INTRODUCTION

1 APOLLONIUS AND THE ARGONAUTICA

Our principal sources for the life of Apollonius and for the composition of *Arg.* are three biographical notices, going back at least to the Roman imperial period, and what seems to be a list of those who were in charge of the Royal Library at Alexandria, preserved in a miscellany on a papyrus of the second century AD; this evidence is, however, riddled with contradiction, anecdote and some obvious errors.[1] A generous reading of these texts suggests that Ap. served as Librarian at Alexandria in the central decades of the third century, but poetic and scholarly activity well into the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BC) can hardly be ruled out and may indeed be thought probable. Uncertainty is increased by the fact that *Arg.* does not contain explicit references to contemporary events and personages, and the identification of implicit references, as also the explanation of elements of the narrative in terms of contemporary concerns, is always a matter for critical judgement and hence potential difference of opinion;[2] the history of scholarship on *Arg.* clearly illustrates how difficult it is for agreement to be reached. Similar uncertainties beset attempts to establish absolute (or even relative) chronologies through the obvious intertextual relations between *Arg.* and some works of Theocritus and Callimachus.[3] In particular, the very rich pattern of correspondence between *Arg.* and Callimachus' *Aitia* has suggested to most of those who have studied the matter that Ap. is usually the borrower from Callimachus (which also seems to have been the prevailing view of ancient γραμματικοί), but that does not take account of the possibility (to put it at its weakest) that the two poets, working in the same Alexandrian institution, were engaged in an on-going interchange of poetic ideas. We are, moreover, hampered by our uncertainty of the process and chronology by which the four books of the *Aitia* were circulated,[4] and the argument is thus in constant danger of merely chasing its own tail.

[1] Hunter 1989: 1–12 will not be repeated here; translations and fuller discussion of the ancient evidence may be sought there. See also Rengakos 1992, Green 1997: 1–8, Lefkowitz 2008. Murray 2012 has stressed that we would do well not to assume that the list of (?) Librarians on *POxy.* 1241 has very good authority, even allowing for the correction of what look to be a couple of obvious slips.

[2] The rich geographical and cultural material in *Arg.* allows the thought that much was indeed determined by Ptolemaic and contemporary concerns, but (again) persuasive 'proof' is very hard to find. For certain aspects of how *Arg.* reflects a third-century world see Hunter 1995.

[3] See pp. 21–5 below.

[4] There is a helpful summary of views in Harder 2012: 1.2–15.

Jackie Murray has recently proposed that a pattern of astronomical indications allows the Argonauts' progress to be mapped precisely against the astronomical calendar of 238 BC, the year in which Ptolemy III seems to have inaugurated a new calendrical era for Egypt.[5] Such a hypothesis can hardly be ruled out on the basis of the ancient biographical notices that have survived, and there is in fact nothing inherently implausible about a date as late as this.[6] What any such reckoning cannot, however, successfully encompass is the length of time (many years?) the composition of a work such as *Arg.* may have taken and the possibility, or even likelihood, that parts at least were constantly being revised; although there are no clear signs of this, we cannot assume that the text we have was considered by Ap. to be fully finished.[7] As for revision, for six places in Book 1, and perhaps also for two in Book 2, the scholia cite variant versions, ranging from one to five verses, which they ascribe to a 'preliminary edition' (προέκδοσις) of the poem; it is clear from the nature of these verses that we are indeed dealing with a different text of the poem, something which cannot be explained as a concentration of the kind of casual variants which inevitably arise in the course of transmission.[8] What lies behind these facts, and to what extent knowledge of this 'preliminary edition' has shaped some of the anecdotal tradition that obviously surrounded Ap. in antiquity, in particular the alleged 'quarrel' with Callimachus, remain fascinating provocations to speculation. The very existence, however, of this προέκδοσις, whatever the term denotes, is a reminder that the search for a date of 'publication' for a poem such as *Arg.* is directed at a very different object than would be the case for a modern literary work.

