has worked, for example, in the many discourses of cultural or national identity during the process of configuration of the Western modern states from during the nineteenth century on. However, now and then, historians have also been able to, time after time, take a critical look at their own days, and put into question what has been taken for granted as the expected, the 'shall be', and many other mandatory claims. Now and then, History is not just a brunch of things that happened in the past, but a quest for Hope, with the aim that things have not always been as they seemed to be (nor the way everything wants to press us and tell us that have been and will then still be). Bolds as love, historians, like poets, are requested to fulfil with ideas, questions, details, chances, and even dreams the conceptual scenario of the people surrounding us (friends and family, students and colleagues, citizens, comrades, general audiences, from closest to very distant people) think beyond the box, beyond present-day daylight (and night's darkness). Better worlds are also key in our concern and how we think of (and imagine) our past realities.

Like many of you, I love reading, and from time to time, I like to revisit the beginning of the precious short novel *The Little Prince* by the adventurous, unforgettable Antoine de Saint-Exupery. My favourite passage is that of the scientist who discovered the tinny asteroid, named B 612. The astronomer, Turkish by origin, decided to go to a great scientific event, an International Conference on Astronomy, and explain his discovery. However, when he began his speech during the conference, his colleagues did not really listen to him, because of the custom he wore, a kind of traditional Turkish dress, that made the audience consider him rather a shabby blatherer than a real scientist. Deeply frustrated, our Turkish astronomer went back home, but he tried again at the next International Conference, although now he dressed himself 'properly' (*i.e.*, in a Western costume, in a suit) and everybody then admired his brilliant explanation. I love this episode, because there is so much useful information on it about how science works, and how many times knowledge and innovation has less to do with the success of reasoning than with appearance.

I have already told here one of my beloved Grandma's best lessons for life. As an illiterate, rural woman (I usually say she was closer to Homer's world than any of my colleagues in Scholarship), she has many sayings and proverbs, but there is one that more frequently comes to my mind than the rest: "things are not as they are, but as they appear to be". Someday, this saying will welcome everyone entering in the Faculties of Classics and History worldwide. History, among many other disciplines in our challenging days' Humanities, has to focus more on what things (in the past) wanted to

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be like or appear, than what they truly were. This is, actually, a terrific question for a huge debate on our discipline, but by putting our focus on appearances can also unmask our own days' realities, and their distressing features. Doubt and questioning are our tools, and the huge catalogue of people that lived before us (*i.e.*, History, in the end), our colleagues, as well as our object of study too, for helping our audiences to guess what we are living through, how do we live, and how can we improve our reality, solving or rejecting the horrors and stressful pressures (exploitation, war, gender inequality, violence and aggression, racism, fascism, hunger, poverty, fundamentalisms…) that surrounds us.

Knowing the past, of course, is not a cure for avoiding repeating it. How much I wish this could be true! But we all know it is not. Like Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*'s main character Billy Pilgrim (what a poor fellow…), even if we could go back to the past maybe we could simply witness ourselves, but no changes could be introduced. Changes are issues for the present, and the future. However, let me be naive and think that knowing the past allows me to understand better my own days and everything happening around me. And I mean 'understand' to say that I feel able to think about, to seek information by myself, to contrast versions, to take a point, and to question myself and the rest, in order to answer uncertainties and, to some extent, to help others around me also to 'understand' it, by sharing tools, thoughts, and even starting actions later. Humanities, including History, Classics, and Archaeology, are our weapons against the uneasy challenge to be ourselves, freethinkers, involved in our worlds as part of them, being voices (like the poets) that offer words to explain how we feel concerning what happens around us. I know it is easy from such a point as a piece of paper like this one you are now reading, but I follow here the lessons of Rebecca Solnit when she defends that gestures, even small ones, can inspire others to move themselves, and to put things going round and round. And I feel our days need things to move and change.

So, from this simple fact of a piece of paper (or a text on a screen, in our digital days), a small fact, that of writing ancient (Macedonian, Greek, Hellenistic) History that changes many things, I am glad to see our journal is able to still claim the usefulness of questioning Antiquity. A brilliant (if you allow me to say it) handful of papers are gathered in this year's issue. In my (very) personal opinion, this issue is also an allegation in favour of the richness of our fieldwork, as far as many different methodologies and approaches can be observed in the papers collected in it. First, Diego Chapinal-Heras offers archaeological and historical approaches to Dion, a topic that links landscape, religion, and cultural identity. The eminent Richard Stoneman (a precious human being, and a wise good man) writes about Buddhism and the Greeks. Branko Van Oppen, my very dear friend (I am truly happy to see him published in *Karanos*, especially when his first paper in our journal is maybe the last one he will dedicate to the topic of the early-Hellenistic royal women, a theme he has worked so much during the so many years; I can feel the emotional imprint of it), offers a deep appreciation on Agathocles' affair. Ana Alexandra Alves de Sousa presents an interesting study on intertextuality, concerning some adventures of Jason in Apollonius' *Argonautica* and the historical remembrance of the kings of Macedonia. Raul Navas-Moreno goes deep in the review and study of the figures of the Frataraka, involving a revision of the whole scholarship on this question and a detailed approach to sources and related problems. Ernesto Damiani examines on the historiography about the death of Alexander by approaching the works of Émile Littré. As co-director of *Karanos*, I am glad to see the diversity of methodological approaches gathered in this issue, from epigraphy to literature, archaeology, history, numismatics, and

