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**Echoing Hylas : metapoetics in Hellenistic and Roman poetry**  
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## CHAPTER 1

# EPIC HYLAS: APOLLONIUS' ARGONAUTICA

Callimachus and Apollonius were fighting  
on the same side in the Battle of the Books  
Lefkowitz 1981, 135

### 1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will argue that Apollonius of Rhodes used Hylas and Heracles to express his allegiance to Callimachean poetics, and that the Hylas episode of the *Argonautica* can be read as a metapoetical statement pertaining to the entire epic. First, however, I will show in what sense the epic can be seen as Callimachean. As has often been noted, the *Argonautica* significantly differs from its main models, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Scholarly attention on the relationship between Apollonius and Homer has focused on the protagonist of the epic, Jason, who has been found to fall short with regard to the heroic credentials of his Homeric predecessors.<sup>43</sup> But Jason has other qualities, such as his beauty and his intelligence, with which he can, and will, fulfil his mission, acquiring the Golden Fleece,<sup>44</sup> as gradually becomes clear.

As I will argue, this relationship between Jason and the Homeric heroes reflects that of Apollonius with regard to the Homeric epic legacy. Jason can thus be seen as a *mise en abyme*, a representation of the poet himself gradually maturing as an epic poet and finding his own poetic niche with regard to the heroic-epic tradition. The latter is symbolized by the greatest Greek hero in the story, who is able to live up to Homeric expectations: Heracles. The hero's departure from the *Argonautica* at the end of the first book, due to the disappearance of Hylas, is an important juncture in the

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<sup>43</sup> Lawall 1966.

<sup>44</sup> So e.g. Fränkel 1959; Beye 1969; 1982, 77-99; Schwinge 1986, 88-152; Hunter 1988; 1993, 8-45; Clauss 1993.

development of both Apollonius and his poetic *alter ego* Jason. The episode constitutes the climax of the continuing clash in the first book between Jason and Heracles and can be read as a metapoetical allegory, symbolizing Apollonius' "Callimachean" attitude *vis-à-vis* the Homeric tradition through association of himself with Hylas. His maturation, symbolized by his transition from involvement in a pederastic relationship with Heracles to his marriage with a nymph, is accompanied by the leaving behind of his adoptive father and teacher Heracles.

## 2. Jason vs. Heracles

### 2.1. Jason the love hero

At the beginning of the *Argonautica*, Jason seems unfit for the task set upon him, because of the presence of a greater hero, Heracles, who is even unanimously chosen by the other Argonauts as their leader (1.342-3). In the course of the first book, however, the powerful Heracles increasingly does not seem to fit this new type of epic, in which other, non-heroic qualities, such as Jason's way with women (Medea in particular) are more effective, as the seer Phineus will tell the Argonauts quite explicitly in book 2:

ἀλλά, φίλοι, φράζεσθε θεᾶς δολόεσσαν ἄρωγὴν  
Κύπριδος· ἐν γὰρ τῇ κλυτὰ πείρατα κεῖται ἀέθλων. Arg. 2.423-4

But, my friends, be mindful of the wily assistance of the goddess Cypris, for with her lies the glorious accomplishment of your tasks. (tr. Race)

The third book of the *Argonautica*, moreover, in which Medea's love of Jason features prominently, opens with a second prologue, stressing the importance of love for the remainder of the epic:<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See Albis 1996, 111-2 for the way in which this prologue also marks a transition from Apollo, who is invoked in the proem of the epic (*Arg.* 1.1), to Aphrodite as tutelary deity.

εἰ δ' ἄγε νῦν, Ἐρατώ, παρὰ θ' ἴστασο καί μοι ἔνισπε,  
ἔνθεν ὅπως ἐς Ἴωλκὸν ἀνήγαγε κῶας Ἰήσων  
Μηδείης ὑπ' ἔρωτι· σὺ γὰρ καὶ Κύπριδος αἴσαν  
ἔμμορες, ἀδμήτας δὲ τεοῖς μελεδήμασι θέλγεις  
παρθενικάς· τῷ καί τοι ἐπήρατον οὔνομ' ἀνήπται.

Arg. 3.1-5

Come now, Erato, stand by my side and tell me how from here Jason brought the fleece back to Iolcus with the aid of Medea's love, for you have a share also of Cyprus' power and enchant unwed girls with your anxieties; and that is why your lovely name has been attached to you. (tr. Race)

At the first stopover of the Argonauts, on Lemnos, we already get an indication of the way this epic is destined to go and the qualities the mission will require. Jason is depicted here as a "love hero", his ἀρετή being attractiveness to women, in this particular case to the queen of the island, Hypsipyle.<sup>46</sup> This love hero is set up as an alternative to a heroic-epic, Homeric hero. Jason, for instance, enters the Lemnian city, when summoned by Hypsipyle, dressed in an extensively described cloak, which is "an erotic version of Achilles' shield",<sup>47</sup> and although Jason's progression into the city is thus reminiscent of a Homeric battle scene, it is also a perversion of one.<sup>48</sup>

## 2.2. *Too heavy for the Argo: Heracles in Argonautica 1*

The time does not seem ripe for eroticised epic as long as Heracles is part of the expedition. While Jason and the other Argonauts accept Hypsipyle's invitation, returning to the city and enjoying themselves with the Lemnian women, Heracles chooses to stay by the Argo with some of his comrades:

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<sup>46</sup> For Jason as a love hero, see Beye 1969 (coining the expression); 1982, 77-99. For the Lemnos episode in particular, see Beye 1969, 43-5; Zanker 1979, 54; Beye 1982, 88-93; Clauss 1993, 131, 135; DeForest 1994, 55-60.

<sup>47</sup> DeForest 1994, 56. See e.g. Goldhill 1991, 308-11 for a discussion of the ecphrasis as *mise en abyme* of the *Argonautica* (with n. 54 for more bibliography).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. DeForest 1994, 57: "The warrior of love storms the woman's heart as a real warrior storms a city. The frequent mention of pylai, "gates," and of Hypsipyle's name, "high gate," reminds the reader that a potential *Iliad* has been changed into a paraclausithyron, a song sung by a locked-out lover." Cf. Beye 1982, 92 and Zanker 1987, 203: "Apollonius is turning the values of traditional heroism upside down."

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ἔνθ' ὁ μὲν Ὑψιπύλης βασιλήιον ἐς δόμον ᾶστο  
Αἰσονίδης· οἱ δ' ἄλλοι ὅπη καὶ ἔκυρσαν ἕκαστος,  
Ἡρακλῆος ἀνευθεν, ὁ γὰρ παρὰ νηὶ λέλειπτο  
αὐτὸς ἐκῶν παῦροι τε διακρινθένθες ἑταῖροι. Arg. 1.853-6

Then Jason set off for Hypsipyle's royal palace, while the others went wherever each chanced to go, except for Heracles, for he was left behind by the ship of his own accord along with a few chosen comrades. (tr. Race)

Although Heracles helps the Argonauts by reproaching them for their behaviour (1.865-74; see below) and in so doing assures the continuation of the expedition, he also distances himself from Jason and most of his fellow-Argonauts by staying behind with a few men. Moreover, he appears to dislike the heterosexual love that will prove to be so crucial for the fulfilment of the epic mission.<sup>49</sup> On Lemnos, Heracles thus appears to be out of place in the expedition. This is reinforced by the intertextual contact between Heracles' reproaching speech in the *Argonautica* and *Iliad* 2, where Thersites addresses the Greeks in much the same way as Heracles does:<sup>50</sup>

δαιμόνιοι (...)  
ἴομεν αὖθις ἕκαστοι ἐπὶ σφέα· τὸν δ' ἐνὶ λέκτροις  
Ὑψιπύλης εἰᾶτε πανήμερον ... Arg. 1.865; 872-3

You fools! (...) Let each of us return to his own affairs; as for that fellow [Jason], let him spend all day long in Hypsipyle's bed. (tr. Race)

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<sup>49</sup> See e.g. Beye 1982, 93; DeForest 1994, 63. The argument of Hunter 1993, 34 against seeing Heracles as "spurning heterosexual love-making" is invalid. His reasoning is that "no Greek hero was more fertile than Heracles", which means that Jason, staying with Hypsipyle on Lemnos, "is merely following in Heracles' footsteps". But, as e.g. Galinsky 1972 shows, the character of Heracles is multi-faceted ("he appears in a variety of roles", p. 1), and the *Argonautica* simply does not focus at all on Heracles as a womanizer. Rather, Apollonius is quite consistent in his depiction of Heracles as an archaic hero with a predilection for homosexual love, as the Hylas episode also reveals (see below). Cf. also Beye 1982, 96 for Apollonius' Heracles as an archaic hero: "Though he probably knew the more recent fourth-century reinterpretation of the mythological Heracles figure into a Stoic ascetic or a man of moral strength who makes the choice between virtue and vice, Apollonius returns to the classical conception of Heracles, the man of physical strength and impulsive if not wanton action; in short a brute. In the catalogue he introduces him with the old-fashioned phrase 'strength of Heracles' (122)."

<sup>50</sup> See also Vian 1974, 91; Hunter 1993, 35-6; DeForest 1994, 58-9 for parallels between the two passages.

ὦ πέπονες, κάκ' ἐλέγχε', Ἀχαΐδες, οὐκέτ' Ἀχαιοί,  
οἴκαδ' περὶ σὺν νηυσὶ νεώμεθα, τόνδε δ' ἐῶμεν  
αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ γέρα πεσσέμεν ...

*Il.* 2.235-7

Soft fools! Base things of shame, you women of Achaea, men no more,  
homeward let us go with our ships, and leave this fellow here [*Agamemnon*] in  
the land of Troy to digest his prizes. (tr. Murray & Wyatt)

Although both men reproach their respective comrades and leaders, their purposes are opposite: whereas Thersites urges the Greeks to abandon the expedition and go home, Heracles' aim is to make the Argonauts resume the expedition. Although his words are justified, Thersites is an outsider. He is not part of the aristocratic elite of kings who are the real protagonists of the *Iliad*, and as a consequence Thersites is scolded by Odysseus.<sup>51</sup> Thersites' position can also be seen from a metapoetical point of view: his aim to end the war would result in the end of the *Iliad*.<sup>52</sup> The intertextual contact emphasizes that, like Thersites, Heracles is an outsider in the epic in which he features. In the *Argonautica*, however, it is the archetypal hero,<sup>53</sup> possessed of heroic-epic qualities that are constantly associated with Homeric heroism,<sup>54</sup> who does not fit the epic. Heracles' position in the Hellenistic epic can consequently also be read metapoetically: as aiming to turn the *Argonautica* into a Homeric, heroic-epic poem. Like Thersites in the *Iliad*, Heracles is thus an outsider, revealing the way the epic is intended *not* to go, but ironically Apollonius' metapoetical statement opposes that of its Homeric intertext: in the *Argonautica*, the great, Homeric hero Heracles is "the Thersites".

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<sup>51</sup> See Marks 2005 for the difference in class between Thersites and the other Greeks.

<sup>52</sup> DeForest 1994, 59.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Clauss 1993, 13, who speaks of Heracles as the "quintessential archaic hero", and Hunter 1993, 25: "The greatest hero among the Argonauts is Heracles, the greatest of all Greek heroes."

<sup>54</sup> See e.g. Beye 1982, 97 (on Heracles' "typically Homeric self-assurance") and DeForest 1994, 53 ("Of the heroes present, he is the most competent to play Odysseus' role of hero-narrator.") and 61-5 (for Heracles' "likeness to Achilles").

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It is already possible to see at the beginning of the epic a metapoetical dimension to the figure of Heracles that sets him at odds with the poetics of the *Argonautica*. When the hero boards the Argo, he appears to be too heavy for the vessel:

μέσσω δ' Ἀγκαῖος μέγα τε σθένος Ἡρακλῆος  
ἴζανον, ἄγχι δέ οἱ ῥόπαλον θέτο· καί οἱ ἔνερθεν  
ποσσὶν ὑπεκλύσθη νηὸς τροπίς. (...) Arg. 1.531-3

In the middle sat Ancaeus and mighty Heracles; he placed his club next to him, and beneath his feet the ship's keel sank deep. (tr. Race)

This passage triggers the symbolic identification between the Argo and Apollonius' *Argonautica*, which pervades the entire epic, as scholars have frequently observed: "The Argo symbolizes the poem when it sinks under Heracles' feet or when it slips through the Symplegades likened to a book-roll."<sup>55</sup> As a consequence, Heracles not only literally but also metapoetically overburdens the Argo: he is too "heavy", so too traditionally heroic, for the *Argonautica*.<sup>56</sup> In the course of the first book, this misfit of Heracles in the epic is expressed continually, for instance in the following stopover at Cyzicus. While Jason is received by Cyzicus, the eponymous king of the Doliones, Heracles is left behind again (λέλειπτο, 992) with some Argonauts, as on Lemnos (855, quoted above). The hero then deals with an attack of the Earthborn giants (Γηγενέες) on his own (989-97), until the other Argonauts arrive to deal with the leftovers. Heracles is thus a great hero, but he is also a loner,<sup>57</sup> pursuing glory on his

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<sup>55</sup> DeForest 1994, 99. See also Beye 1982, 16, Goldhill 1991, 49, and most extensively Albis 1996, 43-66 (Ch. 3: "the poet's voyage") for the correlation between the voyage of the Argo and the poem's narrative through the metaphor of travelling, and sailing in particular, for poetry. On this metaphor see also e.g. Lieberg 1969, Harrison 2007a (both mainly on Latin poetry).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Latin *gravis*, which can metapoetically refer to "the weightiness of the higher genres, especially epic" (Feeney 1991, 319, n. 21, who also provides examples). See also Feeney 1986, 54, who links the idea that Heracles is too heavy with the scholarly tradition, which "was virtually unanimous in saying that Heracles did not actually go on the expedition, since Argo spoke, saying that she could not carry his weight".

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Feeney 1986, 64: "(...) he is so much 'himself' that he moves eventually into total isolation."

own, like a Homeric hero.<sup>58</sup> Again, there is a metapoetical dimension to Heracles' misfit. As Apollonius suggests, the Earthborn giants have been sent by Hera:

δὴ γὰρ που κάκειῖνα θεὰ τρέφεν αἰνὰ πέλωρα  
Ἥρη, Ζηνὸς ἄκοιτις, ἀέθλιον Ἡρακλῆι. Arg. 1.996-7

For no doubt the goddess Hera, Zeus' wife, had been nourishing those terrible monsters too as a labor for Heracles. (tr. Race)

Heracles' feat is clearly associated with the traditional labours (ἀέθλοι) of the hero, which not only belong in another, but also in another kind of, epic: a *Heracleid*, dealing solely with the heroic feats of Heracles.<sup>59</sup> This kind of post-Homeric poem on one hero is criticized by Aristotle in his *Poetics* for its lacking unity of plot in comparison to the epics of Homer (*Poet.* 8, 1451a16ff.). Later on, Aristotle also criticizes two Cyclic epics, the *Cypria* and the *Little Iliad* for the same fault (*Poet.* 23.1459a16ff.).<sup>60</sup> It is interesting that Apollonius also seems to associate Heracleids and Cyclic epics with each other in the Cyzicus episode. As D.C. Feeney notes, line 992, describing Heracles "left behind with the younger men" (ἀλλὰ γὰρ αὖθι λέλειπτο σὺν ἀνδράσιν ὀπλοτέροισιν) alludes to the opening line of the Cyclic epic *Epigoni*: νῦν αὖθ' ὀπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεθα, Μοῦσαι. "But now, Muses, let us begin on the younger men."<sup>61</sup> If we assume for now that Apollonius wrote his *Argonautica* in accordance with Aristotelian ideas about epic, thus rejecting Heracleids and Cyclic epics,<sup>62</sup> Heracles' staying behind in Cyzicus, which symbolizes

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004, 128: "(...) at Lemnos he [Heracles] seems driven by the desire for *kleos*."

<sup>59</sup> The scholia on Apollonius (on *Arg.* 1.1355-57c and 1.1165) attribute a *Heracleid* to Cinaethon (8<sup>th</sup> cent. BC), but see Huxley 1969, 86 for the possibility that the mythographer Conon (1<sup>st</sup> c. BC/AD) is meant. Pisander of Camirus (7<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) wrote a *Heracleid* in two books, apparently following a certain Pisinus of Lindus (thus Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.2.25). There also existed a *Heracleia* (or *Heracleias*) by Panyassis (5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) in 14 books. See e.g. Huxley 1969, 99-112 for more information about these epics about Heracles.

<sup>60</sup> The relevant passages from Aristotle's *Poetics* are quoted (with translation) and discussed more elaborately in Section 2.5 below.

<sup>61</sup> Feeney 1986, 81 (n. 18). The translation is by M. West.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Hunter 1993, 195, who thinks that the *Argonautica* is "utterly unlike the rejected 'cyclic' epics", although he also thinks that "the *Argonautica* is radically at odds with the precepts of the *Poetics*", a position with which I do not agree. Later, Hunter apparently radically changed his opinion by

his misfit among the crew and in this epic, is associated with this rejected kind of poetry, in which Heracles actually belongs.

