NOTES ON THE PAPYRI OF APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

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Arg. 1, 219-220:

τῷ μὲν ἐπ' ἁκροτάτοις ποδῶν ἐκάτερθεν ἴρεμνάς
σεῖον ἀειρομένω πτέρυγας, μέγα θάμβος ἰδέσθαι


"There they were making their dusky wings quiver upon their ankles on both sides as they rose, a great wonder to behold".

This passage describes the Boreads. In a discussion of these lines, Michael Haslam noted¹ that in line 219 the papyrus reads ἐπὶ κροτάφοις instead of ἐπ' ἁκροτάτοις. Haslam then added that, according to ancient sources, the Boreads had wings at their feet and at their temples. Accordingly, Haslam argued that Apollonius Rhodius must have referred to the wings on the temples of the Boreads. He therefore suggested that θ has been omitted by the mss. in line 219. I would like to point out, however, that papyri often trivialized² the text. Moreover, Haslam failed to understand that Hellenistic poets did not usually narrate all the details of a given myth³. Thus Apollonius expected his readers to know the details of the myth concerning the Boreads, and therefore purposely only mentioned the fact that they had wings on their feet. The papyrus reading was invented by

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³ For the allusive narrative technique that was adopted by Hellenistic poets, cf. MPhL vol. 10, p. 51.

somebody who wanted to make the poet refer to the wings on the temples of the Boreads as well as to the wings on their feet.

Arg. 1, 234-235:

Αὐτὰ ἔπει δμῶσεσιν ἐπαρτέα πάντ' ἐτέτυκτο, ὃσα περ ἐντύνονται ἐπαρτέες ἐνδοθι νής

Translation by Seaton:

"Now when all things had been made ready by the thralls, all things that fully-equipped ships are furnished withal".

Haslam was puzzled by the text of line 235. He suggested that we should print the papyrus reading ἐπήρεες. I would like to point out, however, that the mss. once again offer perfect sense. It should, moreover, be noted that the poet has purposely repeated the adjective ἐπαρτῆς. For similar cases of verbal repetition in Hellenistic poetry, cf. my commentary on Theocritus' *Idyll* 24 (Amsterdam 1979), p. 106. For repetition in Apollonius Rhodius, cf. *AC* 1992, p. 138. It should, furthermore, be noted that at Arg. 1, 262 the mss. reading ὁξὺ δ' ἐκάστην need not be altered: cf. Arg. 1, 240 ὅδε δ' ἐκαστος.

Arg. 3, 1299-1301:

ως δ' ὅτ' ἐνὶ τρητοῖσιν ἐὕρρινοι χαλκῶν
φύσαι χαλκῆων ὅτε μέν τ' ἀναμαρμαίρουσιν,
πῦρ ὀλοῦν πιμπράσαι, ὅτ' αὖ λήγουσιν ἀντιμής

Translation by Seaton:

"And as when through the holes of the furnace the armourers' bellows anon gleam brightly, kindling the ravenous flame, and anon cease from blowing".

Haslam noted⁴ that in this passage the fire-breathing bulls are compared to the bellows of a furnace. He was, however, puzzled by the mss. reading ἀναμαρμαίρουσιν in line 1300. He stated that "bellows do not gleam". Haslam therefore suggested that we should print the reading of the papyrus. i.e. ἀναμορμφόνουσιν. Thus the bellows are said to roar as they kindle the fire.

would like to suggest that perfect sense can be made of this passage if we understand that the poet has used the verb ἀναμαρμαίρω with a transitive meaning. Hence the bellows are said to “cause the ravening fire to gleam” when they blow (πιμπράσαι). Note that the preverb ἀν- has been used to strengthen the force of the verb: cf. LSJ, s.v. ἀναεξώ (Q.S. 1, 460).

Arg. 3, 1225:

καὶ τὸν ἄρι Αἴητης περὶ μὲν στήθεσιν ἔεστο θώρηκα στάδιον

Translation by Seaton:

"Then Aeetes arrayed his breast in the stiff corslet which Ares gave him".

Haslam commented⁶ as follows: "ἔεστο, with two epsilons, is attested only once in Homer: II. 12, 464, λάμπε δὲ χαλκὸ / σμερδαλέω, τὸν ἔεστο περὶ χροὶ κτλ.". I would like to add that Apollonius has deliberately repeated a Homeric δαξε λεγόμενον. For the fact that Hellenistic poets tended to reproduce Homeric unica, cf. G. Giangrande, Scripta Minora Alexandrina, Amsterdam, 1980, vol. 1, p. 52. Cf. also Habis 29, 1998, p. 394.

Arg. 1, 1057:

ήματα δὲ τρία πάντα γόων τιλλοντὸ τε χαῖτας κείροντο P.Oxy.

Translation by Seaton:

"And for three whole days they lamented and rent their hair".

Haslam⁷ compared this line with Homer, Od. 24, 46 δάκρυα θερμὰ χέον δαναοὶ κείροντο τε χαίτας. He then added that at Od. 24, 46 κείροντο is a

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⁵ Cf. LSJ, s.v. λάμπω II: "trans., cause to shine". Similarly, φαίνω can mean either “cause to appear” or “appear”, “shine”: cf. LSJ, s.v. Moreover, the verb ἐμπνέω could be used in a transitive sense: cf. LSJ, s.v. II, 1. For the use of verbs in a causative sense, cf. G. Giangrande, MPhL vol. 8, p. 75 ff.
variant reading for κείραντο. I would like to point out that the aorist was sometimes employed together with the imperfect in Homer. This use of the aorist together with the imperfect continued into Hellenistic and late epic poetry: cf. my New Studies in Greek Poetry, Amsterdam, 1989, p. 47 and 106, quoting Giangrande.

Arg. 1, 777-778:

καὶ σφισὶ κυανέοι δι' ἡρος ὀμματα θέλγει
καλὸν ἐρευνόμενος
αἰθέρος P.Amh.: ἡρος codd.

Translation by Seaton:

"and through the dark air it charms their eyes with its fair red gleam".

In this passage, Jason is compared to a star which shines in the dark. Haslam⁸ noted that Fränkel printed the papyrus reading δι' αἰθέρος here. I would like to point out that the reading κυανέοι δι' αἰθέρος recalls Arg. 3, 1265 ζοφερὸν κατ' αἰθέρος. Moreover, at Arg. 4, 927 the aether is said to be "misty with smoke" (καπνὸ δ' ἀχλυόεις αἰθήρ πέλεν). It should also be added that in the Hellenistic period the distinction between the nouns αἰθήρ and ἀήρ was no longer observed: cf. my Studies in Late Greek Epic Poetry, Amsterdam, 1987, p. 38, quoting Bühler and West.

Conclusion. Haslam argued⁹ that scholars have placed too much faith in the mediaeval mss. and have been prejudiced against the readings of the papyri. I have tried to demonstrate that the papyri can often be shown to have trivialized Apollonius' text.

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