historiography, but also on the wide range of topics and geographies. Even the geographical origins of those authors are also a good symptom for our fieldwork, from Barcelona to Tampa, Lisboa, Madrid, Padova, the United Kingdom, and even the Antipodes: our place of honour in this issue is dedicated to the eminent Ian Worthington, with our usual interview (at the 'Main Voices' section) and the re-publishing (in the 'Flashbacks' section) of one challenging paper about the epigraphical source of the League of Corinth. I could not be prouder of the task and the efforts the team of in our journal (Mario Agudo, Marc Mendoza) has made this year, when we also published the first *Karanos Supplement*. A recent incorporation deserves to be mentioned: G. Taietti is now in charge of the secretary tasks in our journal. Welcome, dear Guen, and thank you for your dedication.

There is a deep responsibility in how we enunciate our words as Historians. Following Vonnegut again, through his shocking *Mother Night*'s character Howard J. Campbell, we shall be aware of how we like to be perceived, and what we like to defend, from our scholar positions. History has usually been understood as the eternal judge, but I doubt everyone who deserves historical trial will finally fall into the severe sentence of time and remembering. However, historians are so much like Vonnegut's Howard J. Campbell, guilty of proposing some interpretations of the facts that help him to stay as an Allies' spy in Nazi Germany, interpretations that simultaneously help fascism to justify unjustifiable ideas and facts. And maybe this is one of the points of being historians: we need to live among our people, and feed our interpretations by questioning the world to help others to understand it, re-imagine it, dream better, or simply enjoy life, knowledge, and Humanity. Somehow, when I try to guess why I am so deeply concerned with the past, I feel myself as Kirk Douglas in the film *Ulysses* by Mario Camerini (this film is probably one of the reasons I am now here, writing about ancient Greece), when he observes the eternally-changing sea while he is on the island of Phaeacia to seek the answer of who is he and where he comes from. Maybe all this, our task, is as simple and complex as that. As Camerini's Ulysses, my simplest wish is to sit down in front of the sea, to get some time there to enjoy the fresh air, to think, to paint my nails in red (and maybe green), the sound of the beautiful music of Eleni Karaindrou for the score of the film *Eternity and a Day* (Μια αιωνιότητα και μια μέρα), while I try to figure out how to travel through the sea of time to the understand where we come from, with the hope to discover the way back home.

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Bellaterra (Barcelona), December 2024

Jason's cloak in Apollonius *Argonautica*: A Network of Meanings*

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ABSTRACT Jason's shining arrival at Myrine, in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, wearing a purple cloak and with a spear in the hand, highlights a glamorous heroic excellence that has its origin in Alexander the Great and evokes the military ceremonial mantles displayed during the Ptolemaic processions. Jason is so seductive that the Lemnian women feel ravished at his sight. He evokes Achilles at the gates of Troy sparkling with his armour (*Il.* 22.25-32). But the battlefield will instead be the bed in women's arms. He and almost all of his crew are going to be married to the Lemnians, just as Alexander and his officers did at Susa in 324 BCE. Through a literary resource cherished by Hellenistic poets, an ecphrasis, Apollonius challenges the epic canon, suggesting readings that merge fiction with historical facts, through two opposite cosmic forces φιλότης and νεῖκος. The seven scenes embroidered in the cloak embody them in its tension. Aphrodite, who holds the shield of Ares and sees herself on it, represents those two forces that give the plot, as well as history, its dynamics.

KEYWORDS Jason, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy II, Arsinoë II, love and war.

In Apollonius' epic poem, written in the Hellenistic period, Jason, the expedition leader of the fleece's quest, receives a cloak from the goddess Athena, who had helped to build the ship for the journey[1]. Jason's cloak resembles Achilles' shield: Achilles receives his shield from Thetis, after being forged by Hephaestus, and Jason receives the cloak from Athena, who embroidered it, being the patron goddess of crafts.