As we have seen earlier, however, Apollonius' Heracles is also associated with Homer, who is not rejected by Aristotle but is, quite on the contrary, used as a positive example (see Section 2.5 below). How should we reconcile these two associations of Heracles? First of all, Apollonius, whose *Argonautica* is heavily indebted to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, also does not reject Homer. The depiction of Heracles – who is respected by the other Argonauts, acts as their model even after his departure from the expedition and becomes a god at the end of the *Argonautica*<sup>63</sup> – also points in that direction. Apollonius' point in associating Heracles with Homer is that although Apollonius respects Homer's heroic poetry, he also thinks that his poetry cannot be matched and that it not belongs to the contemporary, Hellenistic age. As such it should not be imitated, as it had been in post-Homeric epic poetry, such as the Epic Cycle, but new, un-heroic poetic ways should be sought, a position also advocated by Callimachus (see Section 2.5 below). Ironically, the outdated position of Heracles was already recognized by Homer himself, where Heracles "is generally represented as a violent and successful mortal hero of an earlier generation."<sup>64</sup> Apollonius seems to state that the heroics of Homeric poetry are now, in the Hellenistic age, equally outdated, and he underlines his point by at the same time associating his hero with the poetry that had revealed how worn out the heroic-epic tradition had become in the Hellenistic age: the Epic Cycle and epics exclusively about Heracles.

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regarding the *Argonautica* as a schizophrenic epic that is both cyclic and Callimachean at the same time (Hunter 2001, 5: "It is not too much, I think, to view Apollonius' epic as a cyclic poem done in the 'modern' (? Callimachean) style."). This view is also taken (without mentioning his debt to Hunter) by Rengakos 2004 ("[...] die *Argonautika* ein kyklisches und zugleich ein kallimacheisches Epos", p. 301).

<sup>63</sup> See Feeney 1986, 63-6 (≈ 1991, 97-8) on Heracles' deification in *Arg.* 4. See also p. 48 below for Heracles as a model for the Argonauts.

<sup>64</sup> Hunter 1993, 27. Cf. Galinsky 1972, 9-21 (Ch. 1: "The archaic hero"), who shows that Heracles is "a relic of archaic, pre-Homeric times, as the poet does not fail to point out (...)."; Feeney 1986, 64: "He is, certainly, a relic from an earlier generation, both of heroes and poetry." See also n. 49 above.

So Apollonius' Heracles seems more at home in a *Heracleid*, celebrating his individual, heroic feats. In fact, Apollonius informs us that the hero has interrupted his labours to participate in the *Argonautica*. When Heracles is introduced in the catalogue of Argonauts in book 1, we hear that he has already slain the Erymanthian boar, traditionally his fourth labour:

οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ βίην κρατερόφονος Ἡρακλῆος  
πευθόμεθ' Αἰσονίδαο λιλαιομένου ἀθερίζαι.  
ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἄε βάξιν ἀγειρομένων ἡρώων,  
νεῖον ἀπ' Ἀρκαδίας Λυρκήιον Ἄργος ἀμείψας,  
τὴν ὁδόν, ἣ ζῶν φέρε κάπριον, ὅς ῥ' ἐνὶ βήσσης  
φέρβετο Λαμπεΐης Ἐρυμάνθιον ἄμ μέγα τίφος,  
τὸν μὲν ἐνὶ πρώτῃσι Μυκηναίων ἀγορῆσιν  
δεσμοῖς ἰλλόμενον μεγάλων ἀπεθήκατο νώτων,  
αὐτὸς δ' ἦ ἰότητι παρὲκ νόον Εὐρυσθηος  
ὠρμήθη. (...)

*Arg.* 1.122-31

Nor indeed do we learn that mighty Heracles of steadfast determination disregarded Jason's eager appeal. But rather, when he heard the report that the heroes were gathering, he had just crossed from Arcadia to Lyrceian Argos, on the road by which he was carrying the live boar that fed in the glens of Lampeia throughout the vast Erymanthian marsh. He put it down, bound with ropes, from his huge back at the edge of the Mycenaeans' assembly place, and set out of his own accord against the will of Eurystheus. (tr. Race)

The fact that Heracles is actually not allowed to interrupt his labours, as the tradition at which Apollonius hints informs us, is also an indication that there is something wrong with Heracles' participation in the Argonautic expedition and thus in the epic.<sup>65</sup> But Heracles will find his own poetic world again by the end of the book. After Heracles has once more – but this time for good – been left behind by the Argonauts in Mysia, the sea-god Glaucus appears to the arguing Argonauts and reassures them that it is not Heracles' fate to continue the expedition:

Ἄργεῖ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶν ἀτασθάλω Εὐρυσθηῖ  
ἐκπλήσαι μογέοντα δωδέκα πάντα ἀέθλους,

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. Feeney 1986, 53-4.

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ναίειν δ' ἀθανάτοισι συνέστιον, εἴ κ' ἔτι παύρους  
ἔξανύση. τῶ μή τι ποθῆ κείνοιο πελέσθω.

Arg. 1.1317-20

At Argos it is his [*Heracles*'] destiny to toil for arrogant Eurystheus and accomplish twelve labors in all, and to dwell in the home of the immortals if he completes a few more. Therefore, let there be no remorse at all for him.

(tr. Race)

So at the end of the Hylas episode, which ends the first book, Heracles is reunited with his own poetic world. This third stopover, after Lemnos and Cyzicus, thus also seems to have metapoetical significance. In fact, as I will argue in what follows, the Hylas episode constitutes the metapoetical climax of the book. Up to this point, however, we have only considered how Apollonius implicitly discusses the kind of epic that he rejects, as symbolized by Heracles. It is now time to consider the character who opposes Heracles in the first book and embodies the poetics of the *Argonautica*.

### 2.3. Jason: the best of the Argonauts<sup>66</sup>

In the first book of the *Argonautica* a tension is set up between the heroic Heracles and the rather un-heroic, but attractive and intelligent Jason.<sup>67</sup> As we have already seen, the difference between the two is emphasized by Heracles himself in his speech at Lemnos, in which Jason is the main target of his reproach. Next, at Cyzicus, while Heracles is fighting with monsters, Jason, by contrast, is on a diplomatic mission to the king.<sup>68</sup> At the beginning of the poem, this difference between the two heroes is emphasized most clearly and explicitly, when Jason asks the Argonauts to choose the best man as their leader:

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<sup>66</sup> My heading quotes the title of Clauss 1993. Clauss argues that “it is at the conclusion of book 1 that Apollonius identifies Jason as the hero of the epic in contradistinction to the quintessential archaic hero, Heracles” (p. 13). Although I agree with this, my approach significantly differs from Clauss’ in that I read the first book, and particularly the Hylas episode, as a metapoetical allegory.

<sup>67</sup> For the opposition between Jason and Heracles see also Beye 1969; 1982, 77-99; Adamietz 1970; Clauss 1993, passim; DeForest 1994, 47-69.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Beye 1982, 98: “(...) Heracles had been left behind (...), while Jason and the others pay a courtesy call, one might say, upon the local king, Cyzicus. Heracles, we may imagine, would be *de trop* in the setting of obligatory diplomatic politeness.”

τούνεκα νῦν τὸν ἄριστον ἀφειδήσαντες ἔλεσθε  
ὄρχαμον ὑμείων, ᾧ κεν τὰ ἕκαστα μέλοιτο,  
νείκεα συνθεσίας τε μετὰ ξείνοισι βαλέσθαι. Arg. 1.338-40

Therefore now without restraint choose the best man as your leader, who will see to each thing, to take on quarrels and agreements with foreigners. (tr. Race)

This results in a unanimous vote for Heracles, who declines, however, taking the view that the person who gathered the Argonauts together (i.e. Jason) should also lead them. A tension is thus created between the two characters concerning the question who is the best man to lead this particular epic, and the passage, right at the start of the expedition, invites the reader to compare the heroes in what follows. Although the Argonauts think that Heracles meets Jason's requirements for leadership best, the Cyzicus episode reveals that the diplomatic Jason has in fact unwittingly designated himself as the best leader for this specific, Hellenistic epic, as he can "take on agreements with foreigners".<sup>69</sup> Not only does Heracles' simultaneous fight with the Earthborn giants not belong to the *Argonautica*, the second fight in Cyzicus even reveals the danger that heroic battle poses for the Hellenistic epic. This fight between the Argonauts and their hosts, the Doliones, is characterized as a Homeric battle narrative,<sup>70</sup> but both parties are unaware that they are killing their mutual friends: the *Argonautica* is not the place for heroic poetry.<sup>71</sup> In the Hylas episode that follows, Jason also meets his other requirement for leadership, "to take

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Hunter 1988, 442: "Jason's speech, with its stress on the responsibility of the leader to the group as a whole, suggests why the expedition could not be led by a Heracles, a hero of notoriously solitary and idiosyncratic virtue. Jason is indeed ὁ ἄριστος, if *arete* consists of what is fitting in a particular context."; Clauss 1993, 65-6: "(...) the captain best suited for accomplishing the shared expedition to and from Colchis (...) will prove to be the man of organizational and diplomatic skill."

<sup>70</sup> Beyé 1982, 98: "The Homeric phraseology 'him the son of Aeson rising up struck as he turned toward him right in the middle of the chest, and the bone was chattered all about by the spear' (1032-34) and the syncopated victim-victor list which follows raise up strong images and impressions of the high-hearted, ambitious, and professional attitude toward fighting and killing which marks the *Iliad*."; Hunter 1993, 43: "The basic technique is Iliadic."

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, which deviates from Apollonius' epic through the inclusion of a Homeric battle narrative, which covers the entire sixth book, as part of the "heroic recuperation" of its Hellenistic model. See esp. Hershkowitz 1998, 105-98 (Ch. 3: "Recuperations: better, stronger, faster") for this view of Valerius' epic, with Ch. 4 (esp. par 1) below for a substantial modification of it.

on quarrels (νείκεα)", when he refrains from force during his argument with Telamon concerning the abandonment of Heracles (see Section 3.2 below). Jason thus grows in his role as leader of the expedition, as was also suggested in the Lemnos episode. Although his attractiveness was not yet useful there, it will become a crucial factor for success in the second part of the epic.

#### 2.4. Jason, Apollonius and Apollo

If Heracles and the tension set up between him and Jason can be read metapoetically, it is *a priori* very likely that Jason also has metapoetical associations. Whereas Heracles is associated with Homer and heroic epic, Jason would, by analogy, be associated with Apollonius and his poetics.<sup>72</sup> Another reason why this scenario is *a priori* very likely is that Jason's precedents, the protagonists of the Homeric epics, which are Apollonius' generic models,<sup>73</sup> often represent the persona of the poet in the text as instances of *mise en abyme*.<sup>74</sup> The language and structure of Achilles' speeches, for instance, reveal striking similarities with Homer's own poetic techniques.<sup>75</sup> Odysseus is often associated with bards,<sup>76</sup> and his persona merges with that of the poet when he tells the Phaeacians of his adventures.<sup>77</sup> Other characters in Homer's epics also function briefly as *mises en abyme* of the poet when they deal with the experiences at Troy.<sup>78</sup> In *Iliad* 3, for example, Helen is described as weaving a web that depicts battles between the Greeks and the Trojans:

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<sup>72</sup> This metapoetical link between Jason and Apollonius was suggested, although not pursued, by Kofler 2003, 41. See also pp. 36-7 with n. 107 below.

<sup>73</sup> See Conte 1986 for the distinction between a particular model ("copy-model"/"modello-esemplare") and a generic model ("code-model"/"modello-codice").

<sup>74</sup> See also Introduction, Section 4 for this phenomenon.

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Martin 1989, 235-6. Cf. also Achilles' playing the lyre in *Iliad* 9, on which see e.g. Fränkel 1957, 10; Kofler 2003, 28-9; 35-6.

<sup>76</sup> See Segal 1994, 142-62 (and the helpful discussion of his work by Kofler 2003, 28-34).

<sup>77</sup> See Fränkel 1957, 11; Suerbaum 1968, 166-8; Kofler 2003, 33.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Macleod 1983, 3: "When Odysseus relates his adventures truly to the Phaeacians, or falsely to the Phaeacians, when Helen, Menelaos, and Nestor recall their experiences at Troy or afterwards, they are to all intents and purposes poets."

τὴν δ' εὖρ' ἐν μεγάρῳ. ἡ δὲ μέγαν ἰστὸν ὕψαινε,  
δίπλακα πορφυρέην, πολέας δ' ἐνέπασσεν ἀέθλους  
Τρώων θ' ἵπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων,  
οὓς ἔθεν εἶνεκ' ἔπασχον ὑπ' Ἄρης παλαμάτων.

*Il.* 3.125-8

She [*Iris*] found Helen in the hall, where she was weaving a great purple web of double fold on which she was embroidering many battles of the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-clad Achaeans, which for her sake they had endured at the hands of Ares. (tr. Murray & Wyatt)

As the scholion (bT) on the lines 126-7 shows, Helen and her web were already in antiquity associated with Homer himself and his *Iliad*, through the metaphor of weaving for the poetic process:<sup>79</sup> ἀξιόχρεων ἀρχέτυπον ἀνέπλασεν ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας ποιήσεως. “The poet has here fashioned a worthy model of his own poetry.” Similarly, characters in the *Argonautica*, such as the archetypal poet Orpheus and Phineus, whose prophetic summary of what is to come reflects the actual adventures as told by Apollonius, merge with the persona of the poet Apollonius.<sup>80</sup>

But what about the epic’s protagonist? Although Jason is not, like his models Achilles and Odysseus, associated with singing or bards, he is associated with Apollonius through Apollo, the patron of both Jason and the poet. In the first book of the *Argonautica*, this association is made very clear, as Apollonius’ invocation to Apollo, which starts his epic (ἀρχόμενος σέο Φοῖβε, “beginning with you Phoebus”), is echoed by Jason’s honouring Apollo Embasios (“of Embarkation”) to start his epic voyage (marked in bold):<sup>81</sup>

τείως δ' αὖ καὶ βωμὸν ἐπάκτιον Ἐμβασίῳ  
θείομεν Ἀπόλλωνος, ὃ μοι χρεῖων ὑπέδεκτο  
σημανέειν δείξειν τε πόρους ἄλός, εἴ κε **Θηλαῖς**  
οὗ ἔθεν ἐξάρχωμαι ἀεθλεύων βασιλῆι.

*Arg.* 1.359-62

<sup>79</sup> For this metaphor, see Introduction, n. 31.

<sup>80</sup> For Apollonius’ Orpheus as poetic figure, see e.g. Albis 1996, 29-31; Cuypers 2004, 58-9. For Phineus, see e.g. Beye 1982, 18; 104; Feeney 1991, 60-1; 94; DeForest 1994, 74-8; Albis 1996, 28-29; Cuypers 2004, 60-1; Murray 2004, 218-23.

<sup>81</sup> DeForest 1994, 41-2. See also n. 55 above on the metaphor of the voyage for epic.

## Chapter 1

In the meantime, let us also build an altar on the shore for Apollo Embasius, who in an oracle promised to give me signs and point out the passages of the sea, if with sacrifices in his honor I would begin my task for the king. (tr. Race)

Moreover, the πόρους ἄλος (“passages of the sea”) recall a moment in the prologue where the poet outlines his subject matter:<sup>82</sup>

νῦν δ' ἄν ἐγὼ γενεήν τε καὶ οὖνομα μυθησαίμην  
ἠρώων, δολιχῆς τε πόρους ἄλος, ὅσσα τ' ἔρεξαν  
πλαζόμενοι Μοῦσαι δ' ὑποφήτορες εἶεν ἀοιδῆς. Arg. 1.20-22

But now I wish to relate the lineage and names of the heroes, their journeys on the vast sea, and all they did as they wandered; and may the Muses be inspirers [or: interpreters] of my song. (tr. Race, slightly adapted)

So Jason clearly evokes Apollonius. But that is not all: Jason also informs us about the poetics of his *alter ego*, as revealed by the link between the two, Apollo. The prominence of the god of poetry in relation to both Jason and Apollonius is quite remarkable, for it is not he but Hera who is traditionally the patron god of Jason and his expedition. Furthermore, the invocation of a god instead of a goddess-Muse constitutes a significant departure from the epic's most important models, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.<sup>83</sup> This makes the presence of the god very striking, and, I would argue, points in the direction of the poetics of Callimachus, whose poetics are quite explicitly expressed by Apollo in two famous programmatic passages, the prologue to the *Aetia* (fr. 1.21-8 Pf.) and the end of the *Hymn to Apollo* (105-12).<sup>84</sup> In addition to the fact that Apollo is the patron deity of Apollonius/Jason and Callimachus, there is also clear intertextual contact between the passages dealing with Apollo in both the

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<sup>82</sup> Albis 1996, 27.

<sup>83</sup> Clauss 1993, 17: “Contrary to the usual practice, Apollonius begins instead from Apollo and addresses the Muses only after first identifying the subject of the poem, the Argonautic expedition, and describing its origin.” Cf., however, Albis 1996, 17-8, who argues that Demodocus’ song in the *Odyssey*, beginning with and inspired by Apollo (ὁ δ' ὄρμηθεις θεοῦ ἄρχετο, φαῖνε δ' ἀοιδῆν. “He [Demodocus] having been inspired by the god began with him, and produced his song.” *Od.* 8.499), does provide a Homeric parallel. Nevertheless, Albis also sees Callimachean influence in the mention of Apollo: “(...) Apollonius’ invocation to Phoebus (...) recalls the language of the *Homeric Hymns* and the *Odyssey*’s depiction of Demodocus, yet it may also have a Callimachean resonance.” (128)

<sup>84</sup> Both passages are quoted and discussed in the next Section.

