

Sons and fathers in the catalogue of Argonauts in Apollonius *Argonautica* 1.23-233

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1. Generations of heroes

The *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius brings emphatically to the attention of its readers the distinction between the generation of the Argonauts and the heroes of the Trojan War in the next generation. Apollonius initially highlights this emphasis in the episode of the Argonauts' departure, when the baby Achilles is watching them, at AR 1.557-558¹ σὺν καὶ οἱ (sc. Chiron) παράκοιτις ἔπωλένιον φορέουσα | Πηλεΐδην Ἀχιλλῆα, φίλωι δειδίσκετο πατρί (“and with him his wife, holding Peleus' son Achilles in her arms, showed him to his dear father”)²; he does so again in 4.866-879, which describes Thetis and Achilles as a baby. Accordingly, several scholars have focused on the ways in which

1 — On this marker of the generations see also Klooster 2014, 527.

2 — All translations of Apollonius are by Race 2008.

Apollonius has avoided anachronisms by carefully distinguishing between the Argonauts and the heroes of the Trojan War³.

More specifically Jacqueline Klooster (2014, 521-530), in discussing the treatment of time in the *Argonautica*, distinguishes four periods of time to which Apollonius refers: first, the time before the Argo sailed, from the beginning of the cosmos (featured in the song of Orpheus in AR 1.496-511); second, the time of its sailing (i.e. the time of the epic's setting); third, the past after the Argo sailed and fourth the present inhabited by the narrator (both hinted at by numerous allusions and *aitia*). All four are part of an evolution over the course of an era in which the quest of the Argo figures as a central episode⁴. She infers:

All in all, the impression the many digressions create is that there was a comprehensive system of mythic-historical chronology in the mind of the narrator, to which he continually relates the travels of the Argo (2014, 527).

Her assertion raises the question of whether or not the poet's awareness of chronology also implies that he harbors ideas of major developments in the course of the generations. It has been argued plausibly that in the *Argonautica* the Argo's journey marks the end of a more violent and primitive area, beginning with the creation of the cosmos⁵ and that the generation of the Argonauts marks the end of the heroic age, as this generation is the last in which sons of gods and mortals were in evidence⁶. It is therefore worth exploring how Apollonius relates both the characters and the achievements of the heroes from the pivotal period of the *Argonautica* to those of the periods just before and just after it, i.e. the Lapiths in the previous generation, and the heroes of the Trojan War in the subsequent generation, with whom the Argonauts were connected as both sons and fathers. In order to address this issue I will investigate the catalogue of Argonauts in the first book, which introduces the heroes to the reader, spotlighting those characters who are connected with the generations before or after them, either explicitly as sons of the earlier generation or implicitly as fathers of the next generation (occasionally the Argonauts

3 — So e.g. Fraenkel 1968, 42; Levin 1971, 31-34; Vian 1974, 8; Knight 1995, 27-28.

4 — Similarly Klooster 2007, 66-67. Interestingly the *Argonautica* thus covers the same period as Callimachus' *Aetia*; see Harder 2012, 1.18-21.

5 — See Claus 2000.

6 — See Claus 2016, who also observes that by pointing to the separation between Thetis and Peleus, whose son Achilles is the last semi-divine hero born of a mixed marriage, Apollonius also draws attention to the separation of gods from mortals. Among the Argonauts there are still quite a number of heroes who are sons of gods (17 out of 52). As the gods are hard to incorporate into the system of human generations they are omitted from this article; for some pertinent remarks on this topic see Claus 1993, 32 n. 24.

will also appear as descendants or ancestors of men representing a longer sequence of generations). This investigation will examine such issues as the transmission of shared values, continuity of hereditary qualities, signs of progress or deterioration with regard to heroic qualities in the course of the generations, and patterns of growth, succession and finally deterioration owing to old age which mark the passing of the generations.