The journey had recently begun. The Argonauts had left the shores of Pagasae, in Thessaly, had seen the coastline of Magnesia, had stopped in a beach called Argo's Aphetae, had passed Meliboea and finally had reached the Isle of Lemnos. Jason puts it on when he is going to meet Hypsipyle, the Lemnian queen who invited him and his crew to enter Myrine in peace. The women needed to guarantee descendants, for they had killed all the Lemnian males after being sexually rejected by their husbands. However, their revenge turned to be harmful for them too, because without men their kingdom was more vulnerable and fated to perish. Although the Lemnians fought and

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[1] On the discussion of Jason's cloak, see, e.g., LAWALL 1966, 55-85; COLLINS 1967, 55-85; SHAPIRO 1980; BULLOCH 1985, 594-595; HUNTER 1993, 52-59; CLAUSS 1993; MORI 2008, 104-109; MASON 2016; KOOPMAN 2018, 207-236; JÚNIOR 2019; PHILLIPS 2020, 204-226; SOUSA 2022a, 33-44.

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worked in the fields, their survival was at risk, because they were aware that over the years ploughing the fields would become increasingly difficult.

From a literary point of view, Jason's arrival at Myrine with a shining cloak and a spear in the hand evokes Achilles as seen by Priam at the gates of Troy sparkling in his armor (*Il*. 22.25-32). The difference lies in the purpose of the situation: Achilles was on the verge of fighting against Hector, whereas Jason was about to get into the queen's bed[2].

What happens in Lemnos recalls the events at Susa in 324 BCE, at the moment when almost one hundred marriages were celebrated between the Macedonians and the Persians, a strategy to ally formerly hostile ethnicities. Alexander himself married two Achaemenid princesses. In Apollonius' poem hostility appears as a possibility. The women put on their armours as soon as they see Argo ship, for they foresee war. But sexual alliance was the outcome of the decision taken by the assembly of the Lemnians. It was a means to guarantee peace and progeny.

Although the scholiast underlines the peaceful disposition of Jason at this moment[3], seeing it the reason for the image of a hero ornamented with such a colourful and shining garment, war should not be excluded from the image. It is the goddess of war, Athena, who had given the cloak to the hero and the image of his arrival thus dressed at Myrine is the image of the idealized ruler, "particularly associated with statues of Alexander"[4]. It evokes the ceremonial cloaks used as a symbol of the power of a warrior from Homeric times down to the third century BCE[5]. Although conciliatory, the heroes in the *Argonautica* also have to fight. Even if they do not pursue battles, they fight whenever diplomatic efforts are ineffective. The epithet "warlike", ἀρήιοι (1.1000) qualify them as a group, as well as describing Butes (1.95) and Jason (1.349; 2.122) individually. The sword that Jason holds at the moment he is wearing the cloak has the same double meaning as the cloak. It enhances the hero's ability to fight, although the object also evokes love, for it was a gift from Atalanta, the woman rejected by Jason as a member of the expedition. Argo's leader wanted to prevent love arising among the crew. Love and war are thus doubly present in both items, the spear and the cloak[6].

The Homeric Odysseus speaks of a double (διπλῆν, *Od.* 19.226) purple (πορφυρέην, 19.225) cloak, embroidered (δαίδαλον, 19.227) and shining like the sun (λαμπρὸς δ' ἦν ἠέλιος ὥς, 19.234). Its description ends with the idea of delight produced by the garment among Cretan women (πολλαί γ' αὐτὸν ἐθηήσαντο γυναῖκες, 19.235)[7]. Apollonius may have taken several things from this description, for it is said that the glare of the cloak was so strong that it was hard to look at. All this gleam is akin to the images of Ptolemy himself. The other Homeric motif is the idea of the delight which

[2] For CLAUSS 1993, 121-122 it is a matter of similarity between the two heroes, not discrepancy.
[3] Apollon. 1.721-722 Schol. WENDEL 1935.
[4] MORI 2008, 109.
[5] "Alexander the Great typically wore a short and informal purple *chlamys*, but adopted a longer, more ornate mantle called an *epiporpoma* for battle and other public occasions" (MORI 2008, 107). SHAPIRO 1980, 269, precisely remembers that during Apollonius' lifetime there was "a most splendid group of textiles, made and publicly displayed in Alexandria". On the stories about Alcibiades' purple cloak, which he wore as a *choregos*, arousing the admiration of both men and women, see HUNTER 1993, 56.
[6] For OTTO 2009, 206 n. 694, the nature of the spear and its provenance stands as a metaphor for the sexual power of the holder. DELIGNON 2020, 582, points to a double meaning in Jason's appearance: but she interprets the cloak as a symbol of the kind of hero Jason is, and the spear as a symbol of his ability as a warrior. For MORI 2008, 109, "by weaving together associations from traditional epic with those of contemporary politics, the cloak becomes a symbol of a new type of heroism".
[7] We have in the *Iliad* other two-fold purple cloaks, of which one was embroidered by Helen (*Il*. 3.125), another by Andromache (*Il*. 22.440-1).

the cloak produced on the observers. While Jason is heading to the queen's palace, the Lemnian women looked at him utterly impressed by his glamor[8]. The Ptolemies also expected wonder from the people looking at their military parades[9], and probably the poet expects the same from the readers.