*Argonautica* and Callimachus' poetry.<sup>85</sup> But who alludes to whom? This specific question is part of a larger, notorious problem concerning the relative chronology of the works of the three major Hellenistic poets.<sup>86</sup> I will negotiate the impasse that this discussion has reached by accepting the productive hypothesis that these poets, working in the Museum, were quite aware of and could allude to each other's work in progress.<sup>87</sup> The specific intertextual contact between Callimachus and Apollonius would then have taken place in both directions and can be interpreted accordingly.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Albis 1996, 102-3 suggests that *Arg.* 4.43 (στείνας [...] οἴμους, "narrow paths") refers to Apollo's admonition to Callimachus in *Aet.* 1.25-8 Pf. not to drive his chariot along the broad road (οἶμον (...) πλατύν), but on untrodden paths, although the road may be more narrow (στεινοτέρην). Furthermore, *Call. H. Ap.* 101-4 resembles *Arg.* 2.711-3, where nymphs are encouraging Apollo (Albis 1996, 123-4), and *Call. H. Ap.* 106 parallels *Arg.* 3.932-3 (Fraser 1970, II, 87-8, n. 162; Hunter 1989, ad loc.; Albis 1996, 123, n. 6). As Albis 1996, 128 convincingly argues, there is also intertextual contact between Callimachus' "*Argonautica*", at the beginning of *Aetia* 1 (fr. 7<sup>19</sup>-21 Pf./9<sup>19</sup>-23 M), and the first word of Apollonius' epic (ἀρχόμενος), for when Callimachus asks Calliope about the origin of the cult of Apollo on the island of Anaphe, she answers: "First bring to mind Apollo Aegletes and Anaphe, neighbour to Spartan Thera, and the Minyans; begin (ἀρχόμενος) when the heroes sailed back to ancient Haemonia from Aeëtes, the Cytean (...) (*Aet.* fr. 7.23-26 Pf./9.23-6 M). Callimachus thus ironically starts his *Argonautica* at the end, with an episode from the return voyage. That Apollonius' Anaphe episode, which is clearly intertextually connected to that of Callimachus, is positioned indeed at the end of his epic (*Arg.* 4.1694-1730), reinforces the allusive play on ἀρχόμενος. See also Harder 2010, I, esp. 4; 32-3 for this and the larger intertextual contact between the *Aetia* and the *Argonautica*, which also involves the story of the leaving behind of the Argo's anchor at Cyzicus during the outward voyage, an incident treated by Apollonius at the beginning of his epic (*Arg.* 1.955-60) and by Callimachus (again conversely) at the end of *Aetia* 4 (fr. 108-9 Pf.).

<sup>86</sup> See Köhnken 2001 for an overview of the scholarly debate and for more bibliography (with the caveat that Köhnken himself strictly adheres to the chronology Theocritus – Callimachus – Apollonius, mostly on subjective grounds).

<sup>87</sup> Hopkinson 1988, 7. A similar situation existed in Augustan Rome: see e.g. Propertius 2.34.65-6, where Propertius appears to know of, and allude to, Virgil's *Aeneid* in progress. See also Ch. 2, n. 220 for the intertextual contact between Callimachus and Theocritus.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Harder 2010, I, 4: "(...) it seems best to assume a kind of continuous interaction between Callimachus and Apollonius" We can perhaps be more precise in the specific case of *Aetia* 1-2 and the *Argonautica*. According to scholarly *communis opinio*, the first two books of the *Aetia* (without the prologue) constitute a separate unity, marked by the frame of a dialogue between the persona of Callimachus and the Muses. They were written by Callimachus as a young man, who later added two more books – framed by two episodes concerned with the Ptolemaic queen Berenice II, the *Victoria Berenices* (*SH* 257-68c) at the beginning of book 3 and the *Lock of Berenice* (fr. 110 Pf.) at the end of book 4 – as well as a new prologue (fr. 1 Pf.) and epilogue (fr. 112 Pf.) to create external unity (Parsons 1977, esp. 49-50). Callimachus' Anaphe episode in *Aetia* 1 may thus antedate that of Apollonius in *Arg.* 4 (see previous note for the intertextual contact). Nevertheless, Callimachus could have rewritten the episode for his hypothetical second edition, which would then postdate *Arg.* 4. The entire matter is possibly complicated even more because the scholia on the *Argonautica* mention a προέκδοσις ("previous edition") of the epic (on which see Fränkel 1964, 7-11). All arguments considered, the composite view of Harder 2010, I, 33 on these two texts is very plausible: "The best way to explain the

On that basis, I take Apollonius to allude to Callimachus in this specific case, assuming the metapoetical role of Apollo in the *Aetia* and *Hymn to Apollo*. Yet the situation can be reversed – Callimachus reading Apollonius metapoetically and making the latter’s statements explicit – without any disabling implications for the metapoetical dimension of either text.

Apart from this intertextual contact there are good reasons to suppose that Apollonius’ patron god has a metapoetical role in the *Argonautica* similar to the one he has in Callimachus. As we have seen, Apollonius not only follows, but paradoxically also deviates from Homeric practice by addressing Apollo in the opening line. This attitude towards Homer is continued in what immediately follows:

ἀρχόμενος σέο, Φοῖβε, παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν  
μνήσομαι ...

Arg. 1.1-2

Beginning with you, Phoebus, I shall recall the famous deeds of men born long ago ... (tr. Race)

Apollonius makes it clear that he is writing an epic, with Homer as its main model, for κλέα φωτῶν (“famous deeds of men”) recalls the Homeric κλέα ἀνδρῶν (“famous deeds of warriors”), the singing of which denotes epic poetry.<sup>89</sup> In the *Iliad*, for instance, Achilles sings κλέα ἀνδρῶν by his ships (*Il.* 9.189; cf. 9.524), and in the *Odyssey* Homer’s *alter ego* Demodocus does the same at the Phaeacian court (*Od.* 8.73). Apollonius, however, has strikingly changed the Homeric ἀνδρῶν to φωτῶν, and because the Argonauts are denoted by this word immediately after the mention of the god Apollo in his hymnic address, the meaning of φωτῶν “mortals (as

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intricate relation between the two works is probably to assume that they were written over a considerable period of time, during which the two poets read each other’s work and reacted to it until the moment when, in his second edition of the *Aetia*, when he probably had the whole of the *Argonautica* in front of him, Callimachus gave his final comment on the *Argonautica* by placing the story of the anchor at Cyzicus at the end [see n. 85 above].”

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004, 91: “The opening verse of the *Argonautica* therefore announces the genre of the poem, and 1.2-4 describe its subject.”

opposed to gods)" (*LSJ* III) is at least suggested. The words which reveal Apollonius' work as an epic in the tradition of Homer thus at the same time distance the *Argonautica* from Homer's heroic poetry: Apollonius will sing of ordinary mortals.<sup>90</sup> Another link between Apollonius and Jason is thus established, as the relationship between Apollonius and Homer is not only paralleled by the tension that is set up between Jason and the archetypal hero Heracles, as we have seen earlier, but also by the intertextual contact between Jason and his heroic, Homeric models. As I will argue in the next section, this tension with Homer points in the direction of the poetics of Callimachus, whose patron deity Apollo advocates a similar attitude with regard to Homer.

### 2.5. Callimachus and (Homeric) epic

Callimachus is the most famous and explicit representative of a new, poetic avant-garde, whose poetics I will label "Callimachean", although Callimachus himself is not necessarily the first to have expressed them.<sup>91</sup> At the end of his *Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus reveals that the poetics promoted by him are not opposed to Homer, the quality of whose poetry is beyond dispute, but rather to neo-"Homeric" poetry,<sup>92</sup> which, in copying Homer, reproduces only Homer's quantity, not his quality:

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. Carspecken 1952, 111; DeForest 1994, 39; Green 1997, 201: "Ap. will celebrate the deeds, not, like Homer, of heroes (*andrōn*), but of ordinary mortals (*photōn*)." Cf. also Goldhill 1991, 288: "(...) the selection of the general term 'people' as opposed to the valorized heroic term *anēr*, 'man', also opens a question on the one hand about the qualities of 'manliness' of the figures of this epic (...)."

<sup>91</sup> In my opinion Callimachus' poetics are shared by his contemporaries Apollonius (see below) and Theocritus (see Ch. 2, Sections 2.1.2 and 2.2 for the Callimachean nature of Theocritus' bucolic poetry). These ideas may very well go back to Philitas of Cos, the poet, scholar and tutor of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who flourished a generation before Apollonius, Callimachus and Theocritus. This is suggested by the allusions (in very programmatic contexts) of Callimachus (*Aet.* fr. 1.9-10; *H. Dem.*; see pp. 45-6 below) and Theocritus (*Id.* 7.39-41; see Ch. 2, p. 86) to his poetical ideas, as well as the ancient references to and puns on the poet's "thinness" (e.g. T. 23a L: λεπτότερος δ' ἦν καὶ Φιλίτας ὁ Κῶος ποιητής. "The poet Philitas of Cos was also rather thin."; tr. Lightfoot), which are very suggestive in the light of the importance of λεπτότης ("refinement") for Callimachus' poetical program (on which see Ch. 2, n. 272). See also Cameron 1991 for the connection between Philitas' thinness and Callimachus' thinness.

<sup>92</sup> Hopkinson's term (1988: 86).

## Chapter 1

ὁ Φθόνος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὐατα λάθριος εἶπεν·  
“οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀείδη.”  
τὸν Φθόνον ὠπόλλων ποδί τ' ἤλασεν ὧδε τ' εἶπεν·  
“Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλά  
λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει.  
Δηοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,  
ἀλλ' ἦτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει  
πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον.”

H. Ap. 105-12

Envy whispered into Apollo's ear: “I don't like a poet who doesn't sing like the sea.” Apollo kicked Envy aside and said: “The Assyrian river rolls a massive stream, but it's mainly silt and garbage that it sweeps along. The bees bring water to Deo not from every source but where it bubbles up pure and undefiled from a holy spring, its very essence.” (tr. Nisetich)

According to the most plausible interpretation of the passage, first formulated by Koster,<sup>93</sup> Callimachus exploits an ancient metaphor of Homer as Ὠκεανός, the source of all waters/poetry. As Williams interprets the passage in his commentary:<sup>94</sup>

Apollo, expressing of course Callimachus' own views, rejects the suggestion that poems which are merely lengthy are by that token 'Homeric'. The Assyrian river is long and wide, challenging comparison with the streams of Oceanus: but its current is sluggish, its waters carry rubbish and silt, and have lost the purity of their origin. In literary terms, this presumably represents the imitation of traditional epic, a genre which in its lengthy course has lost all its vitality, and has been invoked to serve unworthy purposes. The fine spray from the pure spring stands for Callimachus' own poetry: on a small scale, but highly refined, written for the few who are able to appreciate the poet's learning and subtlety. To write such poetry inspired by exact and deep knowledge of Homeric language, Apollo asserts, is to emulate and recreate Homer in a more meaningful and original way than merely to reproduce slavishly the external dimensions of his epic.

A similar attitude towards heroic-epic is expressed in *Epigram* 28 Pf., where Callimachus declares his dislike of the “cyclic poem”, τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν:

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<sup>93</sup> Koster 1970, 119: “Zudem erhellt hieraus, daß Kallimachos genau wie Aristoteles auch zwischen Homers person und seinen Nachahmern, folglich den 'Homerischen' dichtenden, hellenistischen Zeitgenossen unterscheidet. Das wird eindeutig durch den Schluß des Apollonhymnos gestützt, v. 105ff., wo er zwischen πόντος (= Homer, v.106), μέγας ῥόος ποτάμοιο (= epigonale Versuche der Großepiker, v. 108) und der ὀλίγη λιβάς (= kallimacheische Dichtung, v. 112) unterscheidet.”

<sup>94</sup> Williams 1978, 89, who does not mention Koster.

Ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν, οὐδὲ κελεύθῳ  
χαίρω τίς πολλοὺς ὧδε καὶ ὧδε φέρει,  
μισέω καὶ περιφοίτον ἐρώμενον, οὐδ' ἀπὸ κρήνης  
πίνω· σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια.

(...)

*Ep.* 28.1-4 Pf.

I hate recycled poetry, and get no pleasure | from a road crowded with  
travellers this way and that. | I can't stand a boy who sleeps around, don't  
drink | at public fountains, and loathe everything vulgar. | ... (tr. Nisetich)

Κυκλικόν reveals that Callimachus is here aiming at epic poetry, for the word refers to the post-Homeric Epic Cycle, in the strict sense the series of poems about Troy, such as the *Cypria* and the *Little Iliad*, which were written to complete Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, in this context, the line also contains a pun on *κυκλικός*, which means "circular", and thus metaphorically "commonplace" and, more pejoratively, "hackneyed".<sup>96</sup> In the following lines of the epigram, Callimachus elaborates on this theme by using some metaphors (the well, the road), which also occur at the end of the *Hymn to Apollo* and the prologue to the *Aetia* (27-8), and which are clearly metapoetical there.<sup>97</sup> So Callimachus rejects hackneyed poetry from the

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<sup>95</sup> Alexandrian scholars regarded this as the *Epic Cycle* (Davies 1989, 1-2), which, according to the scholia on Clement of Alexandria (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> cent.), included the epics *Cypria*, *Aethiopis*, *Ilias parva*, *Iliupersis*, *Nostoi* and *Telegoneia*. On the date, Davies notes: "(...) [T]he lack of unity of these epics as a whole (...), and their status as attempts to fill in the gaps left by Homer's poems, make me very reluctant to date most of them before the second half of the sixth century." The grammarian Proclus (5<sup>th</sup> cent. AD) also included the *Titanomachia* and the Theban series, which includes the *Oedipodea*, *Thebais* and *Epigoni*. This larger cycle is nowadays referred to as the Epic Cycle. On the Epic Cycle in general, see Davies 1989, 1-12 and the introduction of West 2003.

<sup>96</sup> Asper 1997, 56, n. 140: "κυκλικός changiert wahrscheinlich bewußt zwischen den Bedeutungen 'kurrent = abgegriffen' und 'zum epischen Kyklos gehörig'." Cf. Blumenthal 1978, 127 ("trite cyclic poem") and Hopkinson 1988, 87 ("well worn themes of cyclic epic"), who also reads the passage as playing with the two meanings of *κυκλικός*.

<sup>97</sup> The metapoetical dimension of *Ep.* 28 is fiercely opposed by Cameron 1995, 388-402, who thinks it is only about love. The first line, however, is explicitly a metapoetical statement, as a result of which the reader is invited to read the subsequent metaphors in a metapoetical way. That the metaphors, at the end of the poem (lines 5-6, not printed), appear retrospectively to be erotic as well, as Cameron shows, does not affect the metapoetical reading. Cf. Asper 1997, 56-8, who thinks that the poem functions on both a metapoetical and an erotic level.

Epic Cycle, which keeps “recycling” traditional epic material.<sup>98</sup>

Callimachus’ rejection of the Epic Cycle resembles the position of Aristotle, who in his *Poetics* criticized the two Cyclic epics mentioned (*Cypria*, *Little Iliad*; *Poet.* 23, 1459a16ff.), as well as other post-Homeric epics about one hero (*Heracleids*, *Theseids*; *Poet.* 8, 1451a16ff.), for their lack of unity of plot in comparison to Homer:

μῦθος δ’ ἐστὶν εἷς οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται ἐὰν περὶ ἓνα ᾗ· (...) οὕτως δὲ καὶ πρῶξις ἐνὸς πολλαὶ εἰσιν, ἐξ ὧν μία οὐδεμία γίνεται πρῶξις. διὸ πάντες εὐοικασιν ἀμαρτάνειν ὅσοι τῶν ποιητῶν Ἡρακλεΐδα Θησηΐδα καὶ τα τοιαῦτα ποιήματα πεποιήκασιν. (...) ὁ δ’ Ὅμηρος ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διαφέρει καὶ τοῦτ’ εὐοικεν καλῶς ἰδεῖν, ἥτοι διὰ τέχνην ἢ διὰ φύσιν· Ὀδύσειαν γὰρ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἅπαντα ὅσα αὐτῷ συνέβη (...), ἀλλὰ περὶ μίαν πρῶξιν οἶαν λέγομεν τὴν Ὀδύσειαν συνέστησεν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα.

*Poet.* 8, 1451a16-29

A plot is not unified, as some think, if built round an individual. (...) So all those poets are clearly at fault who have composed a *Heracleid*, a *Theseid*, and similar poems. (...) But Homer, in keeping with his general superiority, evidently grasped well, whether by art or nature, this point too: for though composing an *Odyssey*, he did not include every feature of the hero’s life (...), but he structured the *Odyssey* round a unitary action of the kind I mean, and likewise with the *Iliad*. (tr. Halliwell)

οἱ δ’ ἄλλοι περὶ ἓνα ποιούσι καὶ περὶ ἓνα χρόνον καὶ μίαν πρῶξιν πολυμερῆ, οἷον ὁ τὰ Κύπρια ποιήσας καὶ τὴν μικρὰν Ἰλιάδα. τοιγαροῦν ἐκ μὲν Ἰλιάδος καὶ Ὀδυσσεΐας μία τραγωδία ποιεῖται ἑκατέρας ἢ δύο μόναι, ἐκ δὲ Κυπρίων πολλαὶ καὶ τῆς μικρᾶς Ἰλιάδος πλέον ἢ ὀκτώ ...