Notions of human development, and continuity of hereditary values, as well as the idea that sons could be inferior, superior, luckier or simply similar to their fathers must have been familiar to Apollonius' readers from several passages in earlier Greek literature on the heroes of the Trojan War. Such notions are also attested in the poetry of contemporary Hellenistic poets like Callimachus and Theocritus.

The superiority of an earlier generation is an important theme in the speech by Nestor in *Il.* 1.254-284. Here he memorably claims how the heroes of his youth, the Lapiths who conquered the Centaurs, surpass Agamemnon and Achilles and will never be equalled by later generations (263-268):

οὐ γάρ πω τοίους ἴδον ἀνέρας οὐδὲ ἴδωμαι,
οἶον Πειρίθοόν τε Δρύαντά τε, ποιμένα λαῶν,
Καινέα τ' Ἐξάδιόν τε καὶ ἀντίθεον Πολύφημον,
Θησέα τ' Αἰγείδην, ἐπιείκελον ἀθανάτοισιν·
κάρτιστοι δὴ κείνοι ἐπιχθονίων τράφεν ἀνδρῶν·
κάρτιστοι μὲν ἔσαν καὶ κάρτιστοι ἐμάχοντο,
φηρσὶν ὄρεσκόωιοισι, καὶ ἐκπάγλως ἀπόλεσαν.

Men like those

I have not seen again, nor shall: Peirithous,
the Lord Marshal Dryas, Caeneus, Exadius,
Polyphemus, Theseus – Aegeus' son,
a man like the immortal gods. I speak
of champions among men of earth, who fought
with champions, and wild things of the mountains,
great centaurs whom they broke and overpowered⁷.

As we shall see below, several of these names recur in Apollonius' catalogue: Peirithous and Theseus, described as absent from the expedition; Caeneus as the superior father of Coronus; and Polyphemus as a very old Argonaut. The fact that Nestor only refers to the generation of the Lapiths and leaves out the Argonauts may be explained by the fact that the Lapiths were regarded as a better model for heroes at war, similar to the heroes at Troy. Generally speaking, Apollonius' epic seems to fill the

7 — Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the *Iliad* are by Fitzgerald 1974.

“gap” left by Nestor and present a more varied picture of the Lapiths from the point of view of the Argonauts’ generation.

The first passage touching on the issue of sons as succeeding their fathers is Hector’s prayer for his son in *Il.* 6.476-481:

Ζεῦ ἄλλοι τε θεοί, δότε δὴ καὶ τόνδε γενέσθαι
παῖδ’ ἐμόν, ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ περ, ἀριπρεπέα Τρώεσσιν,
ὦδε βίην τ’ ἀγαθόν, καὶ Ἰλίου ἴφι ἀνάσσειν·
καὶ ποτέ τις εἴποι ‘πατρός γ’ ὅδε πολλὸν ἀμείνων’
ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιόντα· φέροι δ’ ἔναρα βροτόεντα
κτείνας δῆιον ἄνδρα, χαρεῖη δὲ φρένα μήτηρ.

O, Zeus and all immortals, may this child, my son,
become like me a prince among the Trojans.
Let him be strong and brave and rule in power
at Ilium; then someday men will say
“This fellow is far better than his father!”
seeing him home from war, and in his arms
the bloodstained gear of some tall warrior slain –
Making his mother proud.

Here Hector clearly voices the wish that his son will be like him and one day even surpass him. As opposed to the idea of inevitable human degeneration in Nestor’s earlier speech, Hector’s wish suggests the possibility of progress and improvement among men. A clear allusion to the passage, which helps to justify interpreting it as a background for investigating the catalogue, is AR 1.58 εὐῶ ... οὐ πατρός ἀμείνων about Coronus, who was “not better than his father Caeneus”. As in his creative reception of Nestor’s speech, Apollonius gives his own twist to the phrase by applying it to the son’s inferiority instead of the progress in which Hector believes.

