

technique confirm that the fusion of poetry and scholarship in his epic did come off, and, therefore, any cavalier treatment of his poetry in comparison with Callimachus' graceful learning tends to be too subjective and rather unfair. Scholarship of the Apollonian kind is on a par with Callimachean aetiology, both being manifestations of the period's new poetics.⁶⁵ And it is in this sense too that the *Argonautica* can be regarded as a truly "Callimachean" work.

⁶⁵ In an important contribution Rossi (1995) wishes to show that, from the viewpoint of the integration of learned material in his literary work, Apollonius (the "filologo") ranks last, with Callimachus (the "letterato") taking precedence over Apollonius, and pride of place reserved for Theocritus (the "letterato elegante"). Rossi, however, is fully conscious of the subjective nature of his judgement.

APOLLONIUS AS A HELLENISTIC GEOGRAPHER*

Doris Meyer

The *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius is the best known travel epic of the ancient world. According to Apollonius, Jason and the heroes accompanying him set sail from Pagasai, the port of Thessalian Iolkos, and reached Colchis following a route that took them past Lemnos and Samothrake, through the Hellespont and the Bosporos and along the southern coast of the Black Sea.¹ Important geographical landmarks include ports, capes and islands as well as occasional tombs on the coast.² On the banks of Phasis Jason wins Medea and the Golden Fleece. Fleeing the Colchians, the Argonauts cross the Pontos and sail, by way of the river Istros, to the Adriatic Sea where they sail along the islands lying off the coast. Having already caught sight of the mountain range of Akrokeraunia, they are thrown back by a storm because it is the will of Zeus that the murderers of Apsyrtos be purified by Kirke whose home was in the sea of Ausonia.³ The Argonauts reach the western Mediterranean by making their way through the river Eridanos, the Celtic lakes and the Rhodanos, venturing as far as the Stoichades islands. After another stop at the

* This paper is part of the project "Mythische und historische Interpretation des Raumes in der geographischen Lehrdichtung der Antike" which is supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (in connection with the project for the edition of *FGHist* V); see also n. 19 below. The text of the *Argonautica* is cited from Vian's edition without further specification; all translations of *Argonautica* passages are by R. Hunter.

¹ See the maps in Delage (1930) 191; Vian (1976); Vian (1981); Hunter (1993b) maps 1–3; Dräger (1996) 1065 f. (following Vian); Glei-Natzel-Glei (1996); Green (1997a), maps 1–5. The maps of Vian, Dräger and Green (map 5 with the return route) not only mark the ports of call but also try to reconstruct Apollonius' "mental map" as completely as possible; see, though, Janni (1984) 49–51 for problems with such reconstructions.

² E.g. the tombs of Dolops (1.585–588), Sthenelos (2.911–914), Harmonia and Kadmos (4.517) and Polyphemos (4.1476 f.). Heroic tombs on the coast serve as navigational landmarks already for Homeric sailors; see *Il.* 7.86–8.

³ This is the southern Tyrrhenian Sea. Auson is a son of Odysseus and Kalypso; on this anachronism in the geographical terminology (Auson lived after the Argonauts) see Delage (1930) 338. For the modern counterparts of identifiable place names see the index in Vian (1981) 211–66 and the glossary in Green (1997a) 378–445.

island of Aithalia they sail along the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea and reach many important Odyssean locations: Aiaie, the home of Aietes' sister Kirke, the island of the Sirens, called Anthemoussa, the dangerous Planktai, Skylla and Charybdis and finally Thrinakia.⁴ Then the sailors round the Italian peninsula with west wind and land on the Phaeacian island of Drepane according to Hera's plan. On the day of their departure from Drepane they are blown off course by a storm from the north which lasts for nine days until they reach the Great Syrtis⁵ on the northern African coast. From there they carry the ship on their shoulders over land for twelve days and reach Triton's lake⁶ in the vicinity of which they find the spring of the Hesperides. To return to Greece the Argonauts cross the Aegean with south wind in the direction of the island of Karpathos. They land on the eastern tip of Crete, on the island of Anaphe in the Cyclades,⁷ they become the founders of the island of Thera by throwing Triton's clod in the sea and stop at Aigina to replenish their water supply. Finally they follow the coast of Attika and sail along Euboia to Pagasai from where they originally set sail.

The "geographical frame" of the epic, as the voyage of the Argonauts may be called, parallels a *periplous*, the account of a voyage along extensive swaths of the Mediterranean and the Pontos.⁸ For navigation the sailors depend mainly on the coastline and its landmarks. The generally shorter stretches of the trip on rivers and over land mainly allow the passage from one sea to the next. The geographical frame of the epic is internally consistent to the extent that every choice of route and every change of course is clearly justified.⁹ Most

⁴ The reason for this choice of route can be traced to *Od.* 12.69 (passage of Argo through the Planktai παρ' Αἰήτῳ πλέουσα) but see also Hunter (1993b) XXI: "Apollonius constructs the voyage in such a way as to encompass as much of the known world as possible, and his mixture of 'scientific' and fabulous geography is very typical of his age. An important influence here was the *Odyssey*, as one tradition placed Odysseus' wanderings in the western Mediterranean"; on the great importance of the *Odyssey* for the *Argonautica* see Dufner (1988) and on the *Odyssey* as a frame of reference for Hellenistic geography as a whole see Prontera (1993) 388 f.

⁵ Delage (1930) 255–61; Livrea (1973) 349; differently Herter (1973) 42.

⁶ Green (1997a) 344 correctly points out that the lake is mythological and does not correspond to any actual geographical feature; on Delage's attempts to identify this lake see Braswell (1988) 90 and Green (1997a) 345. As in Pindar (Pi. P. 4.20 f.) the lake should probably be located in the region of Kyrene.

⁷ East of Santorini, Green (1997a) 357 f.

⁸ On this genre see Gisinger (1937) 841–50; Güngerich (1950); Prontera (1992).