*Poet.* 23, 1459a37-1459b4

But the others [*other poets than Homer*] build their works round a single figure or single period, hence an action of many parts, as with the author of the *Cypria* and the *Little Iliad*. Accordingly, with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* a single tragedy, or at most two, can be made from each; but many can be made from the *Cypria*, and more than eight from the *Little Iliad* ... (tr. Halliwell)

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 227-30 on the way Aristarchus uses κυκλικώτερον and κυκλικῶς, in contrast to Ὀμηρικώτερον (“genuinely Homeric”) and synonymous with οὐχ Ὀμηρικῶς (“un-Homeric”), to reflect “the distinction first drawn by Aristotle between the great poet of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the makers of the other early epics, the κυκλικοί” (230), thus revealing an attitude similar to Callimachus’ in Hellenistic scholarship.

That Callimachus seems to declare his allegiance to Aristotle is reinforced by the end of the *Hymn to Apollo*, where, as we have just seen, Callimachus does not reject Homer (πόντος), but poetry that keeps copying or “recycling” Homer.<sup>99</sup> Callimachus’ other important programmatic passage, the prologue to the *Aetia*, also seems to reveal Aristotelean affiliations. The poet tells us that the Telchines reproach him for not having written one continuous poem about kings and heroes in many thousands of lines (ἐν ἄεισμα διηνεκές ἢ βασιλ[η] | .....]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἦνυσα χιλιάσιν | ἦ.....].ους ἦρωας, *Aet.* fr. 1.3-5 Pf.). Whether the kind of poem the Telchines suggest is an epic or not,<sup>100</sup> the term διηνεκές (“continuous”) at any rate recalls the already mentioned passages in *Poetics*, where Aristotle rejects epic poems from the *Epic Cycle* and about individuals such as Heracles for their lack of unity. For διηνεκές implies “telling a story completely, from beginning to end”,<sup>101</sup> and comparable to what Aristotle says in the *Poetics* (8.1451a24-5: Ὀδύσειαν γὰρ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἅπαντα ὅσα αὐτῷ συνέβη. “For though composing an *Odyssey*, he [Homer] did not include every feature of the hero’s life.”), the word connotes completeness, continuity and chronological order in a narrative context, and is already in Homer evaluated negatively (e.g. *Od.* 4.836; 7.241f.).<sup>102</sup> So the ἄεισμα διηνεκές the Telchines want Callimachus to write, recalls the kind of bad, post-Homeric, heroic epic, such as the *Epic Cycle*, which is rejected by Aristotle in his *Poetics* and by Callimachus elsewhere in his oeuvre. The heroic-epic poetry of Homer

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<sup>99</sup> See also Koster 1970, 120-2 for a defence of the influence of Aristotle on Callimachus against Pfeiffer 1968, 137. Cf. also Harder 2010, II, on *Aet.* fr. 1.3: ἔν, and on *Aet.* fr. 1.3: διηνεκές, for a discussion of possible influences of Aristotle’s *Poetics* on the *Aetia* prologue. I assume here that Aristotle’s *Poetics* was available in Alexandria. On this debate see Schmakeit 2003, 17ff.

<sup>100</sup> See e.g. the discussion of Harder 2010, II, 9-10, who shows that Callimachus deals with a variety of genres in fr. 1 (e.g. Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, tragedy), and explicitly only to elegy, as is fitting for the prologue to an elegiac poem. The claim of Cameron 1995, 263ff. (part of his iconoclastic argument against the until then widespread view that Callimachus is attacking epic) that the prologue deals solely with elegy is thus also too limited.

<sup>101</sup> Harder 2010, II, on *Aet.* fr. 1.3: διηνεκές.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem. On the adjective see e.g. also van Tress 2006, who argues that Callimachus (following Apollonius) plays with the word’s connotations “Homeric”/“heroic” as well as the negative connotations (even in Homer) “full”/“detailed”, which would create an ironic effect: “If some criticized his work because it was not long, continuous, Homeric, heroic, or detailed, then it would seem that the critics themselves do not know what the master himself, Homer, recommended.”

himself, however, is not renounced by Callimachus; the point is that one should not try to “recycle” it, to write it over and over again. In trying to emulate the quality of Homer’s epics, one should take new poetic paths (cf. *Aet.* fr. 1.25-8). Callimachus’ keyword is thus originality, which he finds in writing small and refined poems on non-heroic subjects, which the tradition before him had not worn out.

## 2.6. Jason the Callimachean hero

Apollonius’ *Argonautica* reveals an attitude similar to that expressed by Callimachus with regard to Homer and heroic-epic poetry. Apollonius does not renounce the works of Homer, which are obviously an important model for the *Argonautica*<sup>103</sup> (as they are for Callimachus’ works),<sup>104</sup> but the epic is strikingly un-heroic. Although the *Argonautica* can also be said to be Callimachean for other reasons, for instance in its extensive use of aetiologies,<sup>105</sup> this un-heroic character of the poem is the most obvious way in which the epic expresses its allegiance to Callimachean poetics.<sup>106</sup>

So Jason, whom scholars have always seen as falling short with regard to the heroic credentials of his Homeric predecessors, seems to resemble the poet Apollonius’ himself. Because the association of both Jason and Apollonius with Apollo has already established a metapoetical connection, Jason can be seen as a *mise en abyme*, a poetic *alter ego* of Apollonius. As Kofler already suggested, behind Jason,

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<sup>103</sup> See e.g. Carspecken 1952 and especially Knight 1995 for the influence of Homer on Apollonius’ *Argonautica*.

<sup>104</sup> See e.g. Rengakos 1992 on Callimachus’ Homeric vocabulary, and Harder 2010, I, 32 for the *Aetia*’s debt to the *Iliad* and especially the *Odyssey* (also for bibliography). The huge influence of the *Homeric Hymns* (which were thought to be composed by Homer) on Callimachus’ *Hymns* needs no elaboration.

<sup>105</sup> For aetiologies in the *Argonautica*, see Fusillo 1985, 116ff.; Paskiewicz 1988, 57-61; Valverde Sánchez 1989; Harder 1994, 21-27. On the Callimachean agenda of Apollonius see, apart from the most extensive study of DeForest 1994, e.g. Clauss 1993, 14-22 (on the prologue of the *Arg.*); Albis 1995 and 1996, 121-32 (on Apollo in the *Arg.*, *H. Ap.* and *Aet.* 1); Kouremenos 1996 (on the programmatic dimension of Apollonius’ similes); Kofler 2003, 40-1 (on Jason). For several points of contact between the *Argonautica* and Callimachus’ *Aetia*, see Harder 2010, I, 4-6, 14, 25, 32-33, 37, with n. 102 for extensive bibliography.

<sup>106</sup> That this is the most important way is also reflected by the scholarly focus on the heroics of the epic in relation to Homer since the beginning of the revival of Apollonian studies, in the middle of the twentieth century. See e.g. Fränkel 1959; Lawall 1966; Beye 1969; 1982, 77-99 (Ch. 3: “The heroes”); Hunter 1988; 1993, 8-45 (Ch. 2: “Modes of heroism”); DeForest 1994, esp. 47-69.

who is in doubt and afraid with regard to the mission imposed upon him, lurks the poet himself, trying to find a way to complete his “Heraclean-Homeric” task of writing a heroic epic in his own, Callimachean way.<sup>107</sup> In the first book of the *Argonautica*, the heroic-epic tradition is still looming at the background, as personified by Heracles. The hero’s place in the Hellenistic epic, however, is questioned more and more, and at the same time, the qualities of the intelligent love hero Jason increasingly reveal themselves as essential for the Callimachean epic in hand. In what follows, I will show how the Hylas episode at the end of the first book is the climax of the metapoetical tension between Homeric, heroic epic, as symbolized by Heracles, and Callimachean poetry, as symbolized by Hylas. This boy, who causes Heracles’ exit, seems to act as a kind of prefiguration of Jason, revealing the way the epic will go.

### 3. The Hylas episode

#### 3.1. *Eris on the Argo*

After the winds have abated, the Argonauts row away from Cyzicus to leave their traumatic experience on the peninsula behind and start a rowing contest, which marks the beginning of the Hylas episode:

ἔνθ’ ἔρις ἄνδρα ἕκαστον ἀριστήων ὀρόθουνεν  
ὅς τις ἀπολήξειε πανύστατος· ἀμφὶ γὰρ αἰθήρ  
νήμενος ἐστόρεσεν δίνας, κατὰ δ’ εὔνασε πόντον.

*Arg.* 1.1153-5

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<sup>107</sup> Kofler 2003, 41: “Um es kurz zu sagen: Heroisches Pathos weicht intellektueller Organisation und alexandrinischer *Leptotes*. Genau hier aber treffen sich Apollonios und Jason. In dem Angesichts der Wichtigkeit der ihm auferlegten Mission zögernden und geradezu ängstlichen Jason könnte sich nämlich die anfängliche Nachdenklichkeit des Dichters spiegeln, der nach einem Weg sucht, die herakleisch-homerische Aufgabe, eind Heldenepos zu schreiben, auf seine Art und Weise zu bewältigen.”

## Chapter 1

Then rivalry spurred on each one of the heroes, to see who would be last to quit, since all around them the still air had smoothed the swirling waters and lulled the sea to sleep. (tr. Race)

As R. Hunter notes, “[t]his is the closest Apollonius comes to including a scene of sports on the pattern of *Iliad* 23”.<sup>108</sup> As was shown in the course of the first book, and most recently in the preceding Cyzicus episode, the *Argonautica* is not going to be a heroic epic, and this point is made clear very dramatically somewhat later, in the remainder of the rowing contest. When the winds rise, and the other, exhausted Argonauts stop rowing, Heracles continues on his own:

(...) αὐτὰρ ὁ τοὺς γε  
πασσυδίη μογέοντας ἐφέλκετο κάρτεϊ χειρῶν  
Ἡρακλῆς, ἐτίνασσε δ’ ἀρηρότα δούρατα νηός. Arg. 1.1159-63

But Heracles kept pulling his weary companions along, one and all, by the strength of his hands, and made the well-joined timbers of the ship quake.  
(tr. Race)

Whereas Heracles appeared too heavy for the Argo – and thus the poem – when he first boarded the ship (1.531-3), he is now revealed as a real danger to it. It is clear that the *Argonautica* is not the place for Homeric competition nor for Heracles, who is obviously in his element with this kind of action.<sup>109</sup> The hero is thus associated with Homer, which is also the case in the immediately following scene, in which Heracles breaks his oar:

ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ Μυσῶν λελημένοι ἠπεῖροιο  
Ῥυνδακίδας προχοᾶς μέγα τ’ ἠρίον Αἰγαίωνος  
τυτθὸν ὑπέκ Φρυγίης παρεμέτρεον εἰσορόωντες,  
δὴ τότ’ ἀνοχλίζων τετρηχότος οἴδματος ὄλκους  
μεσσόθεν ἄξεν ἐρετμόν· ἀτὰρ τρύφος ἄλλο μὲν αὐτὸς  
ἄμφω χερσὶν ἔχων πέσε δόχμιος, ἄλλο δὲ πόντος

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<sup>108</sup> Hunter 1993, 36-7.

<sup>109</sup> See Hunter 1993, 37 for the traditional association of Heracles with gymnasias and competition. Apollonius has adapted this traditional image of Heracles to his own poetical agenda by associating Heracles with Homeric-epic competition.

κλύζει παλιρροθίοισι φέρων. ἀνὰ δ' ἔζετο σιγῇ  
παπταίνων· χεῖρες γὰρ ἀήθεσον ἠρεμέουσαι.

Arg. 1.1164-71

But when, in their eagerness to reach the mainland of Mysia, they were passing within sight of the mouth of the Rhyndacus and the great tomb of Aegaeon, a short distance beyond Phrygia, then, as Heracles was heaving up furrows in the rough swell, he broke his oar in the middle. Still grasping a piece of it in his two hands, he fell sideways, while the sea carried the other piece away on its receding wash. He sat up, looking around in silence, for his hands were not used to being idle. (tr. Race)

This scene again emphasizes that Heracles is too big and heroic for the Argo, but the mention of the Giant Aegaeon is possibly also an allusion to *Iliad* 1.404, the only occurrence of the name in the entire Homeric corpus, in a scene in which Achilles is asking his mother Thetis for help against the injustice inflicted upon him by Agamemnon: she should beg Zeus to help him and remind him of how she once helped Zeus against a revolt of Hera, Poseidon and Athena by employing Aegaeon as his bodyguard.<sup>110</sup> Not only does the Apollonian context (a Homeric contest) make the allusion to Homer more likely, but also the context of the Homeric passage itself, the *eris* (“strife”) between Achilles and Agamemnon as to who is the best of the Achaeans, tells strongly in favour of the allusion, for the Argonauts are also involved in an *eris* (ἔρις, “contesting”, 1.1153).<sup>111</sup> The intertext invites us to read this *eris* metaphorically as well, as a “strife” as to who is the best of the Argonauts, a strife that already started at the beginning of the expedition, when the Argonauts had to

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<sup>110</sup> The parallel has been noted, but not interpreted, by Ardizzoni 1967, 252-3 (ad loc.). Campbell 1981, 20 curiously omits it. Clauss 1993, 181 sees the mention of Aegaeon’s tomb as referring to Cinaethon’s *Heracleia*, who (according to scholia) described how Poseidon drowned the Giant for competing against him. His interpretation of this allusion, as well as that to Ajax’ hybriatic behaviour towards Poseidon (Arg. 1.1168-71 ~ *Od.* 4.504-10; pp. 182-3), as associating Heracles’ rowing with hybris (towards Poseidon) is compatible with my metapoetical interpretation of Heracles’ rowing as too heroic for the *Argonautica*.

<sup>111</sup> The strife between Achilles and Agamemnon, which is so essential for the narrative of the *Iliad* is denoted as *eris* already at the start of the epic: *Il.* 1.6-7: ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε | Ἄτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. (“Of this sing from the time when first there parted in strife Atreus’ son, lord of men, and noble Achilles.”); *Il.* 1.8: τίς τ’ ἄρ’ σφῶε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι; (“Who then of the gods was it that brought these two together to contend?”)

choose τὸν ἄριστον (1.338), in a passage which also evoked the strife between Agamemnon and Achilles.<sup>112</sup>

In fact, the entire Hylas episode is presented as a miniature epic on *eris*, as it begins in the style of a (Homeric) epic, in which the poem's subject is denoted in the first line, often with the first word.<sup>113</sup> The immediately following word (ἄνδρα), the first word of the *Odyssey*, underlines the fact that we are dealing with a miniature epic. This interpretation is reinforced by a thematic ring composition, for the episode ends with another "strife" (νεῖκος, 1284) among the Argonauts concerning Heracles, whom they have just unwittingly left behind in Mysia. This ring composition is itself strengthened by another, for the description of the first *eris* (1.1153-71), denoting the rowing contest which results in Heracles breaking his oar, is immediately followed by an elaborate description of the time of day when the Argonauts arrived in Mysia:

ἤμος δ' ἀγρόθεν εἴσι φυτοσκάφος ἢ τις ἀροτρεὺς  
 ἀσπασίως εἰς αὐλιν ἐὴν δόρποιο χατίζων,  
 αὐτοῦ δ' ἐν προμολῇ τετρομένα γούνατ' ἔκαμψεν  
 αὐσταλέος κονίησι, περιτριβέας δέ τε χεῖρας  
 εἰσορόων κακὰ πολλὰ ἐῆ ἠρήσατο γαστρί·  
 τῆμος ἄρ' οἱ γ' ἀφίκοντο Κιανίδος ἠθεα γαίης  
 ἀμφ' Ἀργανθώνειον ὄρος προχοάς τε Κίοιο.

Arg. 1.1172-8

At the hour when a gardener or plowman gladly leaves the field for his hut, longing for dinner, and there on the doorstep, caked with dust, he bends his weary knees and stares at his worn-out hands and heaps curses on his belly, then it was that they reached the homesteads of the Cianian land near the Arganthonian mountain and the mouth of the Cius river. (tr. Race)

<sup>112</sup> See Clauss 1993, 63-5 for the clear allusions in Arg. 1.341-4 to Il. 19.74-77.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Collins 1967, 107-8. Of course, the *Iliad* (μῆνιν ἄειδε) and the *Odyssey* (ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε) immediately announce their subject matter, but one may also think of the *Epic Cycle* epics *Little Iliad* (Ἴλιον ἄειδε) and *Thebaid* (Ἄργος ἄειδε), although Davies 1989, 24 notes on the latter that its opening is not to the point, as Argos is only the location where the expedition against Thebes starts. The *Epigonoí* mentions its subject in the first line, albeit not with the first word: νῦν αὐθ' ὀπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεσθα.

A similar, albeit somewhat less extensive, time indication of the type ἤμος ... τῆμος features immediately before the νεῖκος among the Argonauts takes place, thus creating a ring within a ring:<sup>114</sup>

ἤμος δ' οὐρανόθεν χαροπὴ ὑπολάμπεται ἠώς  
ἐκ περάτης ἀνιοῦσα, διαγλαύσσουσι δ' ἀταρποί,  
καὶ πεδία δροσόεντα φαεινῇ λάμπεται αἴγλη,  
τῆμος τούς γ' ἐνόησαν αἰδρεῖησι λιπόντες.  
ἐν δέ σφιν κρατερόν νεῖκος πέσεν (...)