The detailed description of Jason's cloak helps to produce this reaction. The literary aim of the Hellenistic ecphrasis is to envision an artwork as if scenes described were being seen in reality. The first scene has the Cyclopes making Zeus' thunderbolt, which has a crucial effect of enhancing the brightness of the cloak; in the second, Amphion and Zethus are laying Thebes' foundations, with Zethus shouldering a mountain peak and Amphion singing; in the third, Aphrodite is contemplating herself in Ares' shield[10]; in the fourth, the Teleboans are attacking Electryon's sons; in the fifth, Oenomaus is falling out of the chariot driven by Myrtilus, while Pelops is leading the chariot race with Hippodamia beside him[11]; in the sixth, Apollo is shooting an arrow at Tityos who is unveiling Leto; and in the last, the ram is speaking to Phrixus. Detailed descriptions of the images painted, carved, sculpted, or embroidered in an object could take away the reader's attention from the main topic of a poem, but, in the *Argonautica*, this disruption is only apparent. The scenes of the cloak are neither futile nor unintentional.

The ring-composition technique bounds the first and the sixth scenes, for the Cyclopes and Tityos are both Gaia's sons[12]. It seems that the images form a separate unity. However, the description of the Cyclopes working on Zeus' thunderbolt fits perfectly into the poem, since the theme concludes the world's creation that Orpheus sung as soon as the outward journey started[13]. The first scene of the ecphrasis is thus linked to the heroes' trip[14], as are the last two. Moreover, Zeus' thunderbolt is symbolically connected to the golden fleece, as, once in Jason's possession, its brilliance is compared to that of the thunderbolt (4.185).

The description of Apollo attacking the giant Tityos embodies the overcoming of the new gods (Apollo) over the old (Tityos), a deed which mirrors what the heroes accomplish by overthrowing the bronze giant off the cost of Crete. It is said that Talos was, among the heroes, the last specimen of the bronze race (4.1641-1642)[15]. Like Apollo, the Ptolemies, who were also deified, usher in a new world order. This shift from a "primeval chaos to the order of civilized society"[16] is exemplified through episodes where the Argonauts confront mythical beings, such as Talos or the earth-born

[8] EFFE 2001, 166 speaks of "the irresistible erotic glow" of Jason.

[9] The amazement would be inevitable in ceremonial processions in which viewers could witness the splendid tapestries that furnished the tent of Ptolemy and the colourful military tunics woven from gold. One of the most important corteges would have been the Grand Procession, with over eighty thousand troops (including twenty-three thousand cavalry) and dozens of floats, that took place somewhere probably around 279/278 BCE, during the *Ptolemaieia* as a tribute made by Philadelphus to his father; cf. MORI 2008, 26-7; ECKSTEIN 2007, 209-210; 2009, 251.

[10] On the influence of a Hellenistic painting whose subject was Thetis in the workshop of Hephaestus, see SHAPIRO 1980, 279.

[11] On the presence of this chariot race in Greek pottery, see Paus. 5.17.7; SHAPIRO 1980, 283.

[12] Cf. HUNTER 1993, 52 n. 26. Ring-composition technique can be found also in the ecphrasis' last words τοῖ' ἄρα δῶρα θεᾶς Ἰτωνίδος ἦεν Ἀθήνης at line 768, which refer back to θεᾶς Ἰτωνίδος at line 721; and there is an address to the reader at the end of the ecphrasis, as well as at its beginning; see also OTTO 2009, 190.

[13] Cf. KOOPMAN 2018, 219-220.

[14] There is another subtle link between the first scene and the island of Lemnos, where the Argonauts have landed, because Lemnos is the place where weapons were first forged, even though the Cyclopes were usually placed under Etna or the islands of the Lipari chain; see HUNTER 1993, 52 n. 25.

[15] Ironically, this new generation is in fact the ancient one: Homeric heroes are their sons.

[16] STEPHENS 2003, 210.

men from the dragon's teeth given to Aeetes and Cadmus during the primeval era of Thebes (3.1176-1187). These battles symbolize the triumph of civilization over chaos, reflecting the Ptolemies' divine role in establishing order. Although the Argonauts are not gods, the link that the Ptolemies have with the gods, and with Apollo in particular, supports this reading[17].