⁹ See especially the authorial statement in 4.552–56: ἀλλά, θεαί, πῶς τῆσδε παρέξ ἁλός, ἀμφὶ τε γαῖαν/Αὔσονίην νήσους τε Λιγυστίδας, αἱ καλέονται/Στοιχάδες, Ἀργῶς περιώσια σήματα νηὸς/νημερτὲς πέφαται; τίς ἀπόπροθι τόσσον ἀνάγκη/

of the "guides" who offer their services to the geographically inexperienced Argonauts are surprisingly well informed. The seer Phineus (2.311–407), for instance, or the friendly Hylleians (4.526–28) or the helpful god Triton-Eurypylos (4.1571–85) show how geographical knowledge helps with plotting a route.¹⁰ The uncertainty of the Argonauts themselves suits a voyage that took place in mythical time, underscoring the dangerous and tragic aspect of the enterprise. This uncertainty contrasts, doubtless on purpose, with Apollonius' geographical knowledge which was clearly the result of extensive research.¹¹ In the environment of the Alexandrian Library with its sophisticated scholars the epic poet could *not* afford to ignore the work of geographers and local historians. The courts of Alexander's successors offered the best access to geographical knowledge in the 3rd century B.C.¹² Equally self-evident for a poet with Apollonius' ambitions is the need to master the poetic tradition.¹³ The geography of the *Argonautica* is inconceivable not only without Homer and Pindar but also without the geographical commentators of Homer and the authors of *periploi* and descriptions of the Earth. The periplous-like catalogue of the Argonauts (1.23–277) is patterned on the Iliadic catalogue of ships and showcases, along with the catalogue of cities in the Propontis, Apollonius' elaboration, or modification, of the Homeric geography in the light of later sources.¹⁴ This technique characterizes especially

καὶ χρειῶ σφ' ἐκόμισσε; τίνες σφέας ἤγαγον ἄνδρα; ("how is it, goddesses, that beyond this sea, in the Ausonian land and the Ligurian islands Stoichades, many clear traces of the Argo's voyage appear? What necessity and need took them so far away? What winds directed them?"). On the principle of the "durchgängige Weisung der Wege", to the Argonauts see Fränkel (1968) 180–2. Delage (1930) 289, on the other hand, discusses the changes of route dictated by tradition. For Rubio (1992) 67, the orientation crisis is a characteristic component of the geographical frame of the epic. "Geographical" crises reflect the crises in myth, on which see Paduano (1992); Hurst (1998).

¹⁰ The behaviour of the Hylleians is indicative: ἐμχανόοντο κέλευθον/μισθὸν ἀειράμενοι (4.527 f.). Triton-Eurypylos has detailed knowledge of the port and the coastline, including the end of the northbound route through the Aegean.

¹¹ Delage (1930) 277–81. Apollonius was steeped in κτίσις-literature. On his hexameter poems about the foundation of various cities see Herter (1973) 409 f.; Vian (1976) XXIV f.; Krevans (2000).

¹² Fraser (1972) vol. I, 520–53; Pfister (1961); Jakob (1998).

¹³ Delage (1930) 277–9; Herter (1956) 302–4; Hunter (1996c) 875 f. On Apollonius' Homeric studies see Rengakos (1994a).

¹⁴ On the geography of the catalogue of the Argonauts see Delage (1930) 38 f.; Green (1997a) 203. The myth of the *Argonautica* necessitated the mention of Miletos and Samos instead of the Ionian islands in Homer. Thus the *periplous* is, on the whole, more accurate, as is shown by the mention of Phokis after Aitolia. On Helle-spont see Delage (1930) 92, 278.

the Odyssean part of the Argonautic *periplous* in southern Italy.¹⁵ Pindar's fourth *Pythian* is the most important model for the episodes in Libya and Thera. The familiarity of the audience or readers of the *Argonautica* with these sources is taken for granted.

The voyage of the Argo is closely related with the heroic plot of the *Argonautica*, the successful performance of a labour by a young man with the help of gods, other heroes and the love of a barbarian witch. This labour necessarily takes Jason and his comrades to the ends of the known world, to the outskirts of the realm of death and, in the case of some comrades, even beyond.¹⁶ The voyage also allows Apollonius to piece together the numerous aetiological myths he found in the Argonautic literature and the local histories of Greek cities. For example, the foundation myth of Kyrene with the genealogy of the Battiaids explains why, already in Pindar, it was almost obligatory for the Argonauts to land on N. Africa.¹⁷ Thus one could get the initial impression that the geography of the *Argonautica* was dictated by myth. In what follows we will attempt a geographical reading of the *Argonautica*. The places visited by the Argonauts make up an imaginary *periplous* map and we will focus not on the examination of geographical and topographical data but on an attempt to integrate the epic into the tradition of Greek geographical literature. Such an approach has not been very popular so far.¹⁸ This is due on the one hand to the fragmentary state of the geographical texts and on the other to the fact that the history of Hellenistic geographical literature became of greater interest to scholars only recently.¹⁹ But even on the basis of the scarce material that has survived from Apollonius' time it can be shown that his conception of the Earth is typical of geographical thought in the early Hellenistic period.

¹⁵ Delage (1930) 239–53; Romm (1992) 194 f. Interesting speculation about a metatextual joke by Hera (!) concerning the notorious Planktai (4.784–90) in Green (1997a) 326.

¹⁶ On underworld-like situations and landscapes see Hunter (1993a) 30 f., 184.

¹⁷ As in the *Argonautica*, in Pindar's *P.* 4.26 the Argonauts carry the ship on their shoulders for twelve days and cross the continent. The nine-day storm, which sends the Argonauts to Libya (4.1233 f.), is reminiscent of the nine days which took Odysseus to reach the Lotus Eaters from cape Maleia (*Od.* 9.79–84); see Delage (1930) 264; Livrea (1973) 348.

¹⁸ See, though, Vian (1981) 11–46 for a critical survey of the geographical literature which is considerably more accurate in comparison to that in Delage (1930).