Arg. 1.1280-4

But at the time when bright dawn shines down from the sky, as it rises from the horizon, and the pathways are clearly visible, and the dewy plains sparkle with a bright gleam, they realized that they had unwittingly left those men [*Heracles, Hylas and Polyphemus*] behind. And fierce strife came upon them (...). (tr. Race)

So the Hylas episode seems to be a miniature epic on “strife”, and more specifically a miniature *Iliad*, Apollonius’ most important intertext for this episode, in which the *eris* theme plays a crucial role. Although *eris* and *neikos* are synonyms, at first sight the two kinds of “strife” – denoting respectively the rowing contest and the quarrel among the Argonauts – seem to refer to completely different matters, not providing the “epyllion” with thematic unity. Both confrontations have an important similarity, however, in that they concern Heracles’ position on the Argo. We have already seen how Heracles breaking his oar in the rowing contest constitutes the climax of the hero’s misfit on the Argo. That Heracles is too heroic is revealed at the moment when he is competing with the other Argonauts, and this gives the *eris* theme a metapoetical dimension, as symbolizing a strife between heroic poetry and un-heroic, Callimachean poetry. This is reinforced when we take a closer look at the νεῖκος that ends the Hylas episode. Here the symbol of Apollonius’ Callimachean epic, Jason, is fiercely addressed by Heracles’ comrade Telamon, who accuses him of having left Heracles behind on purpose (1290-95). The scene clearly recalls the

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. Köhnken 1965, 17-25; Hurst 1967, 64-6; 129-33; Levin 1971, 120-4; Claus 1993, 177-80 for the ring structure of the Hylas episode.

Homeric quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1,<sup>115</sup> but the difference is striking. As Apollonius states, anger has taken hold of Telamon (Τελαμῶνα δ' ἔλεν χόλος, 1289), through which he resembles Achilles. As Glaucus will very shortly reveal, “the reasons for his anger are unsubstantiated; his Achillean wrath is empty”.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, Telamon will apologize to Jason for his behaviour afterwards (1332-5). Jason, on the other hand, does not react at all to Telamon’s rage. He avoids an “Iliadic” conflict and again proves to be the best leader for this new, un-heroic epic, which, according to Jason himself, requires the ability “to take on quarrels” (νείκεα ... βαλέσθαι, 1.340).<sup>117</sup> Accordingly, Jason immediately accepts Telamon’s offer to make up after Glaucus’ revelation, saying that he will not harbour “bitter wrath” (ἀδευκέα μῆνιν, 1339) against him.<sup>118</sup> Jason renounces the typically epic emotion, which is the main theme of the *Iliad*, and thus, as *mise en abyme* of Apollonius, heroic poetry in the style of the *Iliad*. So the quarrel between Jason and Heracles’ stand-in Telamon can – just as the rowing contest – be seen as one between two kinds of poetry: un-heroic, Callimachean poetry and the Homeric-heroic poetry that will eventually be left behind.<sup>119</sup> Whereas the Hylas episode initially resembled an *Iliad*, it is ironically the very theme that invited comparison with Homer’s epic – *eris* – that also tropes Apollonius’ Callimachean deviation from Homer. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that the Hylas episode – starting with Iliadic games and ending with a quarrel – seems to invert the structure of the entire *Iliad*, which starts with the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon and which features funeral games for Patroclus near the end, in book 23.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> As suggested by Hunter 1988, 444. Cf. also Mori 2005. Clauss 1993, 201, is, however, too cautious in his interpretation of the allusion (as Farrell 1995 rightly objects), on the grounds that there are “no discernible textual points of contact”.

<sup>116</sup> Clauss 1993, 201.

<sup>117</sup> See Section 2.3 above for a discussion of this passage.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Mori 2005, 212: “We find in Jason’s acceptance of Telamon’s apology a revision of Achilles’ rejection of Agamemnon’s terms in *Iliad* 9.”

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Mori 2005, 212: “Apollonius (...) appears to move away from Homeric epic, where (...) competitive values outweigh cooperative excellences.”

<sup>120</sup> I owe this suggestion to Professor Harder.

In what follows, I will argue that the centre of the Hylas episode reflects the framing *eris* scenes, in that Heracles and Hylas, in their parallel but also contrasting actions, symbolize the strife between Homer's heroic and Apollonius' Callimachean epic poetry.

### 3.2. Heracles into the woods

After the Argonauts have landed in Mysia, Heracles goes into the woods (εἰς ὕλην, 1188) to find himself a tree to make a new oar. When the hero has found a pine tree, he starts pulling it out of the ground with excessive force. His brute action is compared to a storm that hits a ship's mast:

ὡς δ' ὅταν ἀπροφάτως ἰστὸν νεός, εὔτε μάλιστα  
χειμερὶ ὀλοοῖο δύσις πέλει Ὠρίωνος,  
ὑψόθεν ἐμπλήξασα θοῇ ἀνέμοιο κατὰίξ  
αὐτοῖσι σφήνεσσιν ὑπέκ προτόνων ἐρύσηται·  
ὡς ὅ γε τὴν ἤειρεν. (...) Arg. 1.1201-5

And as when, just as the wintertime setting of baneful Orion occurs, a swift blast of wind from on high unexpectedly strikes a ship's mast and rips it from its stays, wedges and all, so did he lift up the pine tree. (tr. Race)

The ship recalls the Argo, and the simile brings to mind the preceding rowing contest, in which Heracles endangered the Argo and, metapoetically, Apollonius' poem (p. 38 above). By pulling the tree out of the ground, Heracles again poses a danger to the ship – albeit indirectly, through the simile.<sup>121</sup> As the tree is a pine tree, the material of which the Argo is traditionally said to be made,<sup>122</sup> the impression is

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. DeForest 1994, 64: "The simile reminds the reader how dangerous Heracles is to the ship."

<sup>122</sup> See e.g. Eur. *Med.* 3-6: μηδ' ἐν νάπαισι Πηλίου πεσεῖν ποτε | τμηθεῖσα πεύκη, μηδ' ἐρετμῶσαι χέρας | ἀνδρῶν ἀριστέων οἱ τὸ πάγχρυσον δέρος | Πελία μετῆλθον. "Would that pine trees had never been felled in the glens of Mount Pelion and furnished oars for the hands of the heroes who at Pelias' command set forth in quest of the Golden Fleece!" (tr. Kovacs) (cf. *Arg.* 2.1187-9, where the mention of Pelion suggests the same material (τὴν γὰρ Ἀθηναίη τεχνήσατο, καὶ τάμε χαλκῶ | δούρατα Πηλιάδος κορυφῆς πάρα, σὺν δέ οἱ Ἄργος | τεὔξεεν. "For Athena designed it [*the Argo*] and with a bronze axe cut its timbers from the peak of Pelion, and with her help Argus constructed it."); Val. Fl. *Arg.* 1.121-9 (on the construction of the Argo). Initially, Apollonius refuses to treat the building of the Argo (*Arg.* 1.18-9), although he now and then, more and less explicitly, refers to it (see e.g.

created that, by analogy with the rowing contest, Heracles' uprooting of the tree can also be read metapoetically as endangering Apollonius' epic, as symbolically represented by the tree.

This kind of symbolism brings to mind Callimachus' fragmentary fourth *Iamb* (fr. 194 Pf.), where, as most scholars agree, the olive tree quarreling with the laurel tree embodies the poet's poetics.<sup>123</sup> In the remainder of this section, I will argue that Apollonius' pine tree similarly evokes his epic's Callimachean poetics, which are endangered by Heracles. The hero's expedition into the woods (εἰς ὕλην, 1188) thus seems to become a metapoetical journey, into Callimachean territory, through activation of the metaphorical meaning of ὕλη as "(poetic) subject matter". This situation may be compared to what Virgil would later say in his *Aeneid*: *itur in antiquam silvam*. "Into an ancient forest goes their way." (*Aen.* 6.179) In first instance, this line refers to Aeneas' search for wood for Misenus' pyre, but at the same time it both triggers and describes the intertextual process in the following lines, which rework a passage from Ennius' *Annales*.<sup>124</sup> Virgil has activated the metaphorical meaning of *silva*, as, I suggest, Apollonius has done with its Greek equivalent ὕλη in the Hylas episode here.<sup>125</sup> That Apollonius seems metapoetically to express his allegiance to Callimachean aesthetics through a tree which is then threatened, specifically recalls a story in Callimachus, to which I shall turn first.

### 3.2.1. Heracles and Erysichthon

Heracles is involved in an activity that can be described as tree violation, which was evaluated negatively in antiquity, especially when it concerned a sacred grove.<sup>126</sup> A

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above). See Murray 2005 on how these dispersed fragments do form a complete story of the construction (with metapoetical significance).

<sup>123</sup> See Acosta-Hughes 2002, 191, n. 62 for bibliography. He himself, however, thinks that the trees together are "emblematic of the larger program of *Iambi* as a collection" (192), which would not affect my argument, for which it matters that Callimachus' poetics are symbolized by one or more trees.

<sup>124</sup> See e.g. Hinds 1998, 11-3 (from whom I have also quoted the translation of the line).

<sup>125</sup> See also Introduction, n. 23 for the metaphorical meaning of ὕλη and *silva*.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Thomas 1988b, 265: "(...) both documentary and literary evidence conspire to show that in Greek and Roman society, as in so many others, the felling of trees was an extremely hazardous enterprise

well-known, contemporary literary parallel is the tree violation in Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter*, where Erysichthon invades a sacred grove of Demeter with the purpose of cutting down trees to build a lavish banqueting hall.<sup>127</sup> After the first tree, a poplar, has been struck, Demeter is alerted by the sound of the tree being struck, or rather by the cry of its coeval nymph, and punishes the violator with perpetual hunger.

But this Erysichthon story is not just Callimachean in the sense that it was told by Callimachus; it has also been interpreted metapoetically, as allegorizing Callimachus' poetics.<sup>128</sup> As C. Müller and J. Murray have argued, Callimachus' poetical program is in this hymn personified by Demeter, who looks after Callimachean poetry as symbolized by her sacred grove. This interpretation is based on the similarities with the programmatic end of the *Hymn to Apollo*, where it was said that "the bees bring water to Deo [*Demeter*] not from every source, but where it bubbles up pure and undefiled from a holy spring, its very essence." (110-2; tr. Nisetich).<sup>129</sup> The bees mentioned are priestesses of Demeter, but the denotation also triggers the metaphor of the bee for the poet:<sup>130</sup> the devotees of Demeter are Callimachean poets. Now the narrator of the *Hymn to Demeter* is exactly such a devotee, who is furthermore associated with Callimachus himself, as the first person narrator of the poem merges with the persona of the poet.<sup>131</sup> The metapoetical dimension of Callimachus' *Demeter*

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and was, if performed without due reverence, likely to be met with retribution exacted either by the gods or by society."; 263: "Uneasiness emerges particularly in the case of the inviolate sacred grove." For tree felling as an epic *topos* in general, see Leeman 1985, 198; for the *Aeneid* see also Thomas 1988b. Murray 2004 investigates the intertextual and metapoetical contact between the tree violations in *Ov. Met.* 8 (Erysichthon), *Call. H. Dem.* (Erysichthon) and *Ap.Rh. Arg.* 2 (Paroibios).

<sup>127</sup> See Hopkinson 1984, 18-31 for testimonia: "Many and diverse were the myths told of Erysichthon and Triopas [*his father*]." (p.18)

<sup>128</sup> Müller 1987, 27-45, who speaks of a "narrative Metapher". This interpretation is discussed and expanded by Murray 2004, 212-4. My following treatment of the metapoetical dimension of Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter* is based on these two accounts.

<sup>129</sup> See p. 32 above for the text and metapoetical interpretation of this passage. Cf. also the end of Theocritus' *Idyll* 7 (see p. 106 below), in which Demeter plays a similar metapoetical role.

<sup>130</sup> See Williams 1978, 92-3 for the way Callimachus fuses the religious and poetological associations of the bee here. For the metaphor of the bee for the poet, see Waszink 1974.

<sup>131</sup> See also Murray 2004, 212-3 for specific verbal echoes between the *Hymn to Apollo* and the *Hymn to Demeter*.

is reinforced by the *Aetia* prologue, in which “Callimachus aligns himself with Philitas’ elegiac poem *Demeter*”:<sup>132</sup> ἀλλὰ καθέλκει | [δρῦν] πολὺ τὴν μακρὴν ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρο[ς]. “But bountiful Demeter by far outweighs the long [oak]” (*Aet.* fr. 1.9-10 Pf.). If this is indeed the meaning of these lines,<sup>133</sup> it is likely that Callimachus derived the metapoetical significance of his *Demeter* from Philitas’ poem, which, as Callimachus’ allusion would suggest, promoted poetics similar to those of Callimachus.<sup>134</sup> That both poets shared poetical ideas is also suggested by Propertius, who, in his programmatic elegy 3.1, aligns his own poetical ideas with these two poets, placing them in the same sacred and poetical grove (*nemus*):<sup>135</sup>

Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,  
 in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.  
 primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos  
 Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros.  
 dicite, quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro?  
 quove pede ingressi? quamve bibistis aquam? Prop. 3.1.1-6

Spirit of Callimachus and poetic rites of Coan Philitas, allow me, I pray, to go into your grove. I am the first priest from the pure spring to begin bearing Italian sacraments to the accompaniment of Greek music. Tell me, in what glen did you together refine your song? or with what foot did you begin? or what water did you drink? (tr. Heyworth)

As Murray comments on this passage: “From Propertius’ declaration of his allegiance with Callimachus and Philitas it is evident that adopting Callimachean poetics was

<sup>132</sup> Murray 2004, 213. Cf. Müller 1987, 42.

<sup>133</sup> See also Harder 2010, II, on *Aet.* fr. 1.9-12, for a discussion of alternative meanings and supplements: “On the whole Housman’s δρῦν still is the most attractive. The comparison would then contrast the slender corn-ear, evoked by the reference to Demeter, and the big oak-tree and would be relevant on several levels. Each item would stand metaphorically for a certain poetic style, while ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρο[ς] at the same time could remind the readers of Philitas’ *Demeter* and ‘the long oak’ perhaps referred to another poem. (...) The notion of the superiority of the corn-ear over the oak-tree is found elsewhere too and may also imply a notion of progress and a contrast between ‘modern’ and ‘old-fashioned’ beside the contrast small-big ...” (p. 34).

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Seiler 1995, 156, n. 343: “[M]it der Fügung ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρο[ς], die in Aitienprolog (...) den Demeterhymnus bezeichnet, legt Kallimachos nahe, dass die Dichtung des Philitas ebenfalls als geistig nährende verstanden werden will.” See Müller 1987, 40-2 for other parallels between the poetics of Philitas and Callimachus. See also n. 91 above for Philitas and Callimachus.

<sup>135</sup> See also conveniently Hunter 2006, 7-16 on the metapoetical dimension of this passage.

figured as being initiated into the secret rites of Demeter, and that these rites were associated with the goddess's grove."<sup>136</sup> Although Propertius does not mention Demeter, which makes allusion to Callimachus' hymn (let alone to Philitas' *Demeter*) hard to pin down here, Callimachus' grove can indeed, like Propertius' grove, be read metapoetically, as Müller has shown, as a landscape symbolizing Callimachean poetry. As Murray suggests, "Callimachus is here "concretizing the metaphor of ὕλη as poetic material. Erysichthon's attempt to convert the ὕλη of the grove into a banquet hall is an attempt to appropriate and transform poetical material".<sup>137</sup> So Erysichthon, by violating the grove, opposes Callimachus' new poetics, and the banqueting hall he plans to build by analogy symbolizes old, epic poetry. The allusions to Homer should also be understood in this light. During his attack on the grove, Erysichthon's ferocity is for instance described "with an epic simile of the type usually associated with hand-to-hand combat":<sup>138</sup>

τὰν δ' ἄρ' ὑποβλέψας χαλεπώτερον ἢ κυναγὸν  
ᾧρεσιν ἐν Τμαρίοισιν ὑποβλέπει ἄνδρα Λέαινα  
ᾧμοτόκος, τᾶς φαντὶ πέλειν βλοσυρώτατον ὄμμα  
...

*H. Dem.* 50-2

But he looked at her more fiercely than a lioness in the mountains of Tmarus looks at a huntsman when she has just given birth (then, it is said, her look is most fearful), and said ... (tr. Hopkinson)

Furthermore, as Bulloch has shown, Demeter's grove, as described in lines 27-9, resembles the place where Odysseus and Melanthius meet in the *Odyssey* (17.208-

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<sup>136</sup> Murray 2004, 213.

<sup>137</sup> Murray 2004, 214. See Introduction, Section 2 for this metaphorical use of ὕλη (and the Latin equivalent *silva*).

<sup>138</sup> Hopkinson 1984, 6, who also notes that "formal epic-length similes are foreign to the Callimachean hymn". The simile's model is *Il.* 17.133-6 (Ajax defending the corpse of Patroclus): Ἄιας δ' ἀμφὶ Μενοιτιάδῃ σάκος εὐρὸν καλύψας | ἐστήκει ὥς τις τε λέων περὶ οἷσι τέκεσσι, | ᾧ ῥά τε νήπι' ἄγοντι συναντήσονται ἐν ὕλῃ | ἄνδρες ἐπακτῆρες· ὁ δέ τε σθένει βλεμεαίνει, | πᾶν δέ τ' ἐπισκύνιον κάτω ἔλκεται ὅσσε καλύπτων. "But Aias covered the son of Menoetius round about with his broad shield, and stood like a lion over his welps, one that huntsmen have encountered in the forest as he leads his young; and he exults in his might, and draws down his entire brow to cover his eyes." (tr. Murray & Wyatt)

11),<sup>139</sup> and Murray takes this lead to show that Erysichthon is associated with Odysseus.<sup>140</sup> The *Odyssey* is also a relevant intertext with regard to the banqueting hall that Erysichthon wants to build, as “the banquet hall is the place where epic story-telling takes place.”<sup>141</sup> In short, Erysichthon is associated with Homeric, heroic-epic poetry, to which, as we have seen earlier, Callimachus is not opposed. The problem with Erysichthon, however, is that he is violating the Callimachean grove.

Something similar seems to be case in Apollonius’ Hylas episode, where Heracles evokes Homeric, heroic epic. Contrary to Erysichthon, however, Heracles is not rejected by Apollonius, for after his departure from the epic, he will remain an important model for the Argonauts, especially in book 4, in the desert of Libya. There the Argonauts literally and metaphorically find themselves in the footsteps of the hero,<sup>142</sup> who saves them from starvation by creating a spring, in a scene which has a clear metapoetical dimension (4.1393-1460).<sup>143</sup> The problem with Heracles in the Hylas episode, however, is that he is too “heavy” for the Argo, and poses a danger to the epic, as Erysichthon does to the Callimachean grove of Demeter.

### 3.2.2. *The Callimachean pine tree*

The stories of Apollonius and Callimachus, then, resemble each other in having a metapoetical dimension that involves characters with epic connotations violating metapoetical trees. I think, however, Apollonius also specifically alludes to Callimachus’ hymn, as the pine tree seems to allude to the poplar tree that is struck by Erysichthon, causing Demeter to come into action:

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<sup>139</sup> Bulloch 1977, 108-12. See also Hopkinson 1984, 102-3.

<sup>140</sup> Murray 2004, 214-6.

<sup>141</sup> Murray 2004, 216, n. 29.

<sup>142</sup> See Feeney 1986, 56-63 for the way in which Heracles acts as a continuing model for the Argonauts after his departure from the expedition.

<sup>143</sup> For the Callimachean allusions in the Libya episode in book 4 of the *Argonautica*, see DeForest 1994, 133-6, associating the desert where the Argonauts are stranded with Callimachus’ birth-place Cyrene and thus his poetry: “In the Callimachean desert, the Argonauts are saved by the Homeric Heracles.” (p. 136); Kouremenos 1996, 240; 242-4 (mainly on similes). The findings of DeForest and Kouremenos are only the tip of the iceberg, however, and a systematic study of Callimachean influence in book 4 would be most welcome.

ἦς δέ τις αἴγειρος, μέγα δένδρεον αἰθέρι κῦρον,  
τῶ ἔπι ταὶ νύμφαι ποτὶ τῶνδιδιον ἐψιόωντο  
ἂ πράτα πλαγεῖσα κακὸν μέλος ἴαχεν ἄλλαις.  
ἄσθετο Δαμάτηρ, ὅτι οἱ ξύλον ἱερὸν ἄλγει,  
εἶπε δὲ χωσαμένα· “τίς μοι καλὰ δένδρεα κόπτει;”

*H. Dem. 37-41*

There was a poplar, a huge tree reaching to the sky, near which the nymphs used to play at noon. This was the first tree struck, and it shrieked miserably to the others. Demeter sensed that her sacred timber was in pain, and said angrily, “Who is felling my lovely trees?” (tr. Hopkinson)

In the light of the interpretation of Demeter’s grove discussed earlier, the poplar, as part of this Callimachean grove, has a metapoetical dimension as “a concretization of Callimachean ὕλη.” This is emphasized when Erysichthon hits the tree, causing it to produce a κακὸν μέλος, a “bad song”.<sup>144</sup> Although the entire grove is sacred, the fact that this particular tree gets so much attention apparently makes it quite special; the trees that Erysichthon’s men are felling are mentioned only once in passing:

οἱ μὲν ἄρ’ ἡμιθνήτες, ἐπεὶ τὰν πότνιαν εἶδον,  
ἔξαπίνας ἀπόρουσαν ἐνὶ δρυσὶ χαλκὸν ἀφέντες.

*H. Dem. 59-60*

When they [*Erysichthon’s men*] saw the goddess they started away, half-dead with fear, leaving their bronze implements in the trees. (tr. Hopkinson)

Because of its thinness, the poplar is ideally suited to embody the Callimachean poetics of λεπτότης, a point which Apollonius seems to take over in the Hylas episode, where the pine tree is described as follows:<sup>145</sup>

εὔρεν ἔπειτ’ ἐλάτην ἀλαλήμενος οὔτε τι πολλοῖς  
ἄχθομένην ὄζοις οὐδὲ μέγα τηλεθώσαν,  
ἀλλ’ οἶον ταναῆς ἔρνος πέλει αἰγείροιο·  
τόσση ὁμῶς μηκός τε καὶ ἐς πάχος ἦεν ιδέσθαι.

*Arg. 1.1190-3*

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<sup>144</sup> Murray 2004, 214.

<sup>145</sup> I agree with Bulloch 1977 and Murray 2004 that Callimachus’ *Hymn to Demeter* antedates the *Argonautica*, but to interpret the intertextual contact the other way would not affect my metapoetical interpretation of the Apollonian passage. See also pp. 29-30 above for the problematic relative chronology of Hellenistic poetry in general, and Apollonius and Callimachus in particular.

In his wanderings he [*Heracles*] then found a pine tree not burdened with many branches nor sprouting much growth, but like a shoot of a tall poplar; similar it was in both length and thickness. (tr. Race, adapted)

By emphasizing that the pine tree *looks like* a poplar, the text makes the reader more aware of the nature of the tree and marks an allusion to Callimachus' metapoetical poplar. This is reinforced by an allusion to the *Aetia* prologue in line 1193. Having compared the pine tree to a shoot of a poplar,<sup>146</sup> Apollonius' conclusion of the description of the tree is also in terms of the poplar: "similar [*to the shoot*] it was in both length and thickness." The second of the two criteria used to describe the similarities between the pine tree and the poplar shoot, *πάχος* ("thickness"), brings the *Aetia* prologue to mind. Callimachus here recollects how Apollo admonished him to "feed the victim as fat as possible", but to "keep his Muse slender" (tr. Nisetich), i.e. to write refined poetry: τὸ μὲν θύος ὅτι *πάχιστον* | θρέψαι, τῆ]ν Μοῦσαν δ' ὠγαθὲ *λεπταλέην*. (*Aetia* 1.23-4 Pf.). As Apollonius' pine is obviously also slender – something emphasized by the comparison with the shoot of a poplar and by the statement in lines 1190-1 that the tree "is not burdened with many branches" – the similarity of terminology suggests an allusion to Callimachus' *Aetia* in this metapoetical context.

Whether the first criterion, *μῆκος* ("length"), also alludes to Callimachean poetics is more questionable. The pine tree, which does not "sprout much growth" and resembles the shoot of a poplar tree, is not very long, and can be said to accord with Callimachus' poetical ideal to be *ὀλιγόστιχος*, "of few lines" (*Aet.* fr. 1.9). But Callimachus does not use the term *μῆκος*, which does feature in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

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<sup>146</sup> As an *ἔρνος* is a shoot (LSJ 1), the word does not simply denote the trunk of the poplar tree, as the modern translations of e.g. Delage (in Vian 1974), Seaton 1912, Hunter 1995, Green 1997, Race 2008 have it. This (mis)interpretation obviously makes the text read more straightforwardly in translation, but also removes the metapoetical hint: Apollonius' epic is like the shoot of Callimachus' poplar, as I will argue below. Is Apollonius' formulation a way to say that Apollonius is a follower, a student, of Callimachus and his poetry? This is something also suggested by the ancient biographical tradition (*Vita β*, 4: οὗτος ἐμαθήτευσε Καλλιμάχῳ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ὄντι γραμματικῷ. "He was a student of Callimachus, the grammarian, in Alexandria.").

There the length of an epic is prescribed to be “equivalent to the length of a group of tragedies offered at one hearing” (*Poet.* 24.1459b; tr. Halliwell). This would amount to ca. 4000-5000 lines,<sup>147</sup> which is much shorter than a Homeric epic, but it is “a limit more or less observed by Apollonius.”<sup>148</sup> In line 1193, Apollonius thus seems to adhere to Aristotle’s poetics, but also those of Callimachus, who, as we have seen earlier, seems to accord with Aristotle’s *Poetics* with regard to attitude towards Homeric epic. The two also seem to agree on the proper length of a long narrative poem, as Callimachus’ *Aetia*, at a rough estimate, was originally about 5000 lines. “When compared to Hesiod, Homer and Apollonius this makes the *Aetia* a poem which in length is closest to the *Argonautica*.”<sup>149</sup> So, with his remark on the μῆκος of the pine tree, which, as I just argued, symbolizes the Callimachean *Argonautica*, Apollonius in the first instance expresses his allegiance with Aristotle about the proper length of an epic; but this is not incompatible with Callimachus’ own poetics, as the *Aetia* shows. Nevertheless, Callimachus never wrote an epic as long as the *Argonautica*. By comparison, Callimachus’ epic, the *Hecale*, was originally much shorter (probably c. 1000 lines), and also much less traditional in its subject matter.<sup>150</sup> The combination with the mention of the πᾶχος of the tree, which alludes directly to Callimachus, suggests that Apollonius in his description of the pine tree metapoetically states that his *Argonautica* is written in accordance with the poetics of both Aristotle and Callimachus, which are compatible with each other, although

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<sup>147</sup> See Lucas 1968, 222 ad *Poet.* 24.1459b21: “Assuming that the average length of a tragedy did not change between the late fifth century and A.’s time, three tragedies would amount to 4,000-5,000 lines which would take a long half-day in performance.”

<sup>148</sup> Harder 2010, II, on *Aet.* fr. 1.3.

<sup>149</sup> Harder 2010, I, 14.

<sup>150</sup> See Hollis 1990, 337-40 on the length of the *Hecale*. He estimates that the poem was longer than 1000 lines: “(...) while the usual estimate of 1,000 lines for the *Hecale* perhaps has most to be said for it, there are other indications compatible with a longer poem.” (340). On the *Hecale* as Callimachus’ way of writing an epic, cf. Cameron 1995, 437, who speaks of a “model epic” (whereas the *Aetia* is considered to be a model elegy), and Ambühl 2004, 40: “The *Hecale* can be interpreted as a ‘manifesto’ of Callimachean poetics: *Hecale* and Theseus are the heroes of the new Alexandrian epic”.

Callimachus himself would probably never have conceived an epic like the *Argonautica*.<sup>151</sup>

The passage describing the pine tree mainly alludes to Callimachus, however, and, having established the Callimachean dimension of the pine tree, I will now try to see to what extent Heracles' subsequent action can be read metapoetically.

### 3.2.3. Polyphemus' club

Apollonius' pine tree resembles, and arguably alludes to, Callimachus' poplar, but there are also striking similarities with Polyphemus' club in *Odyssey* 9 (compare the underlinings with *Arg.* 1.1193 above):

(...) τὸ μὲν ἄμμες εἴσκομεν εἰσορόωντες  
ὅσσον θ' **ἰστὸν νηὸς** ἐεικοσόροιο μελαίνης,  
φορτίδος εὐρείης, ἣ τ' ἐκπεράα μέγα λαῖτμα·  
τόσσον ἔην μῆκος, τόσσον πάχος εἰσοράασθαι. *Od.* 9.321-4

And as we [*Odysseus and his men*] looked at it we thought it as large as is the mast of a black ship of twenty oars, a merchantman, broad of beam, which crosses over the great golf; so huge it was in length, so huge in breadth to look upon. (tr. Murray & Dimmock)

The possibility of an allusion to this Odyssean passage is strengthened by the appearance of the Homeric words marked in bold (ἰστὸν νηὸς) in the simile comparing Heracles' brutal uprooting of the tree to a storm hitting the mast of a ship (1.1201; quoted on p. 43 above). So both the Odyssean Polyphemus' club and the Apollonian pine tree are compared to a ship's mast. What are we to make of this allusion? First of all, the difference between the pine tree and the club is obvious, if

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<sup>151</sup> Cf. Harder 2010, I, 25 on the different, though also similar, approaches of Callimachus in his *Aetia* and Apollonius in his *Argonautica*: "In Apollonius' *Argonautica* the journey of the Argonauts results in a wide range of monuments, rituals and other traces along their route. The approach is different from that in the *Aetia* if only because in Apollonius the starting-point is the Argonauts' adventures in the past, which leave traces that 'even now' people can observe, whereas in the *Aetia* the starting-point is the present in which the narrator is confronted by traces from the past which he seeks to explain. In both approaches the notion that past and present are closely related as 'cause' and 'result' is prominent."

my interpretation of line 1193 is accepted: whereas the pine tree is slender and not long (compared as it is to the shoot of a poplar), the club is huge in both length and thickness. I suggest that the allusion has metapoetical implications, which become more clear when we take Apollonius' simile into consideration. Although the pine tree is, like Polyphemus' club, likened to a mast, this is not what is directly compared: Heracles' uprooting of the tree is compared to a storm, and the point is, as we have seen, that Heracles' action symbolizes the danger he poses to the epic. In the *Odyssey*, the "heroic-epic" club will help the epic hero Odysseus and his quest, in the *Argonautica*, the Callimachean tree is threatened by the epic hero Heracles. Indirectly, Heracles and Polyphemus are thus also associated with each other, as both are characters who oppose an epic mission.<sup>152</sup> Although Apollonius through the allusion again reveals that Homer is his model, he also again makes clear that his epic is, and has to be, different: there is no place for heroic action in the *Argonautica*.

### 3.3. *Hylas and the spring*

After the episode of Heracles searching for and violating the pine tree, Hylas is described looking for a source to get water for Heracles. Not only does this scene take place simultaneously with Heracles' action (τόφρα, "in the meantime", 1207), it is also clearly parallel with the action of Heracles (ὥς κεν ἐρετμὸν | οἱ αὐτῶ φθαίη καταχείριον ἐντύνασθαι, 1189 ~ ὥς κέ οἱ ὕδωρ | φθαίη ἀφυσσάμενος ποτιδόρπιον, 1209),<sup>153</sup> which invites comparison of the two scenes with each other. This in turn raises the question whether Hylas' search can also be read metapoetically, a question which becomes more urgent when we realize that the

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<sup>152</sup> Cf. Clauss 1993, 186-8 for the similarities between Heracles and Polyphemus. See also Ch. 2, Section 3.4 for the way Theocritus, in *Id.* 13, associates Heracles with Polyphemus. Callimachus also seems to denote Polyphemus as "un-Callimachean" in the *Aetia*. Alluding to the ivy cup (κισσύβιον) that the Cyclops used to drink the wine offered to him by Odysseus *Aet.* fr. 178.16 Pf., Callimachus subtly associates him with excessive, un-Callimachean drinking of wine (see Knox 1985 on Callimachean water-drinking vs. the un-Callimachean drinking of wine). I owe this suggestion to Professor Harder.

<sup>153</sup> Levin 1971, 121.

metaphorical meaning of ὕλη may also continue to play a role in this episode, as ὕλη was an ancient etymology for Hylas.<sup>154</sup>

Another hint that Hylas' search is susceptible of metapoetical reading is provided by Propertius, who in his elegy describes Hylas as going to the fount:

at comes invicti iuvenis processerat ultra  
raram sepositi **quaerere** fontis aquam. Prop. 1.20.23-4

The squire of the invincible hero had gone further afield, to seek the choice water of a secluded spring. (tr. Heyworth)

Propertius here seems to allude to Callimachus' metapoetical water imagery.<sup>155</sup> *Rara aqua* recalls the pure (καθαρή) and undefiled (ἀχράαντος) spring in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (111). But Propertius' *sepositi fontis* at the same time brings the κρήνη, the "public fountain" in *Epigram* 28 to mind, which Callimachus dislikes, because everyone drinks from it: just as Callimachus will not drink from the source that everyone else uses, Hylas will go deep into the woods to find a spring that is "set apart".<sup>156</sup> Propertius also seems to allude to Apollonius in line 24:<sup>157</sup>

δίλιητο κρήνης ἱερὸν ὄοον

[Hylas] sought the sacred flow of a spring. Arg. 1.1208

<sup>154</sup> See Introduction, Section 2.

<sup>155</sup> Petrain 2000, 413-4. On Callimachus' use of water-symbolism, see also Wimmel 1960, 222-3; Kambylis 1965, 110-25; Asper 1997, 109-25.

<sup>156</sup> See Section 2.5 above for (the text and translation of) Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* and *Ep.* 28 Pf.

<sup>157</sup> The readings *puram* (Fontein) and *sacram* (Rutgers) in Prop. 1.20.24 instead of *raram* would strengthen the allusion to Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (just quoted) and Apollonius (quoted immediately below) respectively, as Heyworth 2007b, 89 notes: "(...) *raram* has puzzled readers: is it just to be rendered 'exquisite', or does it mean that fresh water was scarce, so Hylas has to go a long way? Closer imitation of the Callimachean passage would have been achieved through *puram* (Fontein), which has appropriately positive connotations, or *sacram* (Rutgers), which adds an allusion to A.R. Arg. 1.1208 κρήνης ἱερὸν ὄοον." Nevertheless, because Propertius also calls his Cynthia, who metaphorically represents his poetry (see Ch. 3, pp. 153-4 with nn. 452-3 below), *rara* in book 1 (1.8.42; 1.17.16), I accept the reading *raram* in Prop. 1.20.24: Propertius seems to have given his own, elegiac twist to the Callimachean words. See also Ch. 3, Section 7 for Propertius' elegizing of Apollonius' and Theocritus' Callimachean Hylas.

Propertius' apparent allusion to Callimachus through Apollonius suggests that Apollonius too alludes to Callimachus, and, in fact, the similarities between Apollonius' line and Propertius' Callimachean intertexts are striking. The ἱερὸν ῥόον ("holy stream") that Hylas is looking for recalls the "holy spring" (πίδακος ἱερῆς) in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (112). Furthermore, κρήνης ("public spring") brings to mind *Epigram* 28. In this poem, Callimachus rejects hackneyed poetry from the Epic Cycle, which keeps "recycling" Homer and other traditional epic material – keeps "drinking" from the same source. The κρήνη can thus be identified with Homer, just like the πόντος in the *Hymn to Apollo*, the quantity of which is imitated by post-Homeric epic. As Propertius did, Apollonius seems to combine this epigram and the ending of the *Hymn to Apollo*, but although Propertius' Callimachean *fons* points towards a metapoetical interpretation of Apollonius' spring, that spring does not at first sight seem to be Callimachean. The spring's denotation as κρήνη associates it with Homer,<sup>158</sup> and so Apollonius seems to be drinking from the same Homeric source as the poets of the un-Callimachean Epic Cycle. Apollonius' ῥόον at first sight seems to point in the same direction, for in Apollo's statement in the *Hymn to Apollo* that the "the Assyrian river rolls a massive stream (μέγας ῥόος), but it's mainly silt and garbage that it sweeps along" (108-9; tr. Nisetich),<sup>159</sup> the μέγας ῥόος refers to post-Homeric epic (such as the Epic Cycle), which equals Homeric epic in quantity, but not in quality.<sup>160</sup> But Apollonius' ῥόος is ἱερός, a word which at the end of the *Hymn to Apollo* is applied to the holy spring that produces pure and undefiled water of the best quality, i.e. Callimachean poetry. Moreover, quite apart from this single line, Apollonius' spring also clearly recalls that of Callimachus more generally in its remoteness, implying Callimachean purity and thus quality. So what can be made of this apparent paradox? The parallelism with the scene involving Heracles that takes

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<sup>158</sup> The spring is also denoted as κρήνη in lines 1221, 1228 and 1258.

<sup>159</sup> Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ | λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει.

<sup>160</sup> See p. 32 above for this interpretation of these Callimachean lines. That Apollonius alludes to Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* is reinforced by the striking denotation of the spring: as the name Πηγαί ("springs", 1222) reveals, it clearly concerns a spring, not a "stream".

place simultaneously creates the impression that Apollonius' spring is, like its counterpart, the pine tree, a symbol for (the poetics of) the *Argonautica*. As I argued, the tree made clear that the *Argonautica* was properly Callimachean in its relation to Homer, but in a way that Callimachus would probably not have conceived of himself. Something similar seems to be the case with the spring. Although the *Argonautica* is a long epic, a ῥόος (to keep to the Callimachean terminology), whose source of inspiration (Homer) can be denoted as a κρήνη, from which many poets have drunk, Apollonius' epic is still able to produce holy, pure, and hence Callimachean water. Although Callimachus' spring in the *Hymn to Apollo* was (implicitly) remote, it was still connected with Homer's πόντος, whose quality, not quantity, it emulated. In line 1208, I suggest, Apollonius declares the Callimachean nature of his epic, which is Callimachean in another way, in that it tries to emulate both the quality and (to a certain extent<sup>161</sup>) the quantity of Homer, something which Callimachus had not thought possible.

### 3.4. Hylas, Jason and Apollonius

Both Heracles and Hylas go into Callimachean territory. Whereas Heracles violates the pine tree, an action that symbolizes the danger he poses to the Callimachean epic, Hylas becomes one with the Callimachean landscape. At the same time, Hylas makes a transition from a homosexual relationship with Heracles to a heterosexual one with a nymph.<sup>162</sup> Through this separation from Heracles, he ensures the departure of the hero from the epic. Because Heracles was posing a serious danger to the Argo, Hylas, through his ἀρετή of attractiveness, has saved the epic. The appearance of Glaucus at the end of the episode underlines the significance of Hylas' feat, by giving it a divine validation: Heracles belonged to another, more traditionally heroic kind of epic; his

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<sup>161</sup> Although the length of the *Argonautica* is much shorter than an Homeric epic, it is still much longer than a Callimachean "epic" such as the *Hecale*. As I argued in Section 3.2.2 above, the length of the *Argonautica* was probably roughly the same as Callimachus' *Aetia*, but this is an elegiac poem in the Hesiodic, didactic tradition, not a Homeric, narrative epic.

<sup>162</sup> On the pederastic relationship between Heracles and Hylas, see e.g. Beye 1982, 94-6; Clauss 1993, 185-96; Hunter 1993, 38-40; DeForest 1994, 62-6.

disappearance was meant to be, and was no accident. Hylas is here aligned with Jason, who will succeed in his mission with the same ἀρετή. This suggests that Hylas is a kind of prefiguration of Jason, which is reinforced by the intertextual contact between the two. When Hylas reaches the spring, he is abducted by the nymph, who is struck by the beauty of the boy, which is emphasized by the rays of the full moon:

ἡ δὲ νέον κρήνης ἀνεδύετο καλλινάοιο  
νύμφη ἐφυδατίη. τὸν δὲ σχεδὸν εἰσενόησεν  
κάλλει καὶ γλυκερῆσιν ἐρευθόμενον χαρίτεσσιν·  
πρὸς γὰρ οἱ διχόμενις ἀπ' αἰθέρος ἀυγάζουσα  
βάλλε σεληναίη. τῆς δὲ φρένας ἐπτοίησεν  
Κύπρις, ἀμηχανίη δὲ μόλις συναγείρατο θυμόν. Arg. 1.1228-33

But the water nymph was just rising from the fair-flowing spring. She noticed the boy nearby, glowing with rosy beauty and sweet charms, for the full moon was casting its rays on him as it gleamed from the sky. Cypris confounded her thoughts, and in her helpless state she could barely collect her spirit. (tr. Race)

The mention of a full moon is quite striking, as it does not feature anywhere else in the entire *Argonautica*, except in a simile, much later in the poem. After Jason has acquired the Golden Fleece, he and Medea leave the grove of Ares, and a simile follows:

(...) λεῖπον\* δὲ πολύσκιον ἄλσος Ἄρης.  
ὥς δὲ σεληναίης διχομήνιδα παρθένος αἴγλην  
ὑψόθεν ἐξανέχουσεν ὑπωροφίου θαλάμοιο  
**λεπταλέω** ἔανῶ ὑποῖσχεται, ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ  
χαίρει δερκομένης καλὸν σέλας· ὥς τότε Ἴησων  
γηθόσυνος μέγα κῶας ἑαῖς ἀναείρετο χερσίν,  
καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ ξανθῆσι παρησίσις ἠδὲ μετώπῳ  
μαρμαρυγῇ ληνέων φλογὶ εἴκελον ἴζεν ἔρευθος. Arg. 4.166-73

\* λεῖπον Naber: λεῖπεν Sd: λίπεν mG

(...) and they left the shade-filled grove of Ares. And as a young girl catches on her delicate gown the beam of a full moon as it shines forth high above her upper room, and her heart within her rejoices as she beholds the beautiful gleam, so joyfully then did Jason lift up the great fleece in his hands, and upon

his golden cheeks and forehead there settled a red glow like a flame from the shimmering of the wool. (tr. Race)

This Homeric simile at first sight refers to Jason's joy. As J.M. Bremer has shown,<sup>163</sup> however, the full moon has a "erotic-nuptial connotation" (423), through which the girl in the simile clearly also refers to Medea, whom Jason has promised to marry in exchange for help with acquiring the Golden Fleece. Bremer infers "that the simile, by describing the blissful sentiments of a girl looking forward to her wedding, must have had the effect of initially directing the reader's attention to the joy which permeates Medea now that she is walking at Jason's side as his bride-to-be." (425) Apollonius has a famous model for this simile technique, for in *Odyssey* 23.231-9, the happiness of Penelope at Odysseus' return is compared to castaways, happy to set foot on land again, who are strongly reminiscent of Odysseus.<sup>164</sup> As Bremer observes, "in both passages a climax of the narrative is reached, a climax with strong erotic aspects: the *Odyssey* culminating in Odysseus' reunion with his faithful wife, the *Argonautica* in Jason's capture of the Golden Fleece with the help of the princess he has promised to marry" (425). In Apollonius this climax is accompanied by Callimachean imagery. First of all, the gown of the girl in the simile, with which the fleece is implicitly compared, is described as "delicate" (λεπταλέω ἔανῶ, 169), which recalls Callimachus' denotation of his Muse (λεπταλέην, *Aet.* fr. 1.24 Pf.).<sup>165</sup> The connection of the word here with weaving, a widespread metaphor for the poetical process,<sup>166</sup> reinforces the metapoetical association of the gown and thus of the fleece that is compared with it. Two lines later, Apollonius emphasizes the actual size of the fleece: it is a μέγα κῶας, a "great fleece". The impression is created that the Golden Fleece, the objective of the epic mission, symbolizes the epic itself, which Apollonius, as we have seen in the Hylas episode, characterizes as a paradoxically

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<sup>163</sup> Bremer 1987.

<sup>164</sup> Bremer 1987, 426-7. See also de Jong 1985, 274 on this technique in Homeric similes.

<sup>165</sup> Kouremenos 1996, 240.

<sup>166</sup> See Introduction, n. 33 above for weaving as a poetological metaphor.

Callimachean large-scale epic. This is reinforced by a second simile, comparing the size of the fleece to the hide of an ox or a deer:

ὄσση δὲ ῥίνος βοῶς ἥνιος ἢ ἐλάφιοι  
γίγνεται, ἦν τ' ἀγρῶσται ἀχαιϊννέην καλέουσιν,  
τόσσον ἔην, πάντη χρύσεον, ἐφύπερθε δ' \* ἄωτον  
βεβρίθει λήνεσσιν ἐπηρεφές. (...) Arg. 4.174-7

\* ἐφύπερθε δ' Merkel: ἐφύπερθεν Ω

As large as the hide of a yearling ox or of the deer which hunters call the *achaiines*, so great it was, all golden, and its fleecy covering was heavy with wool. (tr. Race)

In this same passage in which the size and weight (βεβρίθει, 177) of the fleece is described, the exclusiveness of its wool is emphasized (ἄωτον, “fine wool”). Again, Apollonius seems to allude to the poetics of Callimachus, who uses the word to denote the exclusive poetry that he promotes (*H. Ap.* 112; quoted in Section 2.5 above).<sup>167</sup>

So the climax of the Callimachean epic mission, the acquisition of the Golden Fleece, is associated with the marriage of Jason and Medea in a simile concerning the Fleece. At the same time this simile emphasizes the Callimachean nature of the epic

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<sup>167</sup> Kouremenos 1996, 240 defends the allusions to Callimachus as follows: “The interpretation of λεπταλέος and ἄωτον as allusions to Callimachean poetics is not unjustified. These words refer to key-notions of Callimachean poetics, and their presence in small-scale non-Homeric similes which are juxtaposed with large-scale Homeric ones suggests poetological concerns. Moreover, the language of this simile shows a feature which unmistakably Hellenistic: words rare in earlier poetry and *hapax legomena* in Apollonius (...).” Kouremenos, who concentrates on the programmatic significance of similes in the *Argonautica*, does not interpret the allusions to Callimachus as symbolizing the entire epic, as I do. Kouremenos’ interpretation of the κύκλα (151, 161), the spirals of the dragon that has been defeated a few lines earlier – as well as the application of the verb ἐλίσσειν (~ *Aet.* fr. 1.5 Pf.: ἐλ[ίσσω] to their movement – as referring to “anti-Callimachean”, “cyclic” poetry (p. 241) reinforces my interpretation. I do not agree, however, with Kouremenos’ premise (based on a misguided reading of Callimachus’ *H. Ap.* 106-9) that “Callimachus attacked not only the Homeric ‘epigons’ but also Homer himself” (p. 234, n. 2). This causes him to see “a fundamental difference between Callimachus and Apollonius” (p. 250), as the latter combines Homeric and Callimachean influences. As I have tried to show earlier, Apollonius and Callimachus are *both* largely indebted to Homer, the quality of whose poetry they do not question. The difference between the two poets lies in the answer to the question how to deal with (imitation of) Homer. See Ch. 2, Section 2 for yet another answer to this question, by Theocritus in his bucolic poetry.

## Chapter 1

through the hinted metapoetical symbolism of the fleece. When we now return to the abduction of Hylas, we see that something similar is happening there, in a similarly crucial moment in the epic. The scene constitutes another, albeit provisional climax, as it ensures the departure of Heracles from the epic. Again this climax is associated with marriage, for the full moon suggests that the nymph, by abducting Hylas, consumes her love.<sup>168</sup> The implied marriage is closely associated with the spring, which, as I argued, symbolizes Apollonius' Callimachean epic. This is very similar to the situation in book 4, where marriage is closely related to another symbol of the *Argonautica*, the Golden Fleece.

Hylas' abduction can, then, arguably be seen as a prefiguration of the epic's main objective, Jason's acquisition of the Golden Fleece. The transformed Hylas himself can be seen as a kind of precursor of the successful love hero that Jason will eventually become. In fact, in the Hylas episode, the epic has taken an important step in the "right" direction, by causing an important threat to the epic to leave. Hylas' entry into the spring, which symbolizes Apollonius' Callimachean epic, and the concomitant leaving behind of Heracles, also reflect Apollonius' attitude towards heroic-epic poetry, and Homer in particular, which, as Apollonius realizes after the first book, he has to leave behind. Although Apollonius tried to write heroic epic in the course of the first book, the Homeric-epic fight at Cyzicus turned into the slaughter of friends, and in a Homeric rowing contest Heracles posed a great danger to the Argo. In hindsight, the Lemnos episode already revealed the way the epic was destined to go, but Heracles could then still steer the epic in another, more heroic, direction.

According to this interpretation Hylas is, like Jason, a *mise en abyme* of Apollonius' poetic persona. Hylas' switch from a pederastic love affair with Heracles to union with the nymph can be read as the final step in Apollonius' gradual maturation and

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<sup>168</sup> As Bremer (1987: 424) comments on the passage: "Full moon accompanies the consummation of her love."

independence as a poet with regard to his model Homer.<sup>169</sup> The metapoetical interpretation of this transition is reinforced by the fact that the pederastic relationship between Heracles and Hylas is modelled on the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus.<sup>170</sup> Admittedly, Homer did not explicitly describe their relationship as pederastic, but this is how it was interpreted by many post-Homeric writers,<sup>171</sup> including Apollonius himself, who in *Arg.* 3.744-60 models Medea's insomnia, with its clear erotic dimension, on that of Achilles, yearning for the dead Patroclus in *Iliad* 24.1-13.<sup>172</sup> The pederastic relationship between Heracles and Hylas betrays a similar erotic interpretation of Homer's Achilles and Patroclus by Apollonius. It can therefore be argued that the love affair between Heracles and Hylas is an evocation of Homer's heroic-epic world, whereas the union between Hylas and the nymph has Callimachean associations. In this way Hylas' switch from Heracles to the nymph symbolizes Apollonius' own switch to a new kind of epic, one that requires a different kind of heroism, as demonstrated by Jason later on in the

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<sup>169</sup> Perhaps the nymph can be interpreted as a Muse in this context (see Albis 1996, 108 on "the Hellenistic association of Water Nymphs with the Muses). The relationship between the nymph and Aphrodite (who makes her fall in love: *Arg.* 1.1232-3) could also point in this direction, as the goddess is also associated with poetic inspiration in the proem to book 3, where she is named in combination with the Muse Erato (*Arg.* 3.3-4). See also Albis 1996, 105-14 on Apollonius' association of Thetis (in 4.838-41), the Nymphs of Libya (in 4.1318-32) and the Hesperides (in 4.1398-9) with the Muses. See also Ch. 2, p. 108 with n. 321 for the way Theocritus' nymphs can become Muses of his bucolic poetry.

<sup>170</sup> See DeForest 1994, 65-6: "Hylas corresponds to Patroclus both as the male friend of the hero and – according to post-Homeric versions – as his lover." (p. 65) Cf. also Beye 1982, 95-6: "If Apollonius emphasizes Heracles' more ridiculous qualities, it is not to ridicule pederasty so much as to mock the old-fashioned heroic, conservative, perhaps even Colonel Blimp-like cast of mind that accompanied it, seen from the vantage point of Alexandria a century and a half later [*than the Greek city-states*]. But, of course, Apollonius makes pederasty comical and therefore rather inconsequential in order to set the stage for the more serious, consequential heterosexual love affair that lies ahead. Men *do* grow up." Although I agree with Beye that pederasty is regarded by Apollonius as outdated, I do not agree with the negative evaluation that Heracles is ridiculed for his behaviour; he is just revealed as out of place in this new (poetic) world, with new heroic ideals.

<sup>171</sup> See Sanz Morales & Laguna Mariscal 2003 for Chariton's interpretation of the relationship as pederastic. Other writers mentioned by them include Aeschylus (*Myrmidons*, *TrGF* 3, 135-6 Radt), Plato (*Symp.* 179e-180b), Aeschines (*Against Timarchus* 1.142), Theocritus (*Id.* 19.34), Martial (11.43.9-10), Meleager (*AP* 12.217) and Pseudo-Lucian (*Am.* 54).

<sup>172</sup> See Laguna Mariscal & Sanz Morales 2005 for Apollonius's interpretation of the relationship between the two as erotic by modelling the insomnia of Medea in *Arg.* 3.744-60, with its clearly erotic dimension, on that of Achilles, yearning for the dead Patroclus in *Il.* 24.1-13.

story.<sup>173</sup> This does not imply that Apollonius renounced his Homeric heritage. As a Callimachean, Apollonius would have regarded Homer as his poetical teacher, and this, in fact, seems to be implied in line 1.1211: δὴ γὰρ μιν τοίοισιν ἐν ἥθεσιν αὐτὸς ἔφεοβεν. “For in such habits had Heracles himself raised him [*Hylas*].” Like Hylas and Jason, however, it is time for Apollonius to mature and find his own poetical niche.

In the epic that has been deeply influenced by the *Argonautica*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*,<sup>174</sup> a similar emancipation occurs. This supports the interpretation suggested above.<sup>175</sup> As A. Deremetz and W. Kofler have shown,<sup>176</sup> Aeneas’ voyage from Homeric Troy to Rome can be read metapoetically as the *Aeneid*’s gradual maturation as a new, Roman epic. His father Anchises here plays a role similar to that of Heracles in the *Argonautica*, as has been observed by C.R. Beye:<sup>177</sup>

[T]hat Apollonius faults Heracles while admiring him seems to me to be the better mode of interpretation, and the one suggested by Virgil whose use of Anchises seems modelled upon this Heracles figure. In the *Aeneid* Anchises, who is much prized, nonetheless mistakes the direction of the voyage and shortly thereafter dies. He is clearly out of the past whereas Aeneas must march into the future. That is the truth behind Heracles’ mad dash out of this narrative and Jason’s survival in it.

This metapoetical interpretation of Hylas and Heracles in the *Argonautica* is anticipated by Apollonius in a digression which immediately follows the statement

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<sup>173</sup> Cf. also Beye 2006, 201 on the relationship between Jason and Hylas: “Just as Jason seems to have lost his virginity with Hypsipyle, to have become authoritative and active through adult masculine sexuality, so Hylas, on the other side of the coin, has left the shelter and comfort of a strong male protector to be seduced into the vast unknown pool of water, and possibly to some kind of death, by a woman. Jason will replicate this frightening immersion in the unknown (3.1194ff.) when on the night before he meets the contest of the bulls, following Medea’s instructions, he goes naked into a pool and then, wrapped in a robe given by Hypsipyle, makes sacrifice to the dread goddess Hecate, whose frightening apparition Apollonius describes in detail.”

<sup>174</sup> See esp. Nelis 2001 for a thorough analysis of the pervasive influence of the *Argonautica* on the *Aeneid*.

<sup>175</sup> For the possibility to use later texts to interpret earlier ones, “retrospective interpretation”, see also Introduction, n. 41.

<sup>176</sup> Deremetz 2000; Kofler 2003, 63-74.

<sup>177</sup> Beye 1982, 184 (n. 22).

quoted above about Heracles being Hylas' teacher, and which explains how the two met:

δὴ γάρ μιν τοίοισιν ἐν ἤθεσιν αὐτὸς ἔφερβεν,  
νηπίαχον τὰ πρῶτα δόμων ἐκ πατρὸς ἀπούρας,  
δίου Θειοδάμαντος, ὃν ἐν Δρυόπεσσι ἐπεφνευ  
νηλειῶς βοὸς ἀμφὶ γεωμόρου ἀντιόωντα.  
ἦτοι ὁ μὲν νειοῖο γύας τέμνεσκεν ἀρότρῳ  
Θειοδάμας ἀνὴρ βεβολημένος· αὐτὰρ ὁ τὸν γε  
βοῦν ἀρότην ἦνωγε παρασχέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα.  
ἴετο γὰρ πρόφασιν πολέμου Δρυόπεσσι βαλέσθαι  
λευγαλέην, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι δίκης ἀλέγοντες ἔναιον.  
ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν τηλοῦ κεν ἀποπλάγξειεν αἰοιδῆς. Arg. 1.1211-20

For in such habits had Heracles himself raised him [*Hylas*], ever since he took him as an infant from the palace of his father, noble Theiodamas, whom he ruthlessly killed among the Dryopians for opposing him over a plowing ox. Now Theiodamas, stricken with pain, was cleaving his fallow fields with a plow, when Heracles ordered him to hand over the plowing ox against his will. For he was eager to create a dire pretext for war against the Dryopians, because they lived there with no concern for justice. But these things would divert me far from my song. (tr. Race)

At the end of this digression, Apollonius' poetical persona himself intrudes the narrative by stating that "these things would divert me far from my song." Apollonius here uses the verb ἀποπλάζω ("lead away"), which is quite remarkable, as it is the only occurrence of the verb in the active voice. Otherwise, it always occurs as an aorist passive.<sup>178</sup> In three of four of these instances in the *Argonautica*, the verb, in the sense "go away from" or "leave behind", is used in connection with Heracles:<sup>179</sup> at the end of the Hylas episode, in Glaucus' speech (1.1325: ἀποπλαγχθέντες ἔλειφθεν, "they [*Heracles, Polyphemus and Hylas*] wandered off and were left behind"; tr. Race), at 2.957, where there is mention of three characters who were separated from Heracles (Ἡρακλῆος ἀποπλαγχθέντες) during his

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<sup>178</sup> Ardizzoni 1967, 263 (ad loc.): "Solo A., in questo solo luogo adopera ἀποπλάζω all'attivo. Il verbo, sempre all'aoristo passivo ἀπεπλάγχθη, ricorre in Omero (...), in Empedocle (...), e nello stesso Apollonio (...)."

<sup>179</sup> Albis 1996, 62.

expedition to the Amazons, and at 2.774-5, where king Lycus, on hearing that the Argonauts have left Heracles behind, reacts thus: ὦ φίλοι, οἷοι φωτὸς ἀποπλαγχθέντες ἀρωγῆς | πείρετ' ἐς Αἰήτην τόσσον πλόον. "O my friends, what a man it was whose help you have lost as you undertake such a long voyage to Aeetes!" The verb is in this way associated with separation from Heracles, which in the Hylas episode acquires a very metapoetical dimension, as we have seen, for Glaucus, in his revelatory speech at the end of the Hylas episode, makes it very clear that Heracles belongs in another epic (see pp. 56-7 above).<sup>180</sup> When Apollonius interrupts his digression in the Hylas, he makes a similar statement, through which he creates "a ring composition framing the Hylas episode".<sup>181</sup> The story which Apollonius does not want to tell, as it distracts him from his own ἀοιδή, is part of another kind of epic dealing with Heracles' heroic feats, a *Heracleia*, to which, as Glaucus states later, Heracles returns after his departure from the *Argonautica*. Apollonius thus already metapoetically announces what he will do immediately afterwards: write Heracles out of his epic, because he is too heroic.

### 3.5. Apollonius and Callimachus on Heracles

The story about Heracles and Hylas' father Theiodamas was also told by Callimachus in the first book of his *Aetia*, and a comparison of the two accounts provides an interesting opportunity to compare the different approaches of these "Callimachean" poets with regard to Heracles. Unfortunately, only fragments (fr. 24-5 Pf.) and scholia remain of Callimachus' account, and we cannot be sure that Hylas was also mentioned. Probably, the story was told because of its similarity to the preceding one, concerning the origin of the sacrifice to Heracles at Lindos (fr. 22-3 Pf.), which also dealt with Heracles killing the bull of a farmer because of his

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<sup>180</sup> Although the other example, *Arg.* 1.315-6, has nothing to do with Heracles, it has a similar metapoetical dimension in that "[t]he form of ἀποπλάζω signals [a] break, showing that the narrative is now moving off in a different direction, that the poet is taking a new path of song" (Albis 1996, 63).

<sup>181</sup> Albis 1996, 62.

appetite, and which was in fact often confused with the story of Heracles and Theiodamas.<sup>182</sup> The scholia make the connection between the two episodes very clear:

]ασθαι Λίνδιοι κ(αὶ) τοῦτο[  
α]ὐτοῖς. π(αρα)τίθεται δ(ὲ) κ(αὶ) ἄλλ[ον μῦθον τῷ προειρημένῳ  
ὄ]μοιον, ἥνικα ἀπ' Αἰ[τωλίας φεύγων ὁ Ἡρακλῆς  
]π(ερι)έτυχεν Θειοδά[μαντι *Schol. Flor. on Aet. fr. 22-5 Pf., 50-3*  
*(Pfeiffer 1949-53, I, 31)*

51 suppl. N.-V.; 52 suppl. Pf.; 53 suppl. Pf.

... Lindians and that ... and an[other tale] similar [to the one just told] is set beside it, how [Heracles fleeing] from Ai[tolia] fell in with Theiodamas ...  
(tr. Nisetich, except for the first line)

So Callimachus' focus is on Heracles, and if Hylas featured at all in the story, his role is likely to have been of secondary importance. Nevertheless, apart from the general similarities, there is clear intertextual contact between the two episodes.<sup>183</sup> I think Apollonius alludes to Callimachus to express metapoetically how he differs from Callimachus in his treatment of Heracles.<sup>184</sup> Whereas Apollonius depicts Heracles as rather brutal in his behaviour against Theiodamas and refuses to digress on his civilizing action against the Dryopians that follows<sup>185</sup> (if it can be called civilizing at

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<sup>182</sup> See Fraser 1972, I, 722-3; Harder 2010, II, on *Aet. fr. 22-3c H*. Despite the similarities between the Callimachean versions of the stories, Heracles is (unlike in Apollonius' version) acting on behalf of his hungry son Hyllus in the Theiodamas episode and not, as in the Lindus episode, for himself.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. e.g. ἄνωγα (*Aet. fr. 24.9 Pf.*) ~ ἦνωγε (*Arg. 1.1217*). Apollonius also alludes to the preceding episode concerning Heracles at Lindos (γεωμόρου ... γύας τέμνεσεν, *Arg. 1.1214f.* ~ τέμνοντα ... αὐλακα γειομόρου, *Aetia*, fr. 22 Pf.), by which he shows that he has seen the close connection between the two episodes. See also Cameron 1995, 250, with n. 81 on this allusion. On the contact between Apollonius' and Callimachus' Theiodamas stories (also including the brief allusion in Callimachus' *H. Art.* 160-1), see e.g. Ardizzoni 1935; Corbato 1955, 7-12; Köhnken 1965, 46-56; Barigazzi 1976; Clauss 1993, 189-91; Harder 2010, II, on *Aet. fr. 24-25d H*.

<sup>184</sup> Although I see Apollonius as alluding to Callimachus here, the direction of allusion could be reversed without implications for the metapoetical dimension of both texts. See also pp. 29-30 above for my approach to the problematic relative chronology of Hellenistic poetry in general and Apollonius and Callimachus' in particular.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Harder 2010, II, on fr. 24-5d H: "(...) 1213-17 create an unfavourable impression of Heracles: the excuse of Hyllus' hunger is lacking and 1214 νηλειῶς is quite emphatic. This impression is subsequently corrected by the explanation in 1218f., which shows Heracles as a champion of civilization, but then the reader is left in the dark about the outcome of the war, because the narrator refuses to digress about it."

all),<sup>186</sup> Callimachus' fragments suggest that the hero is acting in a more civilized manner in the parallel passage in the *Aetia*. There, for instance, Heracles is not acting egoistically (as in Apollonius' version) but on behalf of his hungry son Hyllus, and Theiodamas seems to start the war against Heracles, not vice versa.<sup>187</sup> The hero's behaviour has thus radically changed, for in the preceding Lindos episode, which, as we have seen, is closely connected with the Theiodamas episode, he was still depicted as a brute.<sup>188</sup> Heracles is even contrasted with Callimachean poetics there, for when the Lindian farmer reproaches Heracles for killing his ox, the hero does not listen:

ὦς ὁ μὲν ἔνθ' ἠρᾶτο, σὺ δ' ὡς ἀλὸς ἦχον ἀκούει  
 Σιελλὸς ἐνὶ Τμαρίοις οὖρεσιν Ἰκαρίης,  
 ἠιθέων ὡς μάχλα φιλήτορος ᾠτα πενιχροῦ,  
 ὡς ἄδικοι πατέρων υἱέες, ὡς σὺ λύρης  
 – ἔσσι γὰρ οὐ μάλ' ἐλαφρός, ἅ καὶ Λίνος οὐ σ' ἔχε λέξαι –<sup>189</sup>  
 λυγρῶν ὡς ἐπέων οὐδὲν [ὀπι]ζόμενος Aet. fr. 23.2-7 Pf./25.2-7 M

So he [*the farmer*] cursed then, but you [*Heracles*] did not listen, as the Selloi on Mt. Tmarus hear the sound of the Icarian sea, as the wanton ears of youth hear needy lovers, as unjust sons their fathers, as you the lyre – for you were not easy and Linus could not tell you anything – respecting not at all the dire words ... (tr. Stephens 2002/3, 20)

In lines 5-6, Callimachus seems to refer to the “proverbial example of the lack of musicality – an ass listening to the lyre”.<sup>190</sup> This reminds us of the prologue of the

<sup>186</sup> See Clauss 1993, 190: “Heracles uses his encounter with the wretched Theiodamas – there is no mention of a hungry Hyllus – as a grim pretext (πρόφασιν ... λευγαλήην, 1218-9) for war against the unjust Dryopians. Even granting the low moral status of the Dryopians, Heracles' instigation of the war nonetheless evinces an equal disregard for justice; for he took it upon himself to begin a war by murdering an innocent plowman over a draft animal that, in fuller accounts of the story, he then ate.”

<sup>187</sup> See the scholion on A.R. *Arg.* 1.1212: ὁ δὲ Θειοδάμας ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐστράτευσε καθ' Ἡρακλέους (“Theiodamas went to the city and made war against Heracles”; tr. Nisetich). As this is not told by Apollonius, the scholiast seems to refer to Callimachus' version of the story, which, as his last remark on Apollonius' passage shows, is apparently known to him: τούτων δὲ καὶ ὁ Καλλίμαχος μὲμνηται. “Of these things Callimachus too makes mention.” (tr. Nisetich).

<sup>188</sup> See e.g. Harder 2010, II, on fr. 24-25d H: “As presented by Callimachus this story seems to correct the unfavourable impression of Heracles' behaviour in the story of the Lindian farmer (...).”

<sup>189</sup> Pfeiffer 1949-53 prints the end of line 6 as λι ος ουσεχελέξ..-, but approves of the restoration of Wilamowitz in his apparatus; Massimilla (1996) prints the text with restoration, as it stands here.

*Aetia*, where Callimachus associates his own poetry with the “clear sound of the cicada” (λιγὺν ἦχον | τέττιγος, 29-30), which he contrasts to the braying of asses (θόρουβον (...) ὄνων, 30). Heracles is thus associated with the un-Callimachean sound of asses, heroic poetry, which is reinforced by his characterization as οὐ μάλ’ ἐλαφρός (6), the opposite of the Callimachean poetical ideal λεπτότης.<sup>191</sup> As A. Ambühl has shown, however, “in the first book of the book of the *Aetia*, we witness the gradual transformation of Heracles from a barbarian into a civilized hero. By the beginning of the third book, this poetic process is brought to its logical conclusion. By developing Heracles as a figure of Callimachean narrative, Callimachus is also giving us a narrative of his own poetics”.<sup>192</sup> In Callimachus’ Theiodamas episode, Heracles has taken the first step to his transformation into a civilized as well as Callimachean hero. Apollonius seems to have combined Callimachus’ Lindus and Theiodamas episodes,<sup>193</sup> but he refuses to digress on Heracles’ civilizing and Callimachean aspects, leaving that, as it were, to Callimachus; Apollonius’ Heracles stays consistently in his traditional and un-Callimachean role.

So although Apollonius and Callimachus agree on their evaluation of the traditionally heroic Heracles and the type of poetry he represents, their approaches towards the hero differ significantly. Whereas Callimachus gradually changes and appropriates the old hero to symbolize his own poetics and his gradually maturing attitude towards the heroic-epic literary tradition, Apollonius’ Heracles remains the symbol of Homeric, heroic-epic poetry, who has to leave the Callimachean epic to re-enter his own poetic world. It is rather Hylas and Jason who act as Apollonius’ representations, gradually maturing as new, Callimachean heroes in the footsteps of Heracles.

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<sup>190</sup> Stephens 2002/3, 20.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>192</sup> Ambühl 2004, 43.

<sup>193</sup> Vian 1974, 46-8. Cf. Clauss 1993, “(...) Apollonius’ version is a *contaminatio* of the two Callimachean accounts; the wicked Theiodamas of the Dryopian tale in the *Argonautica* becomes the innocent plowman of the Lindian. The Apollonian Theiodamas is not a brute but a noble man (δίου, 1213), beset with troubles (ἀνίη βεβολημένος, 1216) and pitilessly killed by Heracles (νηλεῶς, 1214).”