Many of the principal concerns of *Arg.*, travel, geography and ethnography, cultic and cultural aetiology, female psychology and characterization, the power and effects of *erôs*, magic and the supernatural, are shared not just with other poetry of the third century, but also with what we can reconstruct of Hellenistic literate culture more broadly. It is often observed that the very breadth of the canvas across which the narrative of the epic unfolds is not merely a re-imagining of the spirit of the *Odyssey*, and in particular of the encounters of Odysseus with 'other', often

[5] Murray 2014. Murray is to publish a full version of her views in a forthcoming monograph, and a proper judgement about the matter will have to wait until then.
[6] For the view that 1021–2 echo Callimachus' 'Lock of Berenice' (Euergetes' young bride), a poem which cannot have been composed before 245 BC, see n. ad loc. So too, 1629–30 seem related to Callimachus' 'Victoria Berenices', a poem probably of *c.* 240, cf. n. ad loc.
[7] See, e.g., nn. on 945–7, 1601–2.
[8] On these verses of the *proekdosis* cf. Fantuzzi 1988: 87–120.

threatening cultures, but also seems to reflect the broad horizons of the international aspirations of the Ptolemies.

2 THE FOURTH BOOK

The events of Book 4 may be schematically set out as follows:[9]

1–5 Address to the Muse
6–108 Medea's flight from Aietes' palace and reception by the Argonauts
109–82 Medea and Jason take the Fleece
183–293 Flight from Colchis to the Paphlagonian coast
294–337 Argonauts and Colchians sail up the Istros to the Adriatic
338–521 Planning, execution and aftermath of killing of Apsyrtos
522–657 Trip through central Europe to western Mediterranean
658–752 Purification of Jason and Medea by Circe
753–981 Hera and Thetis help the Argonauts pass through the Planktai
982–1222 Stop on Drepane; wedding of Jason and Medea
1223–1392 The Syrtis and the Libyan desert; *Argo* transported to Lake Triton
1393–1619 The Hesperides, deaths of Kanthos and Mopsus, intervention by Triton, gift of clod of earth to Euphemos
1620–88 Voyage to Crete; episode of Talos
1689–1772 Voyage home: Anaphe, Euphemos' dream, Aeginetan *hydrophoria*
1773–81 Farewell to the heroes

Book 3 had concluded with perhaps the most epically 'marked' scene of the whole poem, Jason's overcoming of the fire-breathing bulls and the earthborn warriors. Book 4, by contrast, is characterized by scenes of flight, of despair, and of deception, but also by an eerie other-worldliness (the dragon which guards the Fleece, the ritualized killing of Apsyrtos, Phaethon's smouldering body, Circe's 'Empedoclean' animals, the emptiness of the Syrtis, the Garden of the Hesperides, Triton, Talos etc.) which we have good reason to believe was as experimental when Ap. composed it as it seems to us now. As the Argonauts confront one such τέρας after another, readers too are forced to stretch their own imaginations to encompass the new and the strange: Ap. makes all of us fellow-travellers with the Argonauts. Hera's protection of the Argonauts (cf. 11, 510, 576–80, 640–8, 753–841) lends some pattern to the first parts of the book, but a powerful sense of improvisation and randomness, nowhere more strongly felt than in Jason's formulation to Medea of how he plans to

[9] This plan is intended merely as a guide; it does not seek to distinguish the major and minor structural markers which Ap. includes in the text.

deal with the threat from Apsyrtos' pursuit (395–409n.), in the purposeless 'drift' of the Argonauts past the stench from Phaethon's body and in Hera's intervention to prevent them taking a fatal turn (619–44), lends Book 4 a remarkably unsettling feeling; no more than the Argonauts do we really know where we are.

Book 4 picks up and continues some of the themes of the Greek encounter with foreign cultures adumbrated already in Book 3. Jason had described to Medea the patterns of Greek culture and civilization (3.1085–95), apparently so remote from the barbarian land she inhabits, and she – with what is, for the reader, in the light of Euripides' *Medea*, a savage irony – contrasts Greek respect for agreements with what she knows of her own father;[10] this, on the surface, is a distant eastern land where it is not just burial customs (3.200–9n.) and Medea's practices with drugs and body-parts (51–2) which are surpassingly 'other'. That theme resurfaces strongly in Book 4 after the securing of the Fleece, when Jason presents the success of the Argonauts' expedition as determining whether or not 'Hellas' will win great glory (202–5, with n. ad loc.) and proclaims Medea the benefactor of 'all Achaia' (195–6).[11] In evoking both the Trojan War and the Greek wars against the Persians, Jason casts the present poem within a long tradition of Hellenic struggle. Aietes, conversely, speaks the language of tyrannical threat (231–5n.), so different from the communal values and ὁμόνοια of the Argonauts;[12] the fact that Medea's subsequent actions and those of the two teams of pursuing Colchians are driven by overriding fear of returning to face punishment at Aietes' hands speaks volumes for the difference between cultures. The theme recurs in Arete's arguments to her husband on Drepane, where 'the whole city laughed with pleasure at their arrival – you would say that they rejoiced over their own children' (996–7): Aietes, according to Arete, lives so far away that they know nothing of him, whereas Argos and Thessaly are close at hand. In his reply, Alcinous acknowledges that Aietes could, if he chose, bring war to Hellas (1103), as the barbarian Persians notoriously had done.

It is indeed Medea, the 'foreign body' who accompanies the Argonauts back to Greece, through whom the theme of inter-cultural confrontation is mediated. Much modern discussion has been devoted to the question of Medea's state of mind and attitude to Jason in Book 4,[13] but Ap. uses what may be termed 'mirror passages' between Books 3 and 4 to mark the consequences for Medea of her decision (made with Hera's reinforcement, 3.818) to help Jason. Thus, for example, her nocturnal flight in terror from Colchis (41–53) evokes (and reverses) her procession to the

[10] Cf. 3.1105n. [11] For such ideas cf. also, e.g., 1.243, 3.347.
[12] On the importance of ὁμόνοια in *Arg.* see Hunter 1995: 21–4.
[13] The bibliography may be pursued through Hunter 1987 and Dyck 1989.

temple of Hecate to meet Jason in Book 3, just as the simile comparing Medea in her fear of being handed over to the pursuing Colchians to a poor working woman (1062–6) forms a pair with the simile depicting the first awakening of her love for Jason (3.291–7). What is stressed in Book 4 is not, as many critics would have it, any 'extinction' of Medea's *erôs* (far from it, cf. 445–9, 1168), but rather her fearful isolation now that she has cut her ties with her family (vividly expressed by Circe at 739–48) and, particularly, with a father whose penchant for terrible violence and punishment she knows well (e.g. 1043–4); in Book 4, Medea has no alternative but to follow the consequences of her decision and thus entrust herself entirely to the protection and promises of Jason and his crew (88–91). Even in Book 3, Medea had been racked by doubt and guilt almost as soon as she had handed the φάρμακα over to Jason, an action which she viewed as a κακὸν ἔργον (3.1157–62), but there is no way back. Arete's defence of Medea to Alcinous (1080–3), which does not include the killing of Apsyrtos (of which Arete is ignorant), effectively accepts this view of Medea's abandonment of Colchis, which is indeed how Medea had presented it to her (1015–19), while glossing Medea's behaviour as the kind of 'mistake upon mistake' which humans constantly make. Medea's principal actions in Book 4, the taking of the Fleece, the luring of Apsyrtos to his death and the destruction of Talos, are all aimed at securing a safe and successful *nostos* for herself and the Argonauts.[14] In fact, however, we know that her safe arrival in Greece will eventually lead to a very bitter fracturing of her relationship with Jason, a break most clearly foreshadowed in Book 4 in her speeches of reproach to Jason at 355–90 (where see n.) and to the Argonauts in turn at 1031–52, which evoke and echo the harsh exchanges between Jason and Medea in Euripides' *Medea*, thus keeping the events of that tragedy firmly before our eyes.

A striking feature of Book 4 is indeed the rich use of tragic models to mark certain significant moments and narrative patterns.[15] The dominant tragic pattern in Book 4 is not the foreshadowing of the events of Euripides' *Medea*, but rather a web of analogies between the killing of Apsyrtos and tragic versions of the death of Agamemnon and Orestes' subsequent killing of Clytemnestra. This pattern, by imitating the way in

[14] The poet leaves somewhat unclear why the Argonauts wish to land in Crete and therefore are threatened by Talos (cf. 1635–6n.), and it is sometimes claimed that this episode is simply added in an inorganic fashion for the sake of the description of Medea's magical powers. That Talos is a 'leftover' of the previous Bronze Race is clearly relevant to the important pattern whereby the Argonauts are made to confront earlier stages of the cosmos (Hunter 1993: 166–7), but from Medea's point of view Talos is simply one more obstacle to be removed.

[15] Book 3 also had almost certainly drawn extensively on tragic, very probably Sophoclean, models, Hunter 1989: 19. On *Arg.* and tragedy more generally cf. Nishimura-Jensen 1996.

which the paradigm of Orestes' revenge floats in and out of the *Odyssey*, belongs in part with Ap.'s large-scale debt to the Homeric poems (p. 14–21 below); the Homeric model is, morever, elaborated through echoes, including specific verbal allusions, to tragic treatments of the House of Atreus, in particular Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Both the killing itself and the sacrificial imagery with which it is described, as well as the subsequent mutilation of the body (477–8), all evoke the death of Agamemnon in both epic and tragedy (468n., 477n.), and the explicit place given to the Furies (476, 714) suggests, above all, the aftermath of the death of Clytemnestra in Aeschylus. So too, the purification of Medea and Jason by Circe replays the Delphic purification of Orestes (560n., 693–4n., 705–6n.); Clytemnestra's troubling and prophetic dream is here transferred to Circe herself (663–4n.), as Apsyrtos (like Agamemnon) is not allowed any warning at all of what is to happen. The epic background of much of this material lies not so much in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as in the Cyclic poems, and so these tragic patterns must also be seen within Ap.'s considerable debt to, and *mimesis* of the manner of, the Epic Cycle.[16] There is, then, a rich literary and cultural history written into the epic, which produces an effect of deep layering.

One result of this layering is a sense of successive generic stages in an attempt to encompass and describe a now very past world. What, for example, did Ap.'s contemporaries know of *maschalismos* as a 'real' practice (cf. 477n.)? When the poet says that spitting out the blood of the murdered man 'three times' is θέμις for murderers (479), we may ask what kind of imaginative act we have to perform in order to think ourselves into the past. If early epic and tragedy are two genres which offer models of such imaginative recreation, then Ap. also uses Presocratic science and speculation as a third. Circe is accompanied by creatures which resemble Empedocles' weird forms which first emerged at the beginning of time (672–5n., 676–81n.); Empedoclean cosmogony is thus another cultural model for imagining the past. Parmenides too is evoked in the 'gates and halls of Night' from where the Rhodanos is said to rise (629–30n.), thus 'familiarizing' an extraordinary geography but also – given the context of Parmenides' proem – emphasizing the inspired strangeness of the whole. So too, Medea's powers of 'the evil eye' by which she bewitches Talos are in part described through an evocation of Presocratic physical theory (cf. 1665–72n.).

This marked use of Presocratic speculation is also a contribution to a debate about the kind of traces of 'history' which poetry preserves; our fullest ancient source for that debate is the discussion of Homer in Book 1 of Strabo's *Geography*, written in the time of Augustus, but we know that it

[16] See below p. 140.

was a very active debate in third-century Alexandria. Eratosthenes' *bon mot* that one would be able to follow the path of Odysseus' wanderings 'when the shoemaker who stitched the bag of winds was found' (Strabo 1.2.15) is only the best-known reflection of this concern to establish what, if any, 'reality' was to be expected from poetry. Strabo's answer was that Homer's geography was indeed rooted in reality, however much that reality had been elaborated with pleasure-giving μῦθοι, and he will not have been the first to take this view. Apollonius' 'Odyssean' geography (cf. below) already shows clearly how the Homeric hero's wanderings had been located in a known geography (SW Italy, Sicily, Corcyra), even if one where marvellous *paradoxa* can still happen. The use of Presocratic patterns allows the Argonauts to confront extraordinary material which is, nevertheless, sanctioned by an authority which is beyond the 'scholarly' concerns of the Alexandrian Library; from an Alexandrian perspective, the Presocratics (particularly those who composed in hexameters) were, to oversimplify, poised between μῦθος and λόγος, between poetic myth and rational reflection, and this made them very suitable vehicles through which to express the peculiar nature of the 'truth' of poetry. We may perhaps think of this as an alternative model to allegorization for how poetic material could be presented and/or understood.

3 THE RETURN ITINERARY

At 2.420–2 Phineus tells Jason that, if the Argonauts pass safely through the Clashing Rocks on their voyage to Colchis, 'a god will lead you by another route away from Aia', and the Argonauts remember his words at 4.254–5 when they pause on the south coast of the Black Sea in their escape from the pursuing Colchians. Ap.'s readers will have been tantalized by Phineus' riddling lack of detail, which stands in sharp contrast to the pedantic precision of his instructions for the outward voyage, as both poetic and geographical tradition had bequeathed to Ap. a variety of possible return routes for the Argonauts.[17] One possibility was in fact to return by the same (direct) route as that of the outward voyage, as the Clashing Rocks were now fixed immobile and no longer posed an almost insurmountable obstacle (2.604–6); the scholia tell us that Sophocles (in the *Skythai*, fr. 547R), Herodorus of Heraclea (*FGrHist* 31 F10) and Callimachus (fr. 9) were among those who had exploited that possibility.[18] Ap.'s Argonauts do not know (cf. 1252–5, 2.1190–1) that this will be one

[17] Helpful surveys in Delage 1930: ch. 3, Vian III 11–20, Vian 1987, Dufner 1988: 128–33.

[18] Fraser 1972: II 628–9, Harder 2012: 2.162–3. It remains a puzzle how Callimachus combined a return through the Bosporus with episodes clearly set in the west (e.g. on Corcyra).

consequence of their success in traversing the Rocks (this information was perhaps one of the things which Phineus did not believe it was *themis* for them to know, 2.311–13), but little is made of the potential narrative ironies that such a situation lays open. Rather, Ap. adopts a return route which is not only as ἕτερος, 'different', as possible in certain respects from the outward voyage, a difference in fact neatly symbolized by the contrast between the passage through the Clashing Rocks and that through the Planktai, but one which allows him to encompass the whole tradition of Argonautic voyaging to which he was heir. By claiming authority for this route in the primeval knowledge of Egyptian priests and the travels of a now nameless conqueror and civilizer, whose records survive at Aia (259–81, cf. 272–6n.), Ap. not only creates a marked difference from Phineus' dry and precise *periegesis* (cf. 257–93n.), but appeals to a secret wisdom befitting the extraordinary journey which the Argonauts are to undertake, a journey which will, in some senses, take them too back to the beginning of time.

From an early date the Argonauts were brought back to Greece by circuitous and fantastic routes. Hesiod (fr. 241)[19] apparently took them from Aia up the Phasis, and from there into the stream of Ocean in the extreme north, from where they voyaged west and south around the imagined land mass to Africa, where they then carried the *Argo* across the desert to the Mediterranean; this was in principle the route adopted also by Pindar in *Pythian* 4 and, so the scholia inform us, by Antimachus in the *Lyde* (fr. 76 Matthews). Libya, which plays such an important role in *Arg.* 4, had a very firm place in the Argonautic saga. Herodotus 4.179 reports a *logos* which is very reminiscent of *Arg.*, and almost certainly echoed in it,[20] but also very different. Before the expedition, the story goes, Jason wanted to make dedications at Delphi, including a bronze tripod; as he was sailing around the Peloponnese, he was blown off course at Cape Malea southwards to Libya and was caught in the shallows of Lake Triton,[21] where the eponymous god appeared to him and told him to give him the tripod; in return for this, Triton showed Jason and his crew how to leave the lake. The god placed the tripod in his own temple and told the crew that when one of their descendants carried off the tripod, 'one hundred Greek cities would be established around Lake Triton'; as a result of this, the local inhabitants hid the tripod. Herodotus places these events much further west than is Ap.'s 'Lake Triton' (cf. 1311n.), but Ap.'s narrative at 1537–1619 clearly follows the Herodotean pattern very

[19] It is debated in which poem or poems (the *Catalogue*, the *Megalai Ehoiai*?) Hesiod told of the Argonauts' return; see Hirschberger 2004: 452–4, D'Alessio 2005: 195–9.
[20] Cf. 1570n., 1581–2n., 1731–64n.
[21] With Jason's ἀπορία of Hdt. 4.179.2 cf. 1539–40.

closely.[22] Herodotus' account also reminds us how deep and early is the fusion of the adventures of Odysseus, who was also blown off course at Cape Malea, with those of the Argonauts; Ap.'s Argonauts will both lead and follow where Odysseus travelled.[23]

Two prose writers nearer in time to Ap. opened new geographical possibilities which he was to exploit. Probably in the first half of the fourth century, in a work *On Harbours,* Timagetos described the Istros (Danube) as rising in the 'Celtic mountains' and splitting into two branches, one emptying into the Black Sea (presumably) on the NW coast, the other into the Mediterranean, though exactly where is uncertain (Σ 257–62b, 282–91a = *FHG* IV 519);[24] the scholia report that Timagetos brought the Argonauts into the Mediterranean through these two branches and claim that Ap. 'follows' him in this. Scholiasts, like modern scholars, are fond of identifying a direct connection between texts which happen to survive, but we do not in fact know whether Timagetos was the first to propose such a river system, nor to what extent he was directly influential upon Ap. What is certain, however, is that by the end of the fourth century it was a common idea that the Istros had a branch which emptied, not west of Italy, but rather on the north coast of the Adriatic;[25] the existence of the Istroi tribe on the northern Adriatic coast and another (small) river there named Istros no doubt helped to facilitate this misconception (cf. Strabo 1.3.15, Diod. Sic. 4.56.8).

Diodorus Siculus 4.56.3–6 reports that 'not a few both of the ancient historians and of those who came after, including Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F85)' reported that the Argonauts sailed up the Tanais (Don) to its source and then dragged the *Argo* over land to another river which flowed into Ocean; they then sailed anticlockwise round Ocean and into the Mediterranean through the Pillars of Heracles at its western end.[26] This itinerary allowed such writers to explain 'visible signs' of the Argonauts'

[22] Herodotus notes that Jason was caught 'in the shallows of Lake Triton, before sighting land'; Ap. (and perhaps others before him) redistributed this motif into two parts – the Argonauts are indeed trapped in Lake Triton, but the unforeseen shallows seem to correspond to the Syrtis of 1237–49.

[23] See below pp. 14–17. [24] Cf. further *RE* 6A.1071–3.

[25] Cf. 282–3n., Ps.-Scylax 20 (with Shipley 2011: 105), Theopompus, *FGrHist* 115 F129, Arist. *HA* 7.598b15–17. The geography of the northern Adriatic, as it appears in *Arg.* 4, is very inexact and impressionistic. Strabo 1.2.39, immediately after citing Callimachus fr. 11 on the Colchian foundations in Illyria (cf. below p. 22), reports that 'some say that Jason's crew sailed a great distance up the Istros, and others say that he reached the Adriatic'. It is unclear to whom Strabo is referring (cf. n. 47 below), but the juxtaposition of that notice to an extensive quotation from Callimachus is at least suggestive.

[26] Σ 282–91b ascribes this Argonautic route to Scymnus of Chios (fr. 5 Gisinger); on this periegetic writer of (probably) the late third – early second century BC cf. *RE* 3A.661–72.

presence in the western Mediterranean, such as on Aethalia (Elba, cf. 654–8), and this would have been particularly important for Timaeus, the great historian of the Greek west, who was clearly an important source for Ap.[27] It also allowed the Argonauts to come into close contact with sites associated with Odysseus' travels by those who placed a major part of them in the west, rather than removing them to the outer reaches of Ocean, the so-called ἐξωκεανισμός (cf. Strabo 1.2.37); this too was to prove very important for Ap. After the voyage eastwards (at least as far as the west coast of Italy), the Argonauts were blown by winds to the Libyan Syrtis, where they were guided to safety by Triton, 'who ruled Libya at that time', and in return they gave him 'a bronze tripod inscribed with ancient characters', which remained 'until recent times' among the people of Euhesperides. Diodorus proceeds to criticize unnamed others who took the Argonauts up the Istros to its source and then down a branch of the same river which allegedly flowed into the Adriatic; 'time has demonstrated them wrong' (cf. Strabo 1.2.39).

From these various poetic, historiographical and geographical traditions, Ap. constructed (or adopted) a route which allowed his Argonauts to visit most of the places previously associated with them, except for Ocean and the far west of the Mediterranean.[28] In his scheme (see the map at the beginning of the book which shows the route as envisaged by Ap., including his geography of rivers, imposed on a modern map of the Mediterranean), the Argonauts (and one group of pursuing Colchians) sail NE across the Black Sea, and then directly to the Adriatic, by means of the Istros, which is imagined to flow from the far north before splitting into branches which flowed into the Black Sea and the Adriatic.[29] After their Adriatic adventures, including the murder of Apsyrtos, the Argonauts enter the Eridanos (Po, cf. 505–6n.) and proceed NW until, thanks to Hera's intervention, they turn south down the Rhodanos (Rhone), which was imagined to flow from the 'Celtic Lakes' both north into Ocean and south to the Mediterranean. From there the Argonauts' route home encompasses the west coast of Italy, the Straits of Messina, with Scylla, Charybdis and the Wandering Rocks, Corcyra ('Drepane', the Homeric Scherie), Libya, and finally Crete and the Aegean islands. The two major 'joins' in the narrative are both clearly signalled, and in such a

[27] Interest in an Ocean route for the Argonauts may have been increased by the publication near the end of the fourth century of Pytheas' *On Ocean*, an account of his travels in the northern Atlantic, cf. Cunliffe 2001, Roller 2006: 57–91; the date of this work remains, however, fiercely debated.

[28] We cannot say whether Ap.'s route was, in its complex comprehensiveness, original to him, but it seems not unlikely; see Dufner 1988: 145–6.

[29] Callimachus too (frr. 9–11) used this route for the pursuing Colchians, but not apparently for his Argonauts; see p. 22 below.