¹⁹ Studies dealt mainly with the "major" authors, e.g. van Paassen (1957), because the majority of Hellenistic geographers were considered antiquarians and thus of

For the cities and the topography of Greece, the inner Pontos region and the western Mediterranean Apollonius could draw on sources which possibly relied on personal knowledge.²⁰ This applies in part to the Libyan episode too, especially to the early history of Cyrenaica, the home of Callimachus,²¹ which was very well known in Alexandria. The eastern Pontos, however, is presented from an ethnographical rather than a geographical point of view; in this case Apollonius had no local historians to draw on.²² The Alexandrian poet and his contemporaries appear to have had only a vague notion about the north of the *oikoumene*.²³

Since Delage²⁴ historical and geographical research has been able to substantiate or explain some of the topographical information Apollonius and his sources provide about various locations. In his introduction to book 4 Vian has collected the geographical tradition about the places the Argonauts visited on the return trip.²⁵ Relying on Apollonius and his sources the epigraphist Robert and the archaeologist Ehrhardt have shown the importance of foundation myths for the self-conception of the Greek cities in Asia Minor.²⁶ Studies on Greek colonization have

little interest. Ancient geography has long been an appropriate subject for the history of science or historical geography, not for literary studies; see though now Prontera (1984) and below n. 44. For a survey of Hellenistic geography see Sussehl (1891) 649–701; Gisinger (1924) 602–4; Fraser (1972). A scholarly edition of the fragments of Greek geographers is currently being published under the direction of H.-J. Gehrke (Freiburg); see above the preliminary note.

²⁰ Some names are mentioned in the *scholia*; see Delage (1930) 51–73, 277–81; Herter (1956) 302–6; Herter (1973) 44 f. Next to famous historians like Hecataeus (on whom see Pearson [1938] and Herter [1956]), Herodotus (Delage [1930] 79, doubtful according to Herter [1956] 303, but differently Herter [1973] 41), Pherecydes, Ephorus, Timaeus (for the west) and Xenophon ("mehr als zweifelhaft" Herter [1956] 303, cf. Beye [1982] 75 f., Hunter [1993a] 19 f.) there appear less known ones like Timagetus (*FHG* IV, 519 f., only in the *scholia*), Deiochus (*FGrHist* 471) and Neantes (*FGrHist* 84) for Kyzikos, Herodorus (*FGrHist* 31), Nymphis (*FGrHist* 432) and Promathidas (*FGrHist* 430) for Herakleia Pontike.

²¹ Every local mythology has its own topography. Concerning Libya, Vian (1981) 63 observes: "Apollonios a disposé d'une excellente information". On the Libyan episode see now Livrea (1987) who shows that Apollonius' version is not an arbitrary contamination of sources (*ibid.* 176).

²² The savage and hostile local nations give the Argonauts an idea of the conditions in Colchis; see Delage (1930) 282; Beye (1982) 102 f. The ethnographical source may have been the Νόμιμα βαρβαρικά or Ἀσίας of Nymphodorus (*FHG* 2, 379 ff.), which are mentioned in the *scholia*, cf. Höfer (1904).

²³ Vian (1981) 19.

²⁴ Delage (1930).

²⁵ Vian (1981); see n. 18 above.

²⁶ Robert (1980); Ehrhardt (1995); cf. also Vian (1974b).

also looked into the eastern Black Sea region.²⁷ The numerous ancient sources about the western Mediterranean, which are in part related to the *Odyssey* exegesis, allow us to evaluate the historical and geographical information about this region in the *Argonautica*. Modern hypotheses about the exact route of the Argonauts in northern Europe have not been equally convincing.²⁸

Modern literary scholarship has approached the geography of the Argonauts' voyage in the epic of Apollonius primarily from a narratological point of view. Apart from the fundamental problems of the geographical-historical background of the narrative and the geographical sources of Apollonius, scholarly interest has focused mainly on how the disparate geographical material is integrated into the narrative structure of the epic. Landscape description has been generally understood either as a manifestation of the poet's learning or even as a romantic backdrop reflecting the inner world of the travellers. More recently, the historical-political implications of geographical descriptions as well as their relation to the conceptualization of physical space and cultural identity has also been taken into account. However, the epic *periplous* has not yet been put in the context of the history of geographical literature and thought.²⁹

In line with the interests of their time, the groundbreaking studies of Apollonius' geography were concerned with the geographical knowledge of the poet and the sources he drew on.³⁰ Implicit here is an attempt to evaluate scientifically the geographical data in the *Argonautica* by determining their place on a scale whose extremes are myth and "modern" science. The great histories of geography which were published in the last century offered the framework for this evaluation of the Hellenistic *poeta doctus* in the light of the history of science.³¹ Great expectations from the poet of the *Argonautica* are

²⁷ Boardman (1980) 238–55; see also Braund (1994) and the articles in Lordkipanidzé-Lévêque (1996).

²⁸ See, e.g., Delage (1930) 230–4; Herter (1973) 42, and Lévêque in Lordkipanidzé-Lévêque (1996) 48. Patsch (1919) is, by comparison, very cautious.

²⁹ For some brief comments see Delage (1930) 14–9; Rubio (1992) 70–81.

³⁰ Walther (1891) and Delage (1930). It is not accidental that Walther's study appeared in the time of the great histories of geography by Forbiger (1842–77), Bunbury (1883) and Berger (1887–93). The question of geographical exactitude appears prominently again in Herter (1956) and (1973). The comment in Bunbury (1883) 21 is characteristic of the reader's expectations from Apollonius: "The voyage of the Argonauts... has almost the accuracy of a geographical treatise".

³¹ See n. 30.

not unfounded: Apollonius wrote at a time when the discoveries during Alexander's campaigns and the accumulation of scientific knowledge in the Alexandrian Mouseion made possible the advance of geography which culminated in the work of Eratosthenes of Kyrene. Eratosthenes was not only poet and geographer but also Apollonius' successor as head of the Alexandrian library.³² A positivistic approach to the geography of Apollonius is also fully justified because the poet himself shows an unusual interest in technological and scientific matters; in many instances this interest goes beyond the knowledge of the layman and follows closely the new "cutting-edge" developments, particularly in seafaring and medicine.³³ However, the evaluation of Apollonius' geographical knowledge faces a methodological difficulty. The geography of the Argonautic expedition is closely related to a mythical adventure which is older than the *Odyssey* and contains elements of a purely mythical geography.³⁴ It is exactly this myth, with its terrifying description of exotic lands, which is recounted in the *Argonautica*. The poet, therefore, undertakes the by no means simple task of integrating convincingly the mythical geography handed down by tradition and the knowledge of his time into a plausible narrative. This should be taken into account in a discussion of Apollonius' acquaintance with the geographical knowledge of his time.

The geography of the *Argonautica* has also been studied with respect to the relation between poetic geography and reality; this bears on the notorious issue of the unity and the aesthetic value of the epic.³⁵ Does Apollonius give a coherent picture of the Earth or simply a farrago of mythical-poetical traditions and empirical knowledge of more recent explorers? How is the obviously dry geographical "material" integrated into the narrative? Does the pretentious show of geographical learning mesh with the poetic intention of the epic as a

³² Pfeiffer (1978) 178, 194; Aujac (1998).

³³ On seafaring in the *Argonautica* see Fränkel (1968) 635 (I, 38, 3); Rostropowicz (1990) and Janni (1996) 345 n. 26, 167 n. 90; on medicine see Hunter (1989a) 179 f.

³⁴ In its cosmological association with Chaos, the concept of the Okeanos flowing around the Earth is an element of the oldest mythical geography. Reaching the stream of the Okeanos is, therefore, dangerous; cf. Romm (1992) 12–7, esp. 16 n. 24, 20–6.

³⁵ Cf. Knaack (1895) 129 (quoted in Glei-Natzel-Glei [1996] XII): "Aber es war ein verfehltes Unterfangen des A., den Homeriker zu spielen und zugleich im Geiste seiner Zeit eine gelehrte Periege und eine sentimentale Liebesgeschichte in das Epos hineinzutragen..."; cf. Wilamowitz (1924) 227 and Rubio (1992) 38 f. for similar negative remarks in Anglosaxon scholarship.

whole? Stemming from the literary interest in the structure of the epic narrative and the relation of the epic to reality, these questions lead to a fundamental problem in the modern scholarship on the *Argonautica*: making a scientific geographer of Apollonius seems to be wide of the mark, and the view that the poet from Rhodes primarily intended to force into hexameters abstruse bookish knowledge about distant lands and their geography is equally unhelpful. The thesis that in many passages Apollonius is nothing but the poet of a didactic epic on geography is seldom put forth appreciatively, since the purposes of science and fictional poetry are thought to be *a priori* incompatible.³⁶ The perceived conflict between poetry and science in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius explains to a large extent the critical approach to the epic adopted by older scholars who assumed a fondness for geography on Apollonius' part.

Delage, the translator of the Budé text of the *Argonautica*, collected the geographical material in the epic and discussed it in the light of the *scholia* and modern travelogues. His still indispensable study is primarily concerned with the problem of Apollonius' sources, deals with questions of historical geography but also attempts to appreciate the epic aesthetically. In his survey Herter also criticized Delage's unfounded speculations about the geographical sources of Apollonius, pointed out the lack of first-hand knowledge of geographical details and, not least, took issue with Delage's anachronistic attitude to poetry.³⁷ Herter's study profited primarily from Pearson whose speculations about Apollonius' old Ionian sources are, however, often unconvincing.³⁸ The question of how geography functions in the *Argonautica* remains still largely unanswered. Whereas Delage thinks that the epic aims primarily at presenting geographical knowledge,³⁹ Herter subordinates the presentation of this knowledge to the aetiological-mythological interests of the poet.⁴⁰

³⁶ "Oft ist es so, als ob es sich nicht um ein Gedicht, sondern um eine geographisch-mythologische Periegesis handelte", Schmid-Stählin (1920) 145, quoted in Gleis-Natzel-Glei (1996) XII. Livrea (1973) XXII characterizes the *Argonautica* as a "didactic poem" without any negative connotations; see, however, Dalzell (1996) for the usual negative attitude. The problematic relation of poetry and science is discussed in detail by Jakob (1993) 400–30, esp. 402 f.

³⁷ For the lack of unity in the *Argonautica* see Delage (1930) 202 f., 283, 286, 289 f. and the comments in Herter (1956) 302–4. Hurst (1998) defends the aesthetic unity of Apollonius' geography by emphasizing its coherence. It is preferable to acknowledge with Hunter (1993a) 5 that "inconsistency and unevenness reign in all aspects of the *Argonautica* . . .".

³⁸ Cf. Pearson (1938) and Herter (1956) 302. The uncertainty ultimately derives from the absence of any guarantee that the *scholia* cite every single source of Apollonius.

³⁹ "L'élément essentiel des *Argonautiques*" (Delage [1930] 7); "l'épopée d'Apollonios est surtout géographique" (*ibid.* 9); for reservations see Levin (1971) 28 f. and n. 4.

⁴⁰ See also Herter (1973) 42.

For the rest he agrees with Pearson that Apollonius' predilection for older Greek geographers aims at creating "an air of antiquity" and "reality".⁴¹

It is apparent that judging Apollonius as a geographer depends on preconceptions about the science of geography on the one hand and aesthetic criteria on the other. Geography seeks to represent nature in a manner faithful to reality whereas poetry calls for freedom in the handling of the material and a concept of aesthetic unity. However, the ideal of scientific geography which is primarily interested in the "objective" representation of physical space on a mathematical basis has changed in modern times.

In the second half of the 20th century modern geography has drawn an important distinction: "geography", as subject matter of the eponymous science, comprises not only objective data about the Earth's surface but also the perception, and the model, of physical space.⁴² A "mental map" is created on the basis of personal experiences, oral or written learning and geographical speculation. Thus today one will not evaluate only the geographical knowledge of an ancient author by comparing it with the *ex eventu* rated achievements of his colleagues: the author's perception and conception of physical space is also to be taken into account. This approach focuses primarily on the nature of spatial perception and orientation as well as on the nature of human action in relation to the ambient physical space. In what follows we will adopt this broad notion of geography which comprises both topography and the study of geographical speculation, fantasy and mythology. As a consequence, the subject-matter of geography includes the affective relation of humans to space, which can also be expressed in literary texts. The quality of Apollonius' geography is manifest in that he describes with precision not only people in a landscape but also the subjective perception of geographical space.⁴³

⁴¹ Pearson (1938) 456, 459, cf. 447: "There are a number of passages where the geographical detail is unnecessarily full, adding nothing to the story, merely revealing the poet's interest in geographical knowledge". Unlike him, Delage (1930) 279 and 281 seems to believe that Apollonius drew primarily on later historians like Timaios, Timagetos and the local historians of the 4th century. Nevertheless, we know very little about Apollonius' actual sources.

⁴² See Janni (1984) 11–4; Bonnafé (1991–92); Gehrke (1998) 163 f. n. 5; Meyer (1998b) 61–3 and Jacob (1989).

⁴³ Williams (1991) 16. On the subjectivity of geographical perspective in Apollonius see also Meyer (1998b) 71. Fränkel (1968) often adopts a similar approach in his description of Apollonius' geographical interests.

In the recent past this innovative approach of modern geography has been adopted by the sciences of antiquity since the broader horizon of geographical inquiry and the consideration of non-scientific forms of spatial perception amounts to a reappraisal of the literary tradition as a source of geography. The subjective perception of geographical space is influenced by traditional learning, stories and fables in literature as well as by empirical knowledge. The literary character of the ancient geographical tradition has been emphasized especially by Prontera, Nicolet and Romm.⁴⁴ As the development of Greek and Roman geography clearly suggests, in descriptions of the Earth verbal description⁴⁵ and narration⁴⁶ assume a role greater than one would expect, given their irrelevance to natural science. This is apparent, as scholars have observed, from the popularity of *periplous* as a form of presenting geographical material⁴⁷ as well as from the affinity of geography to ethnography and local history, which is to be attributed to the historiographical origins of geography.⁴⁸ Science and storytelling meet sometimes in surprising combinations. In his *periplous*-like work *περὶ λιμένων* a contemporary of Apollonius, the Rhodian Timosthenes, who was an admiral under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, seems to have occupied the entire generic spectrum extending from nautical logbook to antiquarian aetiology and cartography.⁴⁹ In this and other respects Timosthenes is a predecessor of Eratosthenes.

Stories about place names and topographical peculiarities are a staple of ancient geographical prose. On the other hand, there are passages in poetry which can be read geographically. Gods criss-cross the sky and follow the earthly routes of humans;⁵⁰ like the

⁴⁴ Prontera (1984); Nicolet (1988); Romm (1992) 7 ("nearly all geography, in antiquity, can be read as a form of literature"); Prontera (1992); cf. though already van Paassen (1957).

⁴⁵ Janni (1984) 41–9.

⁴⁶ Romm (1992) 5.

⁴⁷ Güngerich (1950) 6; Gehrke (1998) 165 f.

⁴⁸ Jacoby (1909), Prontera (1984) and Prontera (1992).

⁴⁹ On the multiple interests of Timosthenes of Rhodes, who is considered a scientific geographer by Delage (1930) 18, see Wagner (1880), Prontera (1992) and Meyer (1998a). Other *periploi* with the title *περὶ λιμένων* are ascribed only to Cleon of Syracuse (*FHG* IV 365) and Timagetos (*FHG* IV 519 f.) but no fragments have survived. From Timagetos Apollonius took over the Argonauts' voyage on the Istros and the Celtic lakes; see Delage (1930) 279, Green (1997a) 302 f.

⁵⁰ At *Il.* 14.225–30 Hera takes the Argonauts' route around Athos in her travel from Olympos to Lemnos; see Janni (1984) 121, Gehrke (1998) 165. Locations of the Argonautic *periplous* also appear in the wanderings of Io at *A. Pr.* 705 ff., 790 ff.; see Finkelberg (1998), Bonnafé (1991–92).

Greeks on their way home from Troy, the Argonauts are blown off course to strange places, and heroes like Herakles travel throughout the inhabited world; catalogues are structured geographically⁵¹ and symbolism or pathos creates poetical landscapes.⁵² Apollonius of Rhodes can be considered one of the most important geographical authors of his time even if his reworking of the geographical tradition differs from that of Eratosthenes, a radical critic of Homeric geography.⁵³ The integration of the *Argonautica* into the tradition of geographical literature, which includes poets as well as prose writers who wrote about the form and the appearance of the Earth's surface, can be further justified. Apollonius recalls a centuries-old tradition of geographical narratives with his famous geographical *petit tour de force*,⁵⁴ the voyage of the Argonauts from Colchis to Thessaly via the western Mediterranean on a route that combines scientific and fantastic elements. He relies not so much on empirical geographical knowledge as on an imaginary map on which earlier poets and historians have left their marks—signposts that cannot be ignored by a Hellenistic writer. His educated listeners and readers experience the expansion and modification of the traditional itinerary of the Argonauts and at the same time every locale on the Argonauts' route signals a positive or negative stance to a particular tradition. Thus Apollonius clearly subscribes to an old tradition according to which some of Odysseus' wanderings took place in the western Mediterranean just like the chronologically earlier passage of the Argo through the Planktai.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the poet appears

⁵¹ On the spatiotemporal organising principle of the Homeric and Hesiodic catalogues and their importance for the early history of Greek geography see Gehrke (1998) 165 f. The flight of the Boreads (*Arg.* 2.273–300) has a more detailed geographical model in Hesiod, fr. 150–6 M.-W.; cf. also West (1985) 84 f. Beye (1982) 102 f. suggests that the "geographical" second book of the *Argonautica* is an adaptation of Hesiodic catalogue poetry; cf. Hunter (1993a) 95.

⁵² See the extensive study of Bernand (1985). The influence of "tragic" geography on Apollonius is studied only incidentally by Williams (1991); see also Williams (1991) 13 on landscape in Pindar, 12 and 309–13 on the role of geography in the Homeric *Hymns* and on Apollonius' reception of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*; see also, though, the objections in Köhnken (2000).

⁵³ Eratosthenes disputed the geographical competence of Homer and even the intention of the poet to present real geography; see Str. 1.2.15 = Eratosth. fr. I A 16 Berger on which see Romm (1992) 185 f.

⁵⁴ Delage (1930) 289.

⁵⁵ The localization of Odysseus' itinerary in southern Italy is related to the establishment of Greek colonies; see now Malkin (1998) 178–209. The location of

to have rejected some versions which suggested the possibility of a return trip via the circular Okeanos.⁵⁶ Instead Jason and his companions wander into very remote and totally unfamiliar regions with which, though, Apollonius' contemporaries are acquainted through various travelogues.⁵⁷

The heroic *nostos* of the Argonauts through the *oikoumene* is the best known case of a legendary voyage harmonized with the geographical notions of the various times in which the story of this voyage was told.⁵⁸ After Delage, Vian has shown how the Argonautic *periplous*, which was famous already in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 12.70) of the 7th cent. B.C., is increasingly localized in the known world until finally Apollonius eschews entirely the ship's sailing on the mythical Okeanos.⁵⁹ In a famous passage (4.636–44) Hera, who influences the Argonauts' route on other occasions too, prohibits Argo from sailing into the Okeanos because this would mean the Argonauts' certain demise. For the return from Colchis to Iolkos historians and poets before Apollonius had suggested three different itineraries in which the same places could be visited at different times.⁶⁰ In view of the multiple possibilities offered by the literary tradition, Apollonius' choice of route is of great importance for the issue of his "scientific" attitude. According to Vian, the accuracy and honesty of the Rhodian is crucial in this respect when it comes to the limits of his own knowledge.⁶¹ As he did in the case of the Okeanos, Apollonius does

Kirke and the island of the Sirens goes back to Hesiod, *ibid.* 188 f. This colonial topography gives rise to a geography which is then further developed from the 4th century onwards by historians with geographical interests (like Timaios and Timagetos); see Romm (1992) 183–96, esp. 184 f. and 194 n. 51.

⁵⁶ The existence of the Okeanos was vigorously denied already by Herodotus; see Romm (1992) 32–41, Green (1997b) 42 with n. 23. "Okeanos" is for Eratosthenes almost a synonym for "fiction"; cf. Str. 1.2.19 = fr. I A 14 Berger, see Romm (1973).

⁵⁷ Cf. Call. *Jov.* 65: ἄ κεν περὶθοιεν ἀκούην.

⁵⁸ The *nostos* of the Argonauts is only one example of such geographical "updating"; on the triumphant procession of Dionysus through the whole world in Euripides *Ba.* 13–9 as a piece of Hellenistic geography see Dihle (1981) 12–25 and on the modification of Io's itinerary see Finkelberg (1998).

⁵⁹ Delage (1930) 287 f.; Vian (1981) 11–68; Vian (1987). On the Argonautic saga before Pindar see also Braswell (1988) 347 f.

⁶⁰ In *Pi. P.* 4.252 ff., the Argonauts visit Lemnos on the return trip; see the overview of the ports of call in Dräger (1996) 1068 f., Green (1997a) 302 f. Unfortunately we do not know what route Callimachus chose for the Colchians and the Argonauts, but see Vian (1981) 18, 34 f.

⁶¹ Vian (1987a) 255.

not deny the existence of the Hyperboreans but he does not give them a place in his narrative.⁶² The accuracy of geographical data has increased in comparison to earlier poets but the archaising flavour of his poetry is unmistakable. For Apollonius *qua* epic poet and his Argonauts the Okeanos, the Hyperboreans and the Rhipaeian mountains, the gates of Night and the sun-scorched western Ethiopians do exist, even though the Argonauts do not travel there. The sun and the moon rise above a fixed horizon, "the outermost limit of the Earth", although Apollonius was clearly aware of the Earth's spherical shape.⁶³ These are elements of the epic tradition and it is possible that Apollonius did intend to portray the archaic outlook of the Argonauts, as Fränkel suspects. The story of an old Egyptian map (4.279 f.) is at any rate an indication that Apollonius presupposes a scientific and cultural progress of sorts.⁶⁴ For its part, the landscape too changed after Argo sailed by.⁶⁵

However, the Hellenistic geography is not characterized only by the tension between empirical data and a mythology which today's readers may be unfamiliar with. The credit for pointing out the influence of pre-scientific, empirical forms of spatial orientation on ancient geographical literature belongs to Janni.⁶⁶ To understand the geographical texts one must distinguish between two conceptions of spatial orientation: one in terms of the empirical "hodological" *periplous*, in which space is conceived by way of personally experienced landmarks and routes, and another in terms of speculative cartography and geography, which construct a schematic representation of the

⁶² 2.647–76; 4.611–7; Romm (1992) 195. Apollonius leaves thus no doubt that he moves in the *epic* world. He avoids, though, the direct clash with his contemporaries' sense of realism. Dealing with reality in this manner is by no means naive; cf. Hunter (1993b) XXIII f.: "Alexandrian scholars were well aware of the potentially great difference between a story's or description's being textually attested and its being true."

⁶³ On elements of "géographie fabuleuse" see Delage (1930) 290, Fränkel (1968) 508 n. 109, 434 f., 458.

⁶⁴ According to this tradition early Egyptian colonists brought the map and knowledge to Colchis. This is an allusion to Sesostris and Alexander; cf. Hunter (1991) 94 ff. and (1993a) 162–3.

⁶⁵ 4.261 (there was originally no moon), 4.266 (there were originally no stars), 2.604 f. (the clashing of the Symplegades stopped), 4.1757 f. (creation of Thera); see Williams (1991) 185–210, as well as Aujac (1998) on speculations about the change of the surface of the Earth in contemporary physical geography; cf. also Berger (1880) 57–69.

⁶⁶ Janni (1984); Gehrke (1998) 163 f. n. 5, 165.

Earth and the routes on it. It is characteristic that ancient geography retains the "spazio vissuto" even when the conception of the Earth is founded on astronomical observations and geometrical speculation.⁶⁷ Numerous geographical errors in our sources are to be attributed to the unwarranted identification of historical trade routes with actual divisions of land and sea.⁶⁸ Thus Cape Karambis on the southern coast of the Black Sea was erroneously believed to be the northernmost end of the coastline. Consequently Apollonius assumes that this cape lies "opposite the Great Bear" (2.360) and that it channels the north wind in two directions.⁶⁹ In fact the cape marks only the beginning of an important trade route across Pontos and along the northern coast, but this route is by no means directly north-bound.⁷⁰ In maps the Pontos was squarely enclosed by two opposite headlands, Cape Karambis and the Kriou Metopon, which was placed in the north. According to Apollonius, the Black Sea and Adriatic Sea were linked by Istros, a network of waterways connected with the Okeanos, on which the Argonauts sailed in their escape from Colchis. Istros too is not a real geographical entity but a projection onto an imaginary map of something which was partly trade route and partly schematic speculation.⁷¹ Apollonius mentions three transcontinental river systems and their lakes. To the east the Black Sea is linked with the Caspian Sea whereas to the west and north it is linked with the Adriatic and the Rhipean mountains respectively; the Adriatic is linked, by way of the Eridanos and the Rhodanos, with the Celtic lakes, the northern Okeanos and the western Mediterranean. Such a schematic conceptualization of landmasses and waterways did not originate with Apollonius but it is much more

⁶⁷ On the concept of "spazio vissuto" see Janni (1984) 78, 94; on its importance for Greek cartography see 65–78.

⁶⁸ Vian (1987) 254 makes a good point about the return trip of the Argonauts: "Il est bien connu que la cartographie ancienne est à deux dimensions: elle néglige les montagnes et tient compte exclusivement des mers, du contour des terres habitées et des cours d'eau. Si l'on préfère, on peut dire encore que les réseaux hydrographiques se confondent avec les voies commerciales qui suivent les fleuves, mais empruntent évidemment aussi les cols pour passer d'un bassin à l'autre".

⁶⁹ See Fränkel (1968) 175 f.; Strab. 2.124 f., 7.309. The schematic assignment of winds to celestial points is characteristic of "scientific" geography; see Meyer (1998a) 210–13.

⁷⁰ Fränkel (1968) (see previous note). Arnaud (1992) 64, demonstrated that it was the most widely used route across the Euxine (cf. the maps in Arnaud).

⁷¹ Delage (1930) 203 f.; Green (1997a).

prominent in his epic than in any other extant source.⁷² Apollonius calls the Balkan peninsula, which is traversed by the Istros, an "αὐχὴν γαίης" (4.307), a tongue of land separating two seas.⁷³ Already in Herodotus the continents are separated by hypothetical "land straits" whose existence can be assumed only because actual distances in the inland were unknown or underestimated.⁷⁴ The "Balkan Isthmus" is mentioned also by Hellenistic authors.⁷⁵ The Pontos and the Adriatic were traditionally thought to be visible simultaneously from Mount Haimos. This geography reflects a wish for a bird's eye view of a known stretch of distant land, as if one were looking down at it on a map. Especially the relative position of various locations makes sense only in terms of such a quasi-cartographic overview, an experience one can have in several places in mountainous Greece. Various forms of such flight and hiking fantasies are to be found in Greek literature.⁷⁶ They make possible the visualization of an imaginary map and thereby not only the orientation of the reader but also the appreciation of the landscape's extent. The shadow of Mount Athos (1.601–4), which purportedly reaches to the coast of Lemnos, may perhaps be understood as an example of such a quasi-cartographic sea route, even if the emphasis here is on the great size of the mountain. The cartographic thought-experiment of this type is even more clearly exemplified in Aietes' ride on the chariot of the Sun⁷⁷ and in the description of the river Thermodon.⁷⁸ It is, however, also

⁷² Fränkel (1968) 507–9; Vian (1987) 254 with n. 15.

⁷³ Delage (1930) 209 with n. 2.

⁷⁴ Janni (1984) 153. This aspect of Greek geographical thought shows very clearly that the water was considered the primary factor in the division of landmasses.

⁷⁵ See Strab. 7.5.1, 7.5.9; Delage (1930) 208 f.; Janni (1984) 152 with n. 216; Green (1997a) 306 f.

⁷⁶ They extend from the realizable and strategically important possibility of a topographical survey from an elevation to the dream of a bird's-eye view of the continents in Eratosthenes' *Hermes* (Berger [1887–93] 398 f.); on cartographic vision in Herodotus see Aigner (1974) and on the philosophical and geographical view from above see further Romm (1992) 127 f., Jacob (1989).

⁷⁷ 3.309–15; the simultaneous view of the opposite ends of the world is also implied at 3.1119 f., on which see Fränkel (1968) 343 and cf. 539, 435. In contrast to the flight of Homeric gods Aietes' flight is no *periplous* because he follows the trajectory of the sun. On the geographical importance of the east-west axis, especially in Dicaearchus, see also Meyer (1998b) 71. Eros could also enjoy the view from above at 3.158–66 (cf. *Od.* 5.50), on which see Williams (1991) 228–31, Fränkel (1968) 200 n. 122. On the history of Greek cartographic thought see also Aujac (1987).

⁷⁸ 2.972–84, on which see Fränkel (1968) 252 ff., Williams (1991) 279: "The

implied by the sweeping bird's-eye view of the *oikoumene*⁷⁹ in the simile illustrating the speed of the divine trip (2.541 ff.):

ὡς δ' ὅτε τις πάτρηθεν ἀλώμενος—οἶά τε πολλὰ
πλαζόμεθ' ἄνθρωποι τετλήότες, οὐδέ τις αἶψα
τηλουργός, πᾶσαι δὲ κατόψιοί εἰσι κέλευθοι—
σφωιτέρους δ' ἐνόησε δόμους, ἄμυδις δὲ κέλευθος
ὑγρή τε τραφερή τ' ἰνδάλλεται, ἄλλοτε δ' ἄλλη
ὀξέα πορφύρων ἐπιμαίεται ὀφθαλμοῖσιν.

As when a man who wanders far from his own land—as indeed we wretched men often do wander, and no land seems distant, but all paths are spread before us—can picture his own home, and as he sees in a flash the path there over land and sea, his thoughts dart quickly and his eyes grasp one place after another.

Thus clear visualization in landscape descriptions has a poetic as well as a geographical dimension.⁸⁰ The Argonauts themselves visualize their route aided by the “educational geographical video” of the seer Phineus, an “oral map”⁸¹ (2.317–407), and by an inscription, an account of which is given by Argos, the son of Phrixos (4.256 ff.). According to this account the inscription contained an actual map.⁸²

The Hellenistic geography of Apollonius is primarily a developed form of speculative geography. The narrative frame, the dangerous *nostos* of the Argonauts, offers the poet an opportunity to incorporate in his epic, and highlight poetically, a considerable amount of

Thermodon is described for the reader as if one were looking down at it on a map.”

⁷⁹ Cf. *Il.* 15.80–3 and Fränkel (1968) 200 (“wie auf einer Landkarte”), 252 ff.; Meyer (1998b) 69–71.

⁸⁰ Williams (1991) 21. For the perception of phenomena like the curvature of the sea surface see Fränkel (1968) 318; interestingly, Eratosthenes explained the Symplegades as an optical phenomenon: Ἐρατοσθένης δὲ ἐν γεωγραφουμένοις φησὶ τὸν πλοῦν εἶναι στενὸν καὶ σκολιόν, δι' οὗ φαντάζεσθαι τοὺς πλέοντας τὴν ἀπόκλεισιν τῶν πετρῶν, *sch. E. Med.* 2 = fr. III B 8 Berger, cf. fr. III B 80–3, Delage (1930) 131. In the *Argonautica* the description of the coast fits in with the poetical topography of the Symplegades (see Fränkel [1968] 204).

⁸¹ Fränkel (1968) 179 (“geographischer Lehrfilm”, “gesprochene Landkarte”). In this case, though, the concept of an oral *periplous* or a *periegesis* would be more accurate because the description follows the hodologic principle. For Phineus' speech as *periegesis* cf. Hunter (1993a) 94 f.

⁸² Janni (1984) 35 with n. 43 attacks 19th century geographers who used this passage to show that there existed an ancient cartography which produced usable maps. This passage rather echoes the speculative “scientific” geography; cf. the ball of Eros (3.131–41), which is described as a globe.

geographical lore about the *oikoumene*. The geographical “material” is organized along the lines of a *periplous* or in terms of the quasi-cartographic bird's-eye view.⁸³ This geography is “scientific”, in the modern sense of the term, primarily on account of the fullness and quality of the material Apollonius collected. Some other *topoi* of geographical discourse taken over by Apollonius, like the geographical interpretation of the *Odyssey* and the speculative schematization, do support the observation of Lloyd “that much of Greek science consists in the rationalization of popular belief”.⁸⁴

There remains the question of whether the specifically Apollonian compilation of geographical traditions makes a special statement, in other words, what intentions are implicit in the mental map of the *Argonautica*. Does Apollonius go beyond the sheer joy of landscape description or the geographical instruction of his audience? Even if we do not always know the geographical traditions Apollonius accepted,⁸⁵ it is nevertheless clear that the relation of humans to physical space, especially the history of human geographical expansion, play a crucial role in the *Argonautica*. This topic was handled in a literary manner by both Apollonius and the admiral Timosthenes, the aforementioned prodigious writer and reader. One may certainly start from the fact that Timosthenes took part in the expeditions of the Ptolemies. It is this fact, rather than the extant fragments of his *periplous*, that reveals the political dimension of Hellenistic geography. The expanding or expansion-bound state writes its history, to quote Nicolet, “selon un rythme qui est lié à l'espace géographique”.⁸⁶ Nicolet's observations about the relation between geography and politics allude to the example of Rome and invite a comparison with the geography of the early Hellenistic poets: “On savait depuis longtemps, l'usage que la poésie, officielle ou non, épique ou élégiaque, peut

⁸³ It has long been observed that the voyage to the Black Sea resembles a *periplous* with ethnographic interests whereas the cartographic vision predominates in the account of the return voyage; cf. Hunter (1993b) XXIII f. Likewise, Phineus explains the route to Colchis in terms of a *periplous* whereas in Argos' account the return route takes the form of an oral map. At any rate, for their orientation the Argonauts use consistently the hodologic principle, when they have no other information.

⁸⁴ Lloyd (1984) 403. The rationalistic tendency is also apparent in the etymologies of geographical names (Delage [1930] 286).

⁸⁵ Fränkel (1968) 508 f. n. 109, warns correctly: “Überhaupt können wir nicht wissen wie weit er seine geographische Angaben als realistisch gemeint hat, und wie weit als poetisch und phantastisch”.

⁸⁶ Nicolet (1988) 17.

faire des noms propres évocateurs, des mythes, des propagandes ou des exploits célébrés: il y a donc une 'géographie' de Virgile, d'Horace ou d'Ovide. Mais en fait presque toute la littérature est susceptible d'une lecture géographique".⁸⁷ It suffices here to evoke the numerous geographical allusions, with their political associations, in the poems of Callimachus and Theocritus.⁸⁸ An interest in geography is, therefore, common to both poet and ruler. Characteristic of Hellenistic geography is the preference for an encyclopedic "whole-earth literature" which in the traditional form of *περίπλους* or of *περίοδος* encompasses the entire globe.⁸⁹ A passage in the *Argonautica* seems to point clearly to such an "expansionist" level of meaning. Apollonius mentions a military expedition which had started from Egypt long ago and with which the above-mentioned world map reached Colchis (4.272 ff.).⁹⁰ Here tie in recent studies which seek to determine the sociopolitical function of Apollonian geography.

The dissertation of Rubio⁹¹ deals only secondarily with the close parallel between Alexander's expedition and the mythical foreshadowing of Greek colonization in the voyage of the Argo. Ptolemaic attempts at territorial expansion are also discussed rather cursorily. This work adopts a sociological approach and its main interest lies in the narrative structure of the epic which, according to Rubio, suggests ideas of territorial expansion and domination by means of its linear organization.⁹² Thus Rubio attributes a special role to the catalogues of geographical names whose monotony is often disparagingly pointed out.⁹³ Rubio rejects the traditional interpretation of these catalogues as intertextual allusions to the early Greek catalogue poetry and sees in them the expression of a radically altered perception of physical space in the Hellenistic age. Stephens puts the representation of familiar and foreign places in the context of colonization literature⁹⁴ whose characteristic narrative modes appear in Apollonius' *Argonautica*: the approach to a foreign coast, its scientific exploration and naming and finally the

"romantic encounter" of the hero with a foreign girl. Thus, according to Stephens, the cultural situation of Ptolemaic Alexandria is also reflected by the geography of the epic.

As these last examples show, the geography of Apollonius' *Argonautica* still offers room for further readings.

⁸⁷ Nicolet (1988) 16, cited in part by Romm (1992) 7.

⁸⁸ On the geographic catalogues in Callimachus and Theocritus and the possibility of a political interpretation see Weber (1993) 316–8.

⁸⁹ On Ps.-Skylax and Simias see Romm (1992) 31 with n. 64. On the, typical of this time, preference for "enzyklopädische Orientierung in den Weiten von Raum und Zeit" see Fränkel (1968) 21. In the *Argonautica* clear spatial representation coalesces with orientation.

⁹⁰ Delage (1930) 35 f.; Livrea (1973) 92 f.; Hunter (1989a) 94 ff.

⁹¹ Rubio (1992).

⁹² Rubio (1992) 41–52.

⁹³ Hunter (1993) 5.

⁹⁴ Stephens (2000); this study is modelled on Pratt (1992) and Dougherty (1993).