In the *Odyssey* Athena addresses Telemachus in the guise of Mentor in book 2.270-295. In 270-280 she emphasizes that Telemachus will succeed in his journey if he is similar to his father; she includes a general remark about male hereditary qualities, stating that few sons resemble their fathers and that most sons are inferior and only a few are superior to them. She hence combines, as it were, the pessimism of Nestor and the optimism of Hector, but tends to the more pessimistic approach:

Τηλέμαχ’, οὐδ’ ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσειαι οὐδ’ ἀνοήμων·
εἰ δὴ τοι σοῦ πατρός ἐνέστακται μένος ἦῶ,
οἶος κείνος ἔην τελέσαι ἔργον τε ἔπος τε,
οὐ τοι ἐπειθ’ ἀλήθ’ ὁδὸς ἔσσειαι οὐδ’ ἀτέλεστος.
εἰ δ’ οὐ κείνου γ’ ἐσσί γόνος καὶ Πηνελοπείρης,
οὐ σε ἔπειτα ἔολπα τελευτήσειν ἄμενοινας.

παῦροι γάρ τοι παῖδες ὁμοῖοι πατρὶ πέλονται,
οἱ πλέονες κακίους, παῦροι δέ τε πατρὸς ἀρείους.
ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσειαι οὐδ' ἀνοήμων,
οὐδέ σε πάγχυ γε μήτις Ὀδυσσῆος προλέλοιπεν,
ἐλπωρή τοι ἔπειτα τελευτήσαι τάδε ἔργα

Telemachus, in your life hereafter you will be no coward and no fool, if indeed your father's fearless spirit has been instilled in you, sure as he was in accomplishing all that he said or put his hand to. Then this journey will not be vain or fruitless. But if you are no true son of Odysseus and Penelope, I cannot hope you should reach fulfilment of your desires. Few children are just what their father was; they are mostly worse, seldom better. But since in truth in your life hereafter you are to be no coward and no fool, and the wisdom of Odysseus has not altogether forsaken you, I am in goods hopes that you will achieve your purpose⁸.

Later Sophocles' Ajax varies Hector's prayer in his own way at lines 545-551⁹, emphasizing both the importance of good fortune and the possibility of similarity between fathers and sons:

ταρβήσει γὰρ οὐ
νεοσφαγῆ που τόνδε προσλεύσσων φόνον,
εἴπερ δικαίως ἔστ' ἐμὸς τὰ πατρόθεν.
ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ὠμοῖς αὐτὸν ἐν νόμοις πατρὸς
δεῖ πωλοδαμνεῖν κάξομοιοῦσθαι φύσιν.
ὦ παῖ, γένοιο πατρὸς εὐτυχέστερος,
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὁμοῖος· καὶ γένοι' ἂν οὐ κακός.

For he will not be frightened, I think, when he sees this newly shed blood, if he is really my son and I am his father. But he must at once be trained in the rough habits of his father and made similar to him in nature. O, child, may you have a better fortune than your father, but be similar in all other respects; then you would not be a bad man.

In various early epic texts the theme of the son as an epigone of his illustrious father is also explored in the narratives about these sons, such as the performance of Diomedes as a son of Tydeus in the *Iliad* as well as the adventures of Telemachus in the *Odyssey* and of Neoptolemus in the *Little Iliad* and the *Nostoi*. As sons of Trojan heroes all evince traits that suggest

8 — All translations from the *Odyssey* are by Shewring 1980.

9 — For parallels and further references see Kamerbeek 1963 on *S. Aj.* 550-551; Mineur 1984 and Stephens 2015 on *Call. h.* 4.170; for parallels which include the notion of legitimacy see West 1978 on *Hes. Op.* 235; Hunter 2003 on *Theoc.* 17.44. A parallel from a female perspective is found in *Nossis Ep.* 8.3-4 (*HE* 2821-2822), with a more widely applicable conclusion in 4 ἢ καλὸν ὄκκα πέλλι τέκνα γονεῦσιν ἴσα ("it is really wonderful when children resemble their parents"). On the way in which Sophocles alludes to *Iliad* 6 in his *Ajax* and contrasts Hector and Ajax see e.g. Kirkwood 1965; Easterling 1984.

the beginning of a less heroic age¹⁰, one even further removed from the last generation of the heroic age to which the Argonauts belonged. The sequence of the generations of gods in Hesiod's *Theogony*, where sons surpass their fathers, can be regarded from this angle too.

What is more, awareness of these issues can be detected in Hellenistic poetry, where e.g. Callimachus and Theocritus apply the idea of resembling one's father to Ptolemaic fathers and sons in Call. *h.* 4.170 ὁ δ' εἴσεται ἥθεα πατρός ("he will have the character of his father")¹¹ and Theoc. 17.63-64 ὁ δὲ πατρὶ ἐοικώς | παῖς ἀγαπητὸς ἔγεντο ("and the longed-for son, the image of his father, was born")¹² (both about Philadelphus). Thus the notions of heredity found in these earlier texts were also part of Ptolemaic royal ideology. It is conceivable, though hard to prove, that Apollonius' catalogue, which engaged with similar issues, belonged to this discourse. A detailed analysis of the entries in the catalogue where Argonauts are connected with the generations before or after them will show how Apollonius explored a great variety of hereditary possibilities¹³.

2. Argonauts as sons and descendants

In the catalogue, awareness of the recent past is shown by references to the battle of Centaurs and Lapiths, which took place one generation before the journey of the Argo. Both the entries on the older Argonaut Polyphemus (AR 1.40-44) and on Coronus the son of the famous Lapith Caeneus (AR 1.58-64) should be viewed as references to this generation¹⁴.

Polyphemus is said to have fought among the Lapiths when he was young (AR 1.43 ὀπλότερος πολέμιζε "fought as a young man"). He is portrayed as heavy with old age, but as retaining his warlike spirit (AR 1.43-44 τὸτ' αὖ βαρύτεσκε οἱ ἦδη | γυῖα, μένεν δ' ἔτι θυμὸς ἀρήιος, ὡς τὸ πάρος

10 — For evidence and a full discussion of these characters see Sammons 2019. Another obvious epigone, mentioned briefly by Sammons, is of course Orestes.

11 — Translations of Callimachus are by Stephens 2015.

12 — Translation by Hunter 2003. In this passage the emphasis on the fact that the child is "beloved" suggests that this is not merely a claim of legitimacy as might be suggested by line 44.

13 — It should be noted that Apollonius must have chosen his Argonauts carefully in a deliberate scholarly effort, as there were many more characters with claims to be an Argonaut than fitted in the Argo; see on this issue Hunter 1993, 127 and for a survey of the various lists and names of Argonauts Scherer 2006, 43-56. For other useful earlier discussions of the catalogue, from which this analysis has profited, see Fraenkel 1968, 40-54; Vian 1974, 4-10; Clauss 1993, 26-36; Thalmann 2011, 54-57.

14 — See also Händel 1954, 20: "Durch die Jugendgeschichte des Polyphems soll wohl das zeitliche Verhältnis des Argonautenzugs zum Kentaurenkampf hergestellt werden" adding that in this way Apollonius also offers an argument for the fact that he let Coronus take part in the Argo's journey and not his father Caeneus, who took part in the battle against the Centaurs and was therefore part of the earlier generation.

περ “at this point, though, his limbs were already heavy, but his heart still remained as warlike as before”). Readers of Apollonius would probably remember that the battle of the Lapiths against the Centaurs was also recalled by Nestor in *Iliad* 1 (quoted in 1). Nestor places great emphasis on the Lapiths’ extraordinary strength, as does Apollonius – with the phrase ἐρισθενέων Λαπιθάων (“the mighty Lapithae”, AR 1.41) – and also includes Polyphemus in his list. The brief passage in the *Argonautica* thus shows how the movement from youth to old age within a man’s life coincides with the sequence of generations. Although Polyphemus’ warlike heart makes him join the Argonauts, the description of his old age makes him part of the earlier generation and could foreshadow the story of his death among the Chalybes in AR 4.1472-1475, which seems to emphasