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QUAE SUPERSUNT

*SEMA POLYPHEMOU: A CASE OF PARALEIPSIS IN THE ARGONAUTICA OF APOLLONIUS RHODIUS*¹

The aged Thessalian hero, Polyphemos, one of the less renowned Argonauts, plays a prominent role within one of the *Argonautica*'s more colorful episodes, the "Rape of Hylas" (1.1172–1357). When the Argonauts bivouac in Mysia, they are warmly received by the locals (1.1179–1181). All the same, the Argonauts scour about for bedding and firewood (1.1182–1186).² Heracles searches for a tree to fashion a new oar to replace the one he had just broken (1.1187–1206). Hylas sets off alone to fetch water for their meal. He is seized by a water nymph who had become enamored of his beauty (1.1207–1239). Alone of all the Argonauts, Polyphemos hears the boy's cries. Sorely distressed, he immediately sets out in hot pursuit of Hylas whom he fears has been kidnapped by bandits or attacked by wild beasts (1.1240–1252). As he pursues Hylas, he chances upon Heracles and Polyphemos apprises him of the disaster (1.1253–1260). Heracles is overwhelmed by the news (1.1261–1264). He immediately drops his tree and embarks upon his own frantically senseless search for Hylas. While Polyphemos and Heracles vainly search for Hylas, the Argonauts, spurred on by a suddenly favorable wind, depart Mysia unwittingly absent Heracles, Hylas, and Polyphemos (1.1273–1279).

A number of critics have found Polyphemos' presence detrimental to the overall artistry of the scene. He distracts from and so dissipates the emotional force of Heracles' distress.³ Polyphemos introduces into the scene a morass of aetiological and ethnographic details that

¹ The author would like to thank audiences at CAMWS 2004, the CUNY graduate center and the anonymous readers of the *Classical Bulletin* for many helpful suggestions. Any persistent errors are entirely my responsibility. The text of *Argonautica* used throughout is that of Vian. Citations of the *Argonautica* are given by book number and line, which appear in brackets immediately following the quotation. The spelling of Greek names is consciously inconsistent. Names that have well established Anglicized/Latinized forms are used. "Polyphemos" has been transliterated to distinguish the Argonaut from the Cyclops. Less common Greek names are, by and large, transliterated. Abbreviations of ancient authors and works follow those of *Liddell & Scott* and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

² Vian 1974:44–45 perceptively notes the contradiction between the Argonauts being hospitably received by the Kians and then undertaking a search for water, wood and bedding; these acts point to an alternative tradition in which the Argonauts are less than warmly welcomed.

³ Knaack 1883:29; Garson 1963:262–263.

undermine its coherence.⁴ Theocritus' near-contemporary *Idyll* 13 also recounts the Hylas episode. Theocritus omits Polyphemos. This has often been taken as a sign of both Apollonius' priority and Theocritus' criticism.⁵ Excising Polyphemos is an obvious improvement; the Hylas episode is better off without this heroic appendage "pursuing, rather ineptly, an aetiological errand of A's."⁶ In sum Polyphemos is a poorly conceived and poorly executed embellishment.⁷

More recently, several critics have argued that Polyphemos is a much better conceived addition. Beyond displaying a scholastic intimacy with obscure local histories that connect a Polyphemos with both Hylas and Mysia,⁸ Apollonius introduces the aged warrior into the scene for positive aesthetic reasons. Polyphemos serves as a foil to Heracles. Both are overwrought when they realize that Hylas has fallen into danger. Polyphemos "groans greatly" (μεγάλ' ἔστεινεν [1.1248]), but Heracles is more distressed. Heracles becomes so emotionally agitated that "sweat poured down his brows and his blood boiled" (τῷ δ' αἰόντι κατὰ κροτάφων ἄλις ἰδρώσῃ κήκειν, ἂν δὲ κελαϊνὸν ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις ζέεν αἶμα [1.1261–1262]). Polyphemos immediately draws his sword and runs in the direction of the sound (1.1248–1250) while Heracles roams "wherever his feet might take him" (ἐς δὲ κέλευθον τὴν θέεν ἦ πόδες αὐτοῖ ὑπέκφερον ἀίσσοντα [1.1263–1264]). An evaluative comparison lies in the parallelism.

⁴ Vian 1974:46: "Apollonios ignore cette version (i.e. Strabo's and Aristotle's account of the foundation of Kios); mais il combine les deux autres (i.e. Autocharis' and Socrates' versions [Σ 4.1470 (Wendel 1958:318); Σ 1.1207b (Wendel 1958:109–110)]) en insérant Polyphémos dans la quête d'Hylas sans se soucier beaucoup de justifier son intervention." He later 1974:48 tempers his criticism: "Si nous insistons, peut-être à l'excès, sur le caractère disparate de matériaux employés par Apollonios, c'est afin de mettre mieux en lumière la complexité de son récit..."

⁵ Wilamowitz 1905:161; 1906:177–178; Knaack 1883:29; 1888:136–138; Gow 1938:11–12 argue that omitting Polyphemos indicates both Theocritus' superiority and Apollonius' priority. Cf. Köhnken 1965 who offers the most systematic attempt to establish Theocritean priority. See Griffith 1966:300–302 and Serrao 1971:139–140 for a critique of this position. Theocritean priority does not necessarily translate into a positive evaluation of Polyphemos' presence in Mysia. Legrande 1898:76 asserts that Theocritus wrote *Idyll* 13 first. Apollonius imported Polyphemos as a something of a lunge at originality: "c'est pour éviter le plagiat trop brutal qu'il transporte au personnage de Polyphème." Dover 1971:180 and Hunter 1999:204 both lean toward Apollonian priority without the corollary assumption of Theocritus' criticism and improvement. For a recent summary of the state of the question, see Mauerhofer 2004:103–112.

⁶ Gow 1938:11.

⁷ Vian 1974:46 well summarizes the sentiment: "Malgré l'habileté du poète, les sutures sont encore visibles..." Cf. above, n. 3.

⁸ For very convenient summaries of Polyphemos' Mysian career see, *RE* "Kios" 1). col. 486; Delage 1930:114–117; Robert 1921:836–842 esp. 837, nn. 1 and 2; Händel 1954:30 and Vian 1974:44–48.

Polyphemos clearly responds more rationally to the crisis. The similes describing their respective pursuits underscore the difference. Both search for the boy like maddened animals. Heracles runs “like a bull stung by a gadfly” (ὡς δ’ ὅτε τίς τε μύωπι τετυμμένος ἔσσυτο ταῦρος [1.1205]) who loses all thought of the herd and its shepherds (1.1265–1272), while Polyphemos chases “like a wild beast burning with hunger who sets off after the bleating of sheep coming from far off” (ἦνυτε τις θήρῃ ἄγριος, ὃν ῥά τε λήρως ἀπόπροθεν ἔικετο μήλων. | λιμῶ δ’ αἰθόμενος μετανίσσεται).⁹ In contrast to Heracles, Polyphemos pursues a definite goal: the sound of Hylas’ cries.¹⁰ He too may fail to locate the boy, but at least he had a plan of action.¹¹ Thus the doubling of heroes in search of Hylas is not a function of scholastic excess but Apollonius’ desire to comment upon the nature of Heracles’ heroism and its limits relative to the expedition.¹²

Regardless of the aesthetic quality of Polyphemos’ role in the Hylas episode, Polyphemos does exemplify Apollonius’ penchant for introducing a surplus of heroes into his epic. Mopsos and Idmon provide an excess of seers, but still Phineus (2.311–425) and even the *Argo*’s Dodonian plank (4.580–591) are also enlisted to disclose the future.¹³ No less than four credible helmsmen volunteer to replace the fallen Tiphys.¹⁴ Both the swift Boreades and speedy Euphemos try to track down Heracles in Libya (4.1463–1466). Apollonius also seems to enjoy doubling deaths. Just after Idmon is dispatched by the wild boar among the Mariandynoi (2.815–834), Tiphys dies—almost an afterthought (2.851–857). Mopsos’ gruesome demise in Libya (4.1502–1536) comes on the heels of Kanthos’ fatal encounter with the semi-divine shepherd, Kephauros (4.1485–1501). In short, an excess of heroes (and victims) like Polyphemos populate Apollonius’ landscape. However, Polyphemos persists in the narrative far more doggedly than any of his similarly extraneous counterparts.

⁹ This simile may also carry an erotic connotation and so allude to an alternative tradition that declares Polyphemos, not Heracles, to be Hylas’ lover (Socrates’ Πρὸς Ἐιδόθεον [Σ 1.1207b (Wendel 1958:109–110)]). Plato’s Socrates offers a simile to Phaedrus embodying the same general concept: ὡς λύκοι ἄρνας ἀγαπῶσιν, ὡς παῖδα φιλοῦσιν ἔρασταί “as wolves love lambs so lovers love a boy” (Plat. *Phdr.* 241d1). For the erotic element of the episode in general, see Palombi 1985 and below, nn. 18 and 26.

¹⁰ In fact, as Carspecken 1952:88 notes, the differences in Heracles’ and Polyphemos’ response are primarily conveyed by the similes describing them. Cf. Lawall 1966:127; Levin 1971:24 (who also sees the irony in the predator simile attached to Polyphemos— is he to be considered a source of safety or danger to Hylas?); Claus 1993:194–195.

¹¹ Lawall 1966:127–128, Levin 1971:24; Claus 1993:194–195.

¹² Lawall 1966:128; Claus 1993:204–205, 211.

¹³ Manakidou, however, sees Idmon, Mopsos, and Phineus playing distinct divinatory roles while cumulatively expressing a more complex contemporary religious sentiment. See Manakidou 1995:196, 203, and esp. 207–208. Cf. Said 2003.

¹⁴ In addition to Ankaïos, who is selected, Erginos, Nauplios, and Euphemos all volunteer to take the helm (2.894–898).

Besides Heracles (who can hardly be characterized as tertiary to Apollonius' narrative) and Polyphemos, three Argonauts are indeed lost on the way to Cholcis: Idmon, Tiphys, and Hylas; three more on its return: Boutes (4.912–919), Kanthos, and Mopsos. None of these other six receive further notice once the *Argo* has moved on without them. In contrast, we repeatedly hear of the destiny that awaits Polyphemos after he is abandoned in Mysia.

When the Argonauts realize that they had left Heracles—they seem to have entirely forgotten Hylas and Polyphemos—in Mysia, they begin to argue whether they should return to Kios and retrieve him (1.1289–1301). The minor sea god, Glaukos, pops up to resolve their quarrel while bringing (apparent) narrative closure to the scene by disclosing the destinies that await the trio (1.1315–1325): Zeus plans for Heracles to complete his labors and to ascend to the company of the gods (1.1315–1319). Polyphemos, after he finds a city, will “fulfill his destiny in the boundless land of the Khalybes” (μοῖραν ἀναπλήσειν Χαλύβων ἐν ἀπείρονι γαίῃ [1.1323]). Hylas will remain in Kios wedded to the Nymph who abducted him (1.1324–1325). Assured of divine warrant for their departure absent Heracles, the reconciled Argonauts sail for Bebrykia fully aware of their comrades' respective fates.

At the close of the episode Apollonius himself appends a supplement to the god's disclosure. In addition to repeating the god's prophecy, Apollonius offers the audience an aetiology for the Kian ritual search for Hylas (1.1348–1357). Heracles took oaths and hostages to ensure the Kians would obey his demand to search ceaselessly for the lost boy (1.1351–1353). To this day the Kians conduct an annual inquiry of Hylas (1.1354–1355). Heracles ultimately settled the original hostages in Trachis. This explains the Mysian city's connections with the Greek mainland.¹⁵ We learn nothing further of Hylas. However, Apollonius adds a

15 Σ 1.1355 (Wendel 1958:122): Τραχῖν, πόλις Θεσσαλίας, ἔνθα τοὺς παῖδας τῶν Μυσῶν ἐνέκτισεν Ἡρακλῆς (“Trachis, a Thessalian city. Heracles settled the children of the Mysians there”). Thus, within his account of Polyphemos' foundation of Kios, Apollonius embeds Heracles' settling of Kians in Trachis as if both a performing some manner of city foundation. See Händel 1954:32. Delage 1930:115 and n. 2 considers Heracles to be an alternative founder of Kios itself. See below, pp. 15–16 for the how Apollonius (further) circumscribes Polyphemos' civilizing deed.

detail to the destiny Glaukos disclosed for Polyphemos. Apollonius tells us that the city Polyphemos will found will be named from the river by which it sits (rather than from the hero who founded it).¹⁶

Some three books later Apollonius embellishes Polyphemos' fate (4.1472–1477). The Euboean hero, Kanthos, joins the search in Libya for Heracles (4.1432–1484) because “it was a care to him to question [Heracles] in detail about his friend” Polyphemos (μέμβλετο γάρ οἱ οἶοῖ ἔθεν ἄμφ' ἑτάροιο μεταλλῆσαι τὰ ἕκαστα...[4.1470–1471]). Since he never catches up with Heracles, he never finds out about his Thessalian comrade. Apollonius digresses to inform his audience of what Kanthos never discovered: Polyphemos did indeed found Kios and did die fighting the Khalybes as he sought to return to the Argo (4.1472–1477). In addition, “a tomb was built for him there on a promontory of the sea shaded by a burgeoning white poplar” (καί οἱ βλωθρῆν ἀχρωαῖδα σῆμα τέτυχται τυτθὸν ἄλως προπάρειθεν [4.1476–1477]).

In contrast to Polyphemos' role in the Hylas episode, there has been little discussion of these subsequent enumerations of his fate. Lawall makes a passing observation that Heracles' and Polyphemos' respective fates indicate that Polyphemos continues to serve as a foil for Heracles.¹⁷ Otherwise, Apollonius' continued interest in Polyphemos has been mainly seen as an example of his fondness for the minutia of aetiology, ethnography and geography.¹⁸ However, upon closer consideration of Polyphemos' role in the *Argonautica* after Mysia, it becomes apparent that he is not just generally compared with Heracles. Polyphemos is closely linked with him. Heracles is rhetorically proximate to all three disclosures of Polyphemos' destiny. This is no accident.

¹⁶ 1.1347–1349:

...ὁ μὲν Μυσοῖσι βαλέσθαι
μέλλεν ἐπώνυμον ἄστν πολισσάμενος ποταμοῖο
Εἰλατίδης Πολύφημος...

...but the son of Eilatos, Polyphemos, was destined
to found and build for the Mysians a city named
for the river...

Apollonius had identified the river (along with the Kians) at the beginning of the episode (1.1178–1179):

τῆμος ἄρ' οἶγ' ἀφίκοντο Κιανίδος ἦθεα γαίης
ἄμφ' Ἀργανθώνειον ὄρος προχοάς τε Κίοιο.

Then they came to the haunts of the Kians
around mount Arganthonion and the headwaters of the Kios.

¹⁷ Lawall 1966:127–128, n. 16: “Polyphemos is clearly a foil to Heracles here, and latter [sic] in their divergent fates. While Heracles will win immortality through mighty deeds, Polyphemos has a more human destiny...”

¹⁸ Vian criticizes Apollonius for the confusion created in his handling of Polyphemos subsequent to Mysia. In particular having Kanthos enquire after Polyphemos conflates local histories and geographies (Vian 1974:45–46). Pearson 1938:453 speculatively suggests that the description of Polyphemos' tomb given at 4.1476–1478 is derived from an Ionian geography. See below, p. 17 and nn. 59–60.

Within the Hylas episode, Polyphemos' behavior resembled Heracles'. The differences in the parallels provide a contrast between the two and so render a judgment upon Heracles' descent into (erotic) madness and therein heroic failure.¹⁹ After Mysia Apollonius links Polyphemos to Heracles to offer a decidedly different comparison. Apollonius carefully tailors his account of Polyphemos' death and life right down to the white poplar shading his tomb to offer as a paradigm for heroic failure, a *paraleipsis* of heroic ignominy. The *detailed* reiterations of Polyphemos' post-Mysian career in a parallel proximity to Heracles' accentuates how far Polyphemos has fallen and so underscores the magnitude of Heracles' heroic achievements.

Heracles Post-Hylas: The nature and function of Heracles in the *Argonautica* is complex and variegated.²⁰ Within the epic he displays hints of his (comedic) gluttonous excess, tragic fits of violent temper while also serving as a model of philosophic restraint. By his heroic achievements he easily exceeds the "best of the Argonauts."²¹ Yet he proves incapable of keeping his place on the ship.

Often he displays the conflicting facets of his character within the same episode. The *Argo* groaning under the weight of his girth may hint at his renowned comedic gluttony, but it may also foreshadow his apotheosis.²² Gods are notoriously ponderous.²³ At Lemnos Heracles remains chastely on the *Argo* while Jason indulges in the pleasures of Hypsipyle's bed. Prodicus' proto-Cynic philosopher choosing the path of Virtue is readily discerned,²⁴ but there is irony to be found in Heracles' reproach of Jason. Several allusions to Heracles' own carnal excess are inscribed within his speech that inspires the Argonauts to depart their steadings and return to the quest.²⁵

¹⁹ Clauss 1993:195–196 perceives an erotic element to the madness while others such as Carspecken 1952:20 and Vian 1974:41 see the madness as sign of the depth of Heracles' paternal feeling for his charge. For the erotic tone of the episode, see below, n. 26.

²⁰ Clare 2002:88–104 and notes offers a recent study of Apollonius' characterization Heracles. The discussions of Hunter 1993:25–41; Clauss 1993:29–36, 135–146, 184–210; and especially Feeney 1986:52–66 are fundamental to the ensuing description of Heracles and his actions within the *Argonautica*.

²¹ Clauss 1993:2–3 and *passim*. Ultimately, Heracles, in Clauss' view, embodies anachronistic heroic qualities that actually disqualify him from the preeminent position. See Clauss 1993:205–211.

²² Feeney 1986:54.

²³ Diomedes' chariot "groaned" (ἔβραχε [*Il.* 5.838]) under the combined weight of Athena and Diomedes as she stepped on to assist the hero (*Il.* 5.837–839). Apollonius ponders this very indication of divinity is his ironically incongruous description of the massive Athena alighting upon a wisp of a cloud to descend as quick as thought in order to help the Argonauts negotiate the Symplegades (2.533–548). See the discussions of Feeney 1991:72–73; Hunter 1993:86.

²⁴ Fränkel 1968:115; Vian 1974:259, 1.856; Feeney 1986:55 and n. 19.

²⁵ Hunter 1993:34–35.

Many of these contradictions of his character converge in Mysia. While searching for an oar to replace the one shattered by his prodigious strength,²⁶ Heracles descends into a fit of passionate madness when he learns of the loss of Hylas. His pederastic infatuation costs him a seat on the *Argo*.²⁷ Apollonius also embroiders the episode with extra-narrative details that highlight Heracles' multi-faceted nature. Apollonius pointedly digresses to relate how Heracles came to possess Hylas. Heracles had murdered Hylas' father, Theiodamas. According to tradition, he killed the boy's father over the cattle Theiodamas had refused to hand over.²⁸ Apollonius brings that tradition into full view but ascribes a nobler motive to Heracles. He killed Theiodamas in order to instigate a just war against the unjust Dryopians (1.1218–1219). Theiodamas' murder may be rationalized, but Heracles comes off as more than vindictive in Apollonius' proleptic disclosure that the hero will kill the Boreades for abandoning him in Mysia (1.1302–1309). After all, it was divinely appointed for the Argonauts to leave him there. The man of violence has come into full view.²⁹

Yet, within the aetiological postscript that Apollonius appends to the Hylas episode, he inscribes Heracles' recovery of reason. According to the poet, Heracles instructed the locals to continue the search for Hylas. He threatened destruction and took hostages to ensure their compliance (1.1348–1353). Heracles cannot search for the boy forever. Coercing the Kians to search persistently for Hylas bespeaks of the intensity of the hero's feelings for the boy. Delegating the task to others reveals a hero who has found the *metis* necessary to keep faith with his squire while pursuing the more consequential tasks that lie ahead.

Vestiges of the gluttonous brute are all too obvious to the Hesperid, Aigle, as she describes for the Argonauts the anonymous hero who had killed their guardian serpent, Ladon, and snatched their sacred fruit. To the goddess, he is "a most pestilential man in violence and appearance" (...τις ἀνήρ ὀλωτάτος ὑβρινὶ καὶ δέμας [4.1436–1437]). The marauding Heracles is also parched with thirst. Whether inspired or improvisational, he strikes a rock, uncorks a spring and guzzles the water "like a grazing animal" (φορβάδι ἴσος [4.1449]). His spring saves the Argonauts. The bestial, heroic, and soon to be divine facets of Heracles' character are all on display in Libya. But between his Mysian *akrasia* and Libyan (heroic) savagery, the *Argo* sails in Heracles' wake—past places and peoples where he is cast in the most positive light as civilizer, savior and the benchmark of heroism.

²⁶ For Heracles as the embodiment of a "man of strength," see Clauss 1993:4, 29–36, 92–99.

²⁷ Palombi 1985:75–83 offers a detailed description of the erotic overtones to Heracles' response to Polyphemos' news of Hylas' kidnap.

²⁸ Σ 1.1212–1219a (Wendel 1958:110).

²⁹ Particularly if Feeney 1986:57 and n. 22 is correct in asserting that Apollonius invents this destiny for the Boreades.

After Jason has regaled king Lykos of the Mariandynoi with a synopsis of his adventures (2.762–771), the king was “enchanted” (θέλγειτ’ ἄκουῆ ἠθυμόν [2.772]), but he is distressed particularly at the loss of Heracles. Lykos quantifies the extent of the Argonauts’ loss by furnishing a brief excursus on Heracles’ empire building in Asia on behalf of his father, Daskylos (2.774–790). Heracles rendered the Mysians, Mygdones, Bithynians and Paphlagonians subject to the Mariandynoi. With his departure threats to this order emerged in the form of the “Bebrykians’ and Amykos’ insolence” (Βέβρυκες ὑπερβασίη τ’ Ἀμύκοιο [2.792]). By slaying Amykos, Polydeuces unwittingly provided ancillary assistance to the king’s own efforts to ward off threats to the order originally established by Heracles.

The civilizer turns savior as the Argonauts confront the Stymphalian birds. The threat of their attack prevents the Argonauts from landing on the island of Ares. Amphidamas recollects the “strategy” (μήτιν [2.1058]) Heracles once deployed to drive the birds off (2.1047–1057).³⁰ The Argonauts band together and raise a din that scatters the flocks just as Heracles had done before them with a “bronze rattle” (χαλκείην πλαταγήν [2.1055]). The Argonauts can now safely land on the island and fortuitously meet the shipwrecked sons of Phrixos who will provide the link vital to securing Medea’s assistance. Successfully modeling themselves after Heracles’ here presages their own later heroic contrivance—even if they resort to a very different kind of *μήτις*.

As Feeney has shown, within the *Argonautica* the measure of heroic attainment adopts a geographical expression.³¹ To imitate Heracles is, quite literally, to follow him. The Argonauts lag behind Heracles throughout the final three books of the *Argonautica*. Heracles steps beyond them for good as he passes from the sands of Libya into the company of the gods. However, the Argonauts do manage to imitate him well enough to assume some measure of his oversized mantle of civilizer and savior. They also manage to keep up well enough to save themselves in Libya. Had they lagged too far behind, Heracles’ Libyan spring would have been useless to Argonauts already dead from thirst.

Other associates of Heracles prove themselves less capable.³² As the *Argo* journeys through the Black Sea widening the trail blazed by Heracles, the Argonauts chance upon those who could not keep pace with Heracles—at all. Sthenelos had joined Heracles on his quest for the girdle of Hippolyte. Wounded in their battle with the Amazons, Sthenelos quitted the field and died on the road somewhere in and around

³⁰ Feeney 1986:60.

³¹ Feeney 1986:56–57, 62–64.

³² As noted by Feeney 1986:60–61.

Paphlagonia.³³ The sons of Deimachos also joined the sortie against the Amazons. Whether they wandered astray or left to embark upon a conquest of Sinope, they too were left behind.³⁴

By the grace of Persephone the shade of Sthenelos ascends from Hades briefly to observe the passing Argonauts. The amazed heroes land there and pay homage to his tomb (2.910–926). At least they rescue his memory. The living sons of Deimachos never themselves tell us how they came to be separated from Heracles; however, there is no doubt that they are unwilling refugees. They beg the Argonauts to rescue them from Sinope. The heroes happily oblige (2.955–961). At least they possess the endurance to be saved—even if only by the Argonauts.

After the sons of Deimachos, The *Argo* should have next met with Polyphemos, or, better, his tomb. Glaukos had declared that Polyphemos would die “fighting in the land of the Khalybes,” a prophecy confirmed by Apollonius himself (4.1472–1477). Apollonius also describes the tomb that validates the prophecy. The Argonauts journey past the territory of the Khalybes just after they had encountered Sthenelos, saved the sons of Deimachos, and sailed past the land of the Amazons where these heroes had met their respective fates (2.911–1008). There is no sign of Polyphemos. The *Argo* had passed him by. Unlike Heracles’ other abandoned associates, Polyphemos cannot even catch the *Argo*. He does not even leave behind a *sema* of his *kleos*. His failure to do so proves fatal to another.

Searching for Polyphemos: As the Argonauts celebrate their salvation at the hands of Heracles in Libya, five Argonauts set out in pursuit of him. The sons of Boreas and Euphemos hope to overtake Heracles by virtue of their super-heroic speed. Lynkeus trusts his eyes that permit him “easily to see even into the Underworld” (ῥηιδίως καὶ νέρθεν ὑπὸ χθονὸς ἀνγάζεσθαι [1.115]). The thoroughly pedestrian hero, Kanthos, joins them. He contributes only his desire to learn from Heracles what has (had?) happened to his (as we learn for the first time) “comrade” (ἑτάροιο [4.1471]), Polyphemos. His desire for the absent hero (and the “fate of the gods” [αἶσα θεῶν (4.1468)])³⁵ sets him on the path to destruction. The semi-divine shepherd, Kephauros, may strike the fatal blow, but it was Polyphemos’ absence, his inability to overtake the Argonauts, that had sealed Kanthos’ demise. Had there been a *sema*

³³ ...συστρατεύσας Ἡρακλεῖ ἐπ’ Ἀμαζόννας, τρωθεὶς ἀνεχώρησεν καὶ ἀπέθανε καθ’ ὁδὸν περὶ τὴν Παφλαγονίαν (Σ 2.911–914 [Wendel 1958:194]). “Fighting with Heracles against the Amazons, he was wounded and retired from the field. He died on the road round about Paphlagonia.”

³⁴ Σ 2.955 (Wendel 1958:197).

³⁵ Note that Kanthos along with Mopsos had been marked for death in Libya in the opening catalog of heroes (1.78–81).

in Pontus (or a surviving hero), Kanthos would have known for certain what had happened to Polyphemos. Heracles' absence had brought general salvation, Polyphemos', particular destruction.

The chiasmic arrangement of the episode underscores the contrast. The scene begins with Aigle's description of an anonymous hero who had wreaked havoc upon them. The details of her narrative become tokens by which the Argonauts can attach the name "Heracles" (4.1459).³⁶ In contrast, Kanthos sets out with a name and goes in search of a narrative. He never gets one. But even if he were to overtake Heracles, what would Kanthos learn from him? Heracles would have nothing to say. Apparently there is no one, no god, Nymph, or Nereid who can amplify Glaukos' prophecy.³⁷ And so it falls to Apollonius himself to provide the token of Polyphemos' *kleos*. That token is a tomb. The victim does extract some measure of revenge. A Kanthos enquiring of a Polyphemos lost in Kios with Hylas accentuates the pliancy of Polyphemos' very identity.

Who actually boarded the Argo and returned to Hellas safe and sound is a matter of no small variation within the Argonautic tradition.³⁸ There was no guild of rhapsodes dedicated to the preservation and transmission of a more or less fixed narrative formed around the myths. Therefore, any author of an *Argonautica* is much freer to innovate. However, Polyphemos' *Nachleben* (such as it is) testifies to his rather more tenuous position within even this variegated tradition. Although he is third in Apollonius' crew list, he is hardly remarkable enough to appear in Pindar's list.³⁹ Seneca in his *Medea* lists Heracles

³⁶ But one might ask which details establish his identity? Obviously the lion-skin and bow are the most trenchant for us, but the Argonauts never privilege these markers in particular. Aigle succinctly summarizes the defining contradictions of Heracles' heroic persona. By offering this entire constellation of traits as the signs of Heracles' identity Aigle effectively summarizes the complexities of his character as presented by Apollonius in the *Argonautica*.

³⁷ The narrative form adopted here is in sharp contrast to the Homeric models for this scene. In Homer the gods and prophets themselves know and *mimetically* disclose what is assumed to be a widely known destiny (e. g., *Il.* 20.300–308 [Poseidon declaring Aeneas' fate]). See Händel 1954:32.

³⁸ Jessen 1889 remains the most thorough discussion of Apollonius' crew list.

³⁹ Pindar, *P.* 4.171–183 lists Heracles, Kastor, Polydeuces, Euphemos, Periklymenos, Orpheus, Echion, Erytos, Zetes and Kalais. Mopsos may join the expedition, but Pindar's Greek (Μόψος ἄμβασε στρατὸν "Mopsos caused the expedition to board..." [*P.* 4.191]) does not demand (or even imply) that he did. See *LSJ* "ἀναβαίνω" B.

(648), explicitly names Hylas (648–650), but makes no mention of Polyphemos even though all fourteen of the Argonauts he does name or allude to are also listed by Apollonios.⁴⁰ Diodorus Siculus (4.40–49), even though his truncated Argonautica is told as part of Heracles' exploits, does not list Polyphemos. Apollodoros lists Polyphemos dead last—as if he barely made it on the boat.⁴¹ Valerius Flaccus also sends him to the back of the Argo along with Idas, who, like Polyphemos, is excised from his subsequent narrative.⁴² In short, Polyphemos does not appear in any crew list that can be shown to be independent of Apollonios.⁴³ In the other versions of the quest for the Golden Fleece we have or know of, Polyphemos plays no part in the narrative proper.

The scholia on Apollonios and even Apollonios' own narrative testify to how difficult it is for Polyphemos to maintain a distinctive identity. Apollonios gives Polyphemos something of a generic genealogy. He is the son of Eilatos, a father of similarly secondary heroes mentioned

⁴⁰ Seneca, *Medea* 616–669. The fourteen are: Tiphys, Orpheus, Heracles, Zetes and Kalais, Periklymenos, Ankaios, Meleager, Hylas, Idmon, Mopsos, Peleus, Nauplios, Oileus, Admetos.

⁴¹ Apollod. 1.113.

⁴² V. Fl. 1.457–461:

At tibi Palladia pinu, Polypheme, revecto
ante urbem ardentis restat dependere patris
reliquas, multum famulis pia iusta moratis,
si venias... (Lieberman).

But it will wait for you, Polyphemos, to return
in Pallas Athena's ship to find the burning remains
of your father, with the family delaying his due rites
if you would just come.

I follow Lieberman's printing of "At" instead of "Et" under the same assumption that Polyphemos is being contrasted with Kanthos in that he returns home while Kanthos does not. The reading accords well with the manner in which Valerius resists Apollonios narrative. He situates Kanthos and Polyphemos in rhetorical proximity, undoubtedly to recollect Apollonios' account of Kanthos' pursuit of Heracles for news of Polyphemos and his subsequent death in Libya (4.1467–1501). Valerius then proceeds to prescribe very different destinies for the two: Kanthos will die in Aiaia; Polyphemos will return home by some other means. For extended discussions of the textual problem, see: Lieberman 1997:163, n. 100; Kleywegt 2005:266–270, who also provides a useful summary of Polyphemos' reduced role in the narrative.

⁴³ Jessen 1889 remains the most thorough discussion of the various crews of the Argo.

by Pindar.⁴⁴ The scholia report an alternative paternity. Polyphemos is the son of Poseidon who also fathered Euphemos. Both Polyphemos and Euphemos are also said to be wedded to Heracles' half-sister Laonome.⁴⁵ The manuscript tradition reflects the confusion between the two sons of Poseidon. At 1.179, Euphemos is introduced in Apollonius' catalog (Ταίφαρον αὐτ' ἐπὶ τοῖσι λιπῶν Εὐφημος ἕκανε). Vian's Ω, his archetype for the extant manuscripts, names (another?) Polyphemos. Only the testimony of E preserves the adopted "Euphemos."⁴⁶ The scholia on Theocritus reverse the trend: they report "Euphemos" in the place of "Polyphemos" in the Hylas episode. Hemsterhuys corrects the error.⁴⁷

Kanthos is the closing capstone to this problem. As Vian pointed out Kanthos has no real connection with a Polyphemos as described by Apollonius.⁴⁸ However, if we turn to that alternative genealogy in the scholia, which makes Polyphemos a son of Poseidon and husband to Laonome, Polyphemos becomes interchangeable with the Boeotian hero, Euphemos, since Euphemos is also a son of Poseidon and the husband of Heracles' half-sister. In fact, Kanthos should be more interested in an Euphemos who is more easily associated with Hylas by virtue of his maternal geography. Mekionike, Euphemos' Hesiodic mother, is

⁴⁴ Pindar, *O.* 6.33 names Eilatos as the father of the rather obscure Arcadian ruler Aipyros. At *P.* 3.31 he is the father of Iskhyos who had surreptitiously slept with Koronis and so angered Apollo. I am grateful to one of the *Classical Bulletin's* anonymous readers for these references.

⁴⁵ Polyphemos is reputed the son of Poseidon and husband of Laonome in Σ 1.1241a (Wendel 1958:112): ...κατὰ γὰρ τινὰς Ἐλάσου υἱὸς ἐστὶν ὁ Πολύφημος, κατὰ δὲ τινὰς Ποσειδῶνος. γυναῖκα δὲ ἔσχεν ὁ Πολύφημος Λαονόμην, Ἡρακλέους ἀδελφὴν, Ἀμφιτρύθνος καὶ Ἀλκμήνης θυγατέρα. "...According to some Polyphemos is the son of Elastos, according to others the son of Poseidon. Polyphemos had for a wife, Laonome, the sister of of Heracles, the daughter of Amphitryon and Alkmene." Euphemos is given the same paternity in Σ Pindar *P.* 4.36c = M-W fr. 253 (Drachmann 1997:102):

ἢ οἴη Ἵριη πυκινόφρων Μηκιονίκη,
ἢ τέκεν Εὐφημον γαιήοχῳ Ἐννοσιγαίῳ
μιχθεῖσ' ἐν φιλότῃτι πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης.

Such was shrewd Mekionike in Hyria
who bore Euphemos having lain with
the Earthshaker in the embrace of golden Aphrodite.

Laonome is said to be his wife at Σ *P.* 4.79b (Drachmann 1997:108):

γυναῖκα δὲ ἔσχεν ὁ Εὐφημος Λαονόμην Ἡρακλέους
ἀδελφὴν, Ἀμφιτρώωνος θυγατέρα καὶ Ἀλκμήνης.

Euphemos had for a wife, Laonome, the sister of Heracles,
the daughter of Amphitryon and Alkmene.

Cf. Σ *P.* 4.15b (Drachmann 1997:99).

⁴⁶ Vian 1974:58 *app. crit.* 179. Cf. Vian 1974:xlili–iv, li–lii for his description of Ω and E respectively.

⁴⁷ See Σ 13.7–9a Wendel 1966:259 *app. crit.* 13. Hemsterhuys' conjectures are compiled by Gaisford 1820:v. 4. See Wendel 1966:xxxvii, "Gaisford."

⁴⁸ Vian 1974:45–46.

Boeotian.⁴⁹ Hylas is Boeotian but also connected with Euboea via an association with Oechalia.⁵⁰ A Boeotian comrade of the Boeotian-Euboean Hylas, Euphemos, is more likely a person of interest to the Euboean Kanthos than a Thessalian Polyphemos.⁵¹ Euphemos, the Peloponnesian hero who will later receive the clod from Triton, may join the search party for Heracles because of his swift feet, but bringing this particular name into close proximity to Kanthos in Libya (“Euphemos” opens 4.1464; “Kanthos” closes 4.1465)⁵² also subtly reminds us that Kanthos could well be looking for the wrong hero.

Polyphemos’ one positive accomplishment in the *Argonautica*, the foundation of Kios, also blurs his identity. Both Aristotle and Strabo report that the *polis* was founded by an eponymous Milesian hero.⁵³ This version easily explains the city’s name. Apollonius had clearly chosen not to follow it. At first the matter is left ambiguous. Glaukos had not named the city Polyphemos founded in Mysia and so the reader is free to imagine an obscure Mysian town as Polyphemos’ handiwork not necessarily Kios. However, Apollonius himself furnishes the name of the town by noting that the city is named for the river, Kios.⁵⁴ Once he connects the name of the city with the name of the river, Apollonius raises the specter of the alternative founder of Kios even if he does so in order to defend his own version of the city’s foundation. The curious apologetic does little more than suggest that that Polyphemos is a double for the actual founder of Kios, Kios.

As a standard-bearer of Greek civilization, Polyphemos hardly excels. His role in the actual foundation of Kios is highly circumscribed. Given that there are already Kians haunting the environs (1.1177),⁵⁵

⁴⁹ M-W fr. 253 = Σ Pindar *P.* 4.36c. See Vian 1974:45.

⁵⁰ Hygin. *Fab.* 14. See Vian 1974:46.

⁵¹ Vian 1974:45–46.

⁵² 4.1463–5:

ποσσι δὲ κούφοις
 ...**Εὐφήμος** πίσυνος, Λυγκεύς γε μὲν ὄξεά τηλοῦ
 ὅσσε αβλεῖν, πέμπτος δὲ μετὰ σφίσιμ ἕσσυτο **Κάνθος**.
 ...Euphemos trusting his swift feet, Lynkeus to cast his sharp eyes afar,
 and fifth Kanthos hastened after them.

⁵³ Arist. *fig.* 471 (Σ 1.1177–1178 [Wendel 1958:107]); Strabo 12.4.3.

⁵⁴ See above, p. 5 and n. 15.

⁵⁵ The Argonauts arrive in Mysia thus: τῆμος ἄρ’ ὄγ’ ἀφίκοντο Κιανίδος **ἦθεα γαίης** (“Then they came to the haunts of the Kians” [1.1177]) “ἦθεα γαίης” seems a *variatio* of Hesiod, *WD* 22 where Dike wanders about: ἦ δ’ ἔπειτα κλαίουσα πόλιν καὶ **ἦθεα λαῶν*** “Dike trails after weeping the city and fields of the people.” If Apollonius has Hesiod in mind, the phrase suggests that Kians have settlements and a collective identity just no *polis*. See below, nn. 29 and 30. Cf. Garson 1972:3 on the contrast between Apollonius’ uses of ἦθεα and Homer’s where it is used for the haunts of horses (*Il.* 6.511; 15.268).

Polyphemos merely executes a synoecism.⁵⁶ How much of that we should ascribe to Polyphemos is a matter left ambiguous by Apollonius. Is the *ktisis* of Kios related to the search for Hylas? Should we imagine that Heracles' organization of the search party for Hylas gave impetus to the city's foundation and that Polyphemos completed the process? Or did Heracles delegate the search to Polyphemos who went on to found the city? It is left to Nicander to tie together the loose ends left by Apollonius' account of events in Mysia.⁵⁷ He has Heracles entrust the search to Polyphemos before he returns to his labors. The foundation of Kios is a by-product of the search and so can easily be ascribed to Polyphemos as Autocharis does.⁵⁸

Separating the hero's tomb from the locale of his *ktisis* only weakens the link between Polyphemos and the city. Apollonius' description of Polyphemos' tomb itself offers a closing contrast between Polyphemos and Heracles. Dying at the hands of the Khalybes may not be an exotically miserable demise, but judging from the grim description of the people and the place,⁵⁹ Polyphemos' dispatch in Pontus is less than glorious. Like the four other Argonauts who die during the voyage, Polyphemos is furnished a tomb (though who actually built it must remain a mystery). Mopsos and Kanthos are ceremoniously buried in Libya but not provided a monument (4.2449–2451 [Kanthos]; 4.1532–1536 [Mopsos]). A *sema* is constructed for Idmon and Tiphys, but the locals come to honor it mistakenly as the grave of the local hero, Agamestor (2.846–850). In contrast, Apollonius assures us that Polyphemos' tomb “sits on a promontory of the sea with a tall white poplar blooming over it” (καί οἱ ὑπὸ βλωθρίην ἀχερωίδα σῆμα τέτυκται|τυτθὸν ἀλὸς προἶροιθεν [4.1476–1477])—presumably to the poet's very day. Pearson imagined that Apollonius drew his description of an Ionian

⁵⁶ Vian 1974:45 n.1: “Polyphémos doit opérer une espèce synoecisme...”

⁵⁷ Anton. Lib. 26.5: Πολύφημον δὲ καταλείπει ἐν τῷ χωρίῳ, εἴ πως δύναίτο ζητῶν ἐξευρεῖν αὐτῷ τὸν Ὑλαν·καὶ ὁ Πολύφημος ἔφθη τελευτήσας. (“He left Polyphemos in the area that he somehow might be able to continue searching and find Hylas for him, but Polyphemos died before he could [find him]”). See Robert 1921:840: “Als Herakles trotz langem Suchen ihn nicht finden kann...läßt aber den Polyphemos zurück, damit er das Suchen fortsetze. So wird Nikander beiden Sagenformen gerrecht.” Cf. Vian 1974:45: “Nicandre se borne à arranger le récit d’Apollonios...”

⁵⁸ Σ 4.1470 (Wendel 1958:318).

⁵⁹ 2.374–376:

...μετὰ δὲ σμυγερώτατοι ἀνδρῶν,
 τρηχειῖν Χάλυβες καὶ ἀτειρέα γαίαν ἔχοντες
 ἔργατῖναι, τοὶ δ' ἄμφι σιδήρεα ἔργα μέλονται.

...next are the most unyielding of men, the toilsome Khalybes.
 Possessing a harsh and barren land, they concern themselves
 with the mining and manufacture of iron.

geographer.⁶⁰ Meyer is rightly skeptical.⁶¹ There is no evidence either literary or material for the existence of this tomb let alone as the grave of an aged Thessalian Argonaut, Polyphemos.

The white poplar blooming over it testifies to Apollonius' invention: the tree underscores Polyphemos' heroic deficiency relative Heracles. The "acherois" tree, by virtue of its false etymology with "Acheron" is associated with the Underworld. According to Pausanias (5.14.2), Heracles discovered the tree growing beside the Acheron—presumably on his way to or from Hades.⁶² Later mythography is more explicit. The ninth century *Etymologicum Genuinum* reports that Heracles took a fancy to the tree when he saw it on his way to fetch Kerberos.⁶³ Given its associations with life and death, it would seem a tree most *apropos* of a tomb. However, of all tombs in extant Greek literature, only Polyphemos' is shaded by a "βλωθρή ἀχερωΐς." The tree is Heracles' tree not a funerary symbol;⁶⁴ the white poplar adorning Polyphemos' tomb is a *sema* of Heracles transcending death not of the death of the forgettable hero buried beneath it.

⁶⁰ Pearson 1938:453: "Where else but from an old geographer was Apollonius likely to have learned about the monument of Polyphemos in the land of the Chalybes...?"

⁶¹ Meyer 2001:224.

⁶² Paus. 5.14.2:

τὴν δὲ λεύκην ὁ Ἡρακλῆς πεφυκυῖαν παρὰ τὸν Ἀχέροντα
εὕρε τὸν ἐν Θεσπρωτῖα ποταμόν, καὶ τοῦδε ἕνεκά φασι
αὐτὴν Ἀχερωΐδα ὑπὸ Ὀμήρου καλεῖσθαι.

Heracles found the white [tree] growing beside the Acheron river
in Thesprotaia. Because of this they say that it is called "Acheroids"
by Homer.

⁶³ *E Gen.*, Alphabetic letter *alpha* entry 1507: Ἀχερωΐς ἡ λεύκη τὸ δένδρον εἶρηται παρὰ τὸν Ἀχέροντα ποταμόν· φασι γάρ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐπὶ τὸν Κέρβερον κατελθόντα καὶ παρὰ τῷ Ἀχέροντι πεφυκὸς τὸ δένδρον ἑωρακότα ἡσθῆναι ἐπ' αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνενεγκεῖν. "Acheroids" is the white tree. It was said to be located beside the Acheron river. They say that Heracles when he went down for Kerberos took pleasure in seeing it growing beside the Acheron and carried it up [with him]."

⁶⁴ The tree is, however associated with death in Homer. Homer uses the following formulaic simile to describe the fall of Asios and later, Sarpedon (*Il.* 13.389–391; 16.482–484):

ἦριπε δ' ὡς ὅτε τις δρυὺς ἦριπεν ἢ ἀχερωΐς
ἢ ἐ πίτυς βλωθρή, τὴν τ' οὐρεσι τέκτονες ἄνδρες
ἐξέταμον πελέκεσσι νεήκεσι νήϊον εἶναι

He fell as when some oak or white poplar
or blooming pine, which in the mountains wrights
for ship's timber cut down with their sharp axes.

If Apollonius had these verses in mind there would seem to be no small irony in a blooming white poplar still standing to mark the fallen hero—as if Polyphemos did not fall with a great glorious crash worthy of the simile.

Conclusion: Apollonius reintroduces Polyphemos into his narrative in order to accentuate his deficiencies. He thereby highlights the towering achievements of Heracles. After Mysia the *kleos* of the absent Heracles permeates the *Argonautica*. Aigle may remind us of his savage excesses, but as the Argonauts sail through the Black Sea, they encounter the results and recollections of Heracles' civilizing deeds. Subjugating whole nations of barbarians and even the Amazons is faintly echoed in Polydeuces' triumph over Amykos. Polyphemos' synoecism of Kios does not bear comparison. By recollecting Heracles' stratagem, the Argonauts fend off the Stymphalian birds and save the sons of Phrixos who prove so crucial to their own success. Heracles himself unwittingly saves the Argonauts languishing in the wastes of Libya. Polyphemos inadvertently sends one to his death. While the Argonauts long for Heracles and failed to reach him, we learn that Polyphemos longed for the Argonauts but could not catch up to them. The Argonauts remember Heracles' saving deeds on the island of Ares and immediately discern his identity in Libya by Aigle's description of the hero and his acts. The Argonauts thus underscore his utterly unique heroic profile. Neither Polyphemos' name nor his remains offer testimony to his *ktisis* or his *kleos* since they are to be found in some far away place inhabited by a hostile people. No wonder Jason fails to mention his loss to king Lykos. Apollonius himself only underscores how forgettable he is. By intentionally associating Polyphemos with Kios, Kanthos, Euphemos and Hylas, Apollonius displays how malleable his identity really is. In the end, Polyphemos may well have been best left forgotten after his loss in Mysia save for Apollonius' persistent presencing of his absence that so well serves to lengthen the shadow of Heracles' tree blooming over his desolate tomb.

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