The reader is clearly invited to recall the Argonauts' voyage when Phrixus is mentioned, for he had arrived at Colchis with the ram, and it is for his fleece that the Argonauts set out from Thessaly. However, it remains unclear where exactly they are. If they are still crossing the Hellespont and Helle has just fallen into the sea, the ram is encouraging the young man not to give up and reach Colchis (1.256-258). But it is also possible that he could be commanding Phrixus to sacrifice him, after the arrival at Colchis (2.1146-1147). For some scholars there is no doubt that the animal does not speak unless when Helle falls into the sea[18]. But the precise setting is not really important. Apollonius wants to make the reader return to the story and he does so in such a way that can place him either in the Hellespont, where the Argonauts are going after Lemnos, or in Colchis, where they will arrive. In both cases, the scene points at the path that the heroes have to tread.

Apollonius, besides worrying about the consistency of his narrative, is also concerned about giving messages to his contemporary readers, who were learnt pupils of Alexandria's Library and the Ptolemies. The building of Thebes, in the second tableau, can be seen as an image of Alexandria presented as a centre for knowledge. The image illustrates the prevalence of science over physical strength. Zethus and Amphion each embody the two principles that a city needs to run: physical strength symbolised by Zethus shouldering a mountain peak, and scientific knowledge, as illustrated by Amphion singing with a lyre. While Amphion recalls Orpheus, Zethus evokes Heracles[19]. The scholiast interprets this scene as expressing the excellency of music and culture over irrational manhood[20]. It does not seem by chance that a rock, which is twice as large as the mountain peak carried by Zethus, trundles after Amphion because of the sound of the music. It is thus shown that science is much more powerful than human arms, probably as much as love, since both music and love have a seductive effect expressed by the same lemma, θέλγω[21]. Orpheus' song had already displayed the scientific nature of musical themes because it evokes Empedoclean cosmology, in which there is continuous transformation of the four elements dominated by two

[17] The reader does not yet know the episode. He can only reconnect it to the ecphrasis at the end of the story. But this is the way Apollonius wants to be read. The *Argonautica* is a poem that suggests links that are only perceptible to a reader willing to reread the poem a few times.

[18] For FRÄNKEL 1968, 294-295, the lamb only speaks at the moment the scholiast underlines it on *Arg.* 1.256-9.

[19] The strength of Heracles is highlighted by two expressions that present the hero's name in the form of a genitive. The lemmas to express it are βίη (1.122) and σθένος (1.531). Whereas the first comes from a Homeric-Hesiodic periphrases βίη Ἡρακληείη, commented by FANTUZZI–HUNTER 2004, 270, the other can be found in Theocritus, *Idyll* 25.110. On the concepts of βίη and σθένος in Apollonius, see SOUSA 2022b.

[20] Apollon. 1.740-741a Schol WENDEL 1935. Cf. SHAPIRO 1980, 280; KOOPMAN 2018, 222 n. 61. Euripides explores the opposition between the strong Zethus and the musician Amphion who enchanted stones by playing on his lyre in *Antiope*; see VIAN 1974, 258; PHILLIPS 2020, 207.

[21] Aphrodite is said to seduce virgins, θέλγεις ἁδμῆτας παρθενικάς (3.4-5); while Orpheus' singing is said to seduce nature with his voice and lyre, θέλξαι ἑνοπῇ (1.27), θελγομένας φόρμιγγι (1.31); see JÚNIOR 2019, 154.

opposite states, φιλότης and νεῖκος[22]. This tension is the dominant theme not only of the scenes embroidered, but also of the story, and of contemporary politics.

The tension between the two forces is felt as soon as the journey is started, in the election of the leader: it is Heracles, chosen by election, that nominates Jason[23]. The hero that is always willing to fight chooses the one who values diplomatic efforts over physical strength, as if there is a recognition by the old hero that a new era has arrived. In Lemnos, the tension reappears with Heracles' refusal to enter the city. He totally repudiates the love mission that the Argonauts accept. Once in Colchis, the theme returns in the Argonauts' discussion of the best strategy to achieve their goal: Cypris' help or their arms' support. Jason and Heracles thus embody φιλότης and νεῖκος, but in a special manner. In reality, both forces are present in each one of the heroes: Jason's entering Myrine with the cloak and the spear exhibits both, while Heracles is not insensitive to love, for he gets lost because of his affection for Hylas. Jason first dons the cloak upon entering Myrine, where the Argonauts will engage with the Lemnian women, symbolizing his role in facilitating the triumph of philia over neikos, to use Empedoclean terms[24].

The poet is always finding a way to bring together Jason and Heracles, until the latter vanishes[25]. Jason's cloak is no exception. Two of the scenes embroidered have a link to Heracles: Thebes' foundation, for this was the hero's birthplace, and the murder of Electryon's sons, who were the brothers of Heracles' mother, Alcmena. Heracles is crucial in the poem[26] (even after he is left behind[27]) also due to the ancestry claimed to him by both Alexander and Ptolemy[28].

The concepts of φιλότης and νεῖκος can be observed in the third tableau, where Aphrodite holds Ares' shield and sees herself reflected in it. The love goddess by using a war object as a toilette mirror[29], merges war and love in a seductive manner: long locks and a bared breast.

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[22] Whereas the idea of a deadly strife (1.498) which creates a cosmic order by sundering the earth, sea and sky, sung by Orpheus, has an Empedoclean inspiration, the eternity of the fixed orbits of the stars, moon, and sun, precludes the Empedoclean theory of transformation and seems influenced by the Aristotelian criticism of it; see KYRIAKOU 1994, 309-310.

[23] On Heracles' election, see, e.g., MORI 2008, 66-67; on Heracles' character, see, e.g., HUNTER 1993, 25-36; JÚNIOR 2019.

[24] STEPHENS 2003, 202. This is thus the cosmic message of the cloak.

[25] Heracles seems to have been seen by Lynceus in the Libyan desert, on their homecoming journey (4.1478).

[26] If it was not for Heracles, the Argonauts could have stayed in Myrine much longer; perhaps they even could have stayed there forever (1.863). To reach the Mysian coast without him would not be an easy task (1.1161-1168). The heroes long for Heracles' presence, even after he was forgotten in Mysia.

[27] FOSTER 2016, 136 interprets the loss of Heracles as a consequence of his "hyper-heroic stature": the hero transcends the "traditional heroic categories", passing "beyond the bounds of the Quest and towards divinity". He is a mortal that becomes a god after his death, therefore he can be seen as both a hero and a god, just like Alexander wanted to be regarded in life.

[28] Theocritus, writing an Idyll in honour of Ptolemy Philadelphus, places both Alexander and Ptolemy I as direct descendants from Heracles (17.26-27). For the Ptolemies it was crucial to demonstrate a divine heritage and, at the same time, be seen as heirs to the Egyptian throne. Therefore, they appropriate Alexander's image and all its symbols: "Ptolemy I seized Alexander's corpse in 321 and built a gigantic tomb for it in the Ptolemaic capital of Alexandria; Alexander's portrait appeared on Ptolemaic coinage; Ptolemy wrote a famous memoir of his campaigns with Alexander; and Alexander eventually became a central figure in the religious cult of the dynasty, and thus a putative ancestor" (ECKSTEIN 2009, 250). To a Hellenistic audience "Ptolemy presented himself as the divine son of Zeus by descent through Herakles and Dionysus, while to an Egyptian audience he was seen as an embodiment of Horus and the sons of Amon-Re" (MORI 2008, 27).

[29] DUBEL 2010, 16 underlines: "La pièce d'armement est détournée en objet de toilette; son épisème, en place d'un terrifiant gorgonéion, présente le visage de la déesse de la beauté: le motif héroïque a été

The next two descriptions illustrate those cosmic forces: the fight between the Teleboans and Electryon's sons represents strife, and the chariot race for the hand of Hippodamia embodies love. The blood-soaked plain is the result of a fight between two conflicting sides unable to come to an agreement (it was a claim felt as robbery)[30]. The deadly fall of Oenomaus from the chariot enables Hippodamia's marriage to Pelops[31]. A triptych appears in front of the readers' eyes: stasis in the centre panel (Aphrodite looking at her image) and movement on the outer faces of the tryptic, representing strife and love (the fourth and fifth scenes).

To understand the logical sequence of the images embroidered[32], the reader must pay attention to the juxtaposition of men and gods, much like the juxtaposition of myths and kings on the military cloaks, which were ornate with kings and mythological themes, and on Ptolemaic coins, which were both means of royal propaganda. The cloak has three scenes with gods (the Cyclopes, Aphrodite, and Apollo) and four with mortals (Amphion and Zethus; the Teleboans and Electryon's sons; Pelops, Oenomaus, Hippodamia and Myrtilus; and Phrixus with the ram). The first presents a cosmology (the Cyclopes finishing the world's creation) that progresses to the human world (Thebes' foundation), as in the shield of Achilles[33]. Then the next two scenes (the third and the sixth) which feature gods are preceded and followed by a human scene. As a result, after Aphrodite's tableau, there are two scenes with men, which underlines the double value of the goddess' description.

But the epic motif of the shield changed into a mirror causes a complete reversal of the concepts of love and war. And in reality things are not quite as they seem. The misconception and the deceit are even shown in the way that Aphrodite is living. The tale of the goddess' infidelity is presumed. But the moment is unclear: is she doing her toilette before or after going to bed with Ares[34]? The reader is puzzled about the image,

systématiquement détourné en motif érotique, et ce 'bouclier de bronze' n'est plus ni bouclier ni bronze. L'objet qui servait de support à l'ecphrasis archaïque est ici devenu l'ornement d'un nouveau support, un manteau, où il continue d'ailleurs à générer des images, en l'occurrence le reflet d'Aphrodite –un joli symbole du travail de réécriture opéré par Apollonios". On Jason as a hero that uses love instead of war to accomplish his mission, see, e.g., SHAPIRO 1980, 282; MORI 2008, 104 n. 67.

[30] The Taphians, who are also called Teleboans, tried to steal the cattle of Electryon, the king of Mycenae, because he did not recognize the legitimacy of their claim. They wanted to recover their great-grandfather's throne. The sons of Electryon protected their father and challenged the Taphians.

[31] Apollon. 1.763-64a Schol. WENDEL 1935 also remarks on the violence in the scene involving the Teleboans against Electryon's sons, as well as the contest and the love union in the other.

[32] LAWAL 1966 thinks that the ecphrasis has a didactic purpose, but I have my doubts on that. Others think that the scene's sequence is randomly organized (SHAPIRO 1980, 276). Equally absurd is to think that the main topic of *Argonautica* is "miserable relationships, between men and women in which suspicion and betrayal play a dominant part" (BULLOCH 1985, 594).

[33] In later antiquity it was common to interpret Achilles' shield in cosmic terms; cf. KOOPMAN 2018, 220; HUNTER 1993, 54. The *scholium* to this passage also gives a cosmic interpretation of Jason's cloak: "the cosmic order and men' actions", τὴν κοσμικὴν τάξιν καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράξεις (Apollon. 1.763-64a Schol. WENDEL 1935). However, several differences could still be underlined between the two texts. HUNTER 1993, 54-5 points out others, such as the cloak being a finished product, whereas "Homer describes the actual making of the shield" and the exclusion from the cloak of the Homeric feasting and marriage scenes. For Phillips 2020, 205 n.10, "Apollonius does not attempt to replicate structure of his most important model, the ecphrasis of Achilles' shield, but instead foregrounds his departures from it, most obviously by means of the cloak's more pronounced internal discontinuity".

[34] According to COLLINS 1967, 197, it "is an amusing picture of the goddess as a tousled courtesan, on the morning after a night with Ares, who, because of the presence of his shield, must still be in bed, sleeping late". Other scholars take this opinion, see, e.g., PAVLOCK 1990, 36, but others are less specific, cf., e.g., OTTO 2009, 191. For KOOPMAN 2018, 224, regardless of whether she is undressing or not, it is unquestionably Aphrodite that is depicted as an unfaithful wife.

and he does not know how to envision it. The description of the goddess could be of an image projected onto the shield as a mirror, in which the goddess turns her back to those who look at her. Perhaps she is seen from the front because of the mirrored image. The mirror is a way to play with the concepts of war and love.

Deceit also appears in the next two descriptions, for they represent more than it seems. Although the quarrel between the Teleboans and Electryon's sons is undoubtedly an image of νεῖκος, the carnage will enable a marriage. Amphitryon will take revenge on the slaughter of Alcmena's brothers to obtain her hand in marriage[35]. Therefore, love will profit from strife. And it is not just any wedding, for from this union Heracles will be born. The poet thus relies on his reader's knowledge in the interpretation of the scene.

The fifth tableau has this same doubleness. The chariot race between Pelops and Oenomaus has love at its origin, but it is a matter of strife between Pelops and Oenomaus, for the latter did not accept his daughter's marriage. The deceit is entwined with love because the problem is settled once and for all through Hippodamia's deception. The tale connects with the narrative in many ways[36]. Oenomaus' hostility towards Pelops marks a parallel with Aeetes' antagonism towards Medea's passion. Like Pelops, Jason will also triumph in love. The death of Myrtilus, Oenomaus' charioteer, has much in common with the murder of Apsyrtus, Medea's brother, who also drives a chariot. If the reader knows the story told by the scholiast, i.e., that Myrtilus is murdered through a strategy contrived by Hippodamia, who madly wanted to marry Pelops[37], the parallel with Medea's plot to kill her brother is very clear.

The fourth and fifth scenes conceal a message both to Philadelphus, whose territorial problems and ambitions of conquest soaked many plains[38], and to Arsinoë II, whose marriages, being strongly rooted in politics, could arouse suspicions about her trickery. In Apollonius' time it is possible that there was some gossip about Arsinoë's ambitions. After arriving in Egypt as a refugee, she benefited from the king's decision to exile his wife, Arsinoë I: in fact, she became queen of Egypt. Nevertheless, it is possibly that Ptolemy II could have decided to marry his sister and thus got rid of Arsinoë I without any influence from the former[39]. Even though no ancient source mentions Arsinoë II as having engineered his stepdaughter's exile, the sequence of events speaks for itself, making it possible that suspicions had arisen. Arsinoë had already previously accepted a marriage with Ptolemy Ceraunus to protect her difficult position at the time as queen

[35] This explanation is given by the Scholiast on Apollon. 1.747-751a Schol. WENDEL 1935, where the Hesiodic *Scutum* is seen as the best authority for the tale. The Hesiodic shield of Heracles, whose authenticity raised Apollonius' attention as a scholar, also mentions Thebes several times (2, 13, 49, 80, 105), the slaughter of Electryon's sons committed by the Teleboans (17-20), and a chariot race is described as one of men's activity in the city (305-313). On the influence of the Hesiodic shield of Herakles, see MASON 2016, 9-11.

[36] On this parallel, see COWAN 2021, 152 n. 33.

[37] Apollon.. 1. 752-758a Schol. WENDEL 1935.

[38] STROOTMAN 2014, 54 says that "the Hellenistic empires were notoriously warlike. They were in essence tribute-taking military organizations whose rulers were burdened with the obligation to pursue territorial expansion and military glory". ECKSTEIN 2006, 209 speaks of "the royal obsession with victory ideology", inherited from Alexander the Great and testified by "the Macedonian conquest of the Persian empire [which] was one of history's greatest examples of a devastating strategic offensive", for the Ptolemies "lived in Alexander's shadow, consciously imitating his strategically aggressive spirit" (ECKSTEIN 2006, 95).

[39] On Arsinoë I's exile, see CARNEY 2013, 67-70.

of Thrace and Macedonia, after her first husband's death[40]. But things went wrong, and she had two of her three sons murdered by the new husband; so, she departed all at once to Samothrace, and from there to Egypt. Even earlier, after she arrived at Thrace to be Lysimachus' wife in her middle teens, it is not unlikely that she had been involved in the murder of her stepson, Agathocles, as a means of supporting political control of her sons[41]. Medea's deceits are an indirect, and hazardous, way to evocate the divine queen of Egypt.

Additionally, other parallels can be found in the cloak. The fifth scene with Apollo shooting at Tityos to protect his mother from violence can recall the hopes that Arsinoë put on her eldest son, Ptolemy, to restore the control of Macedonia and Thrace, after Lysimachus' death. Tityos would be, on this reading, the prefiguration of the ruthless and impious Ptolemy Ceraunus, while Apollo would be the symbol of the young Ptolemy, which fits perfectly with the Ptolemaic imagery[42]. Ceraunus' presence in the cloak is also suggested by the first scene (the Cyclopes making Zeus' thunderbolt) for thunderbolt is the meaning of the epithet Ceraunus[43].

The ecphrasis of Jason's cloak, besides giving a Ptolemaic image of the epic hero, crosses the Hellenistic history in several ways and is itself a work of art appearing in front of the reader's eyes. It brings sound, colour, motion and light as if we were seeing a film: the beating of metal struck by an anvil and a hammer, the voice of Amphion singing; the green of the grassland completely stained with the red blood of the carnage; the clatter of the horses' hoofs and chariots' wheels running and the rumble of a wheel breaking and the bang of a man falling; the whistle of the darted arrow; and the sibling of a talking ram. Apollonius employs ecphrasis to explore how the intertwining of written words with pictorial art can establish networks of meanings, conjuring images in readers' minds: the splendour of Ptolemaic processions, the sounds of building construction echoing through Alexandria, the Library's memory as a hub of knowledge, and the spectacle of familial conflicts that stained the royal household with bloodshed. Literature and historical events are intimately connected, and Jason's cloak mirrors it.

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[40] CARNEY 2013, 56 explains her decision to marry Ceraunus as the outcome of her ambition: "she wanted to rule for them [her sons] and she desired the status that came from being the mother of the king and the power that often accrued to a royal widow with still young sons".

[41] The sources for this murder disagree on Arsinoë's role; cf. see CARNEY 2013, 44-45. On the marriage of Arsinoë II with Ptolemy Ceraunus, see also HAMMOND–WALBANK 1988, 247-249.

[42] Apollo provides an important image for the Ptolemaic kingdom, since "the religious association of the king with the sun (and the moon) has a long tradition in Egypt and the Ancient Near East, but in Hellenistic empires the sun became an emblem of kingship more profoundly than in any of the preceding monarchies" (STROOTMAN 2014, 51). Putting the scene in more recent times is not reasonable because it gives to Ptolemy Philadelphus the abductor's role.

[43] On the reason for this epithet, see CARNEY 2013, 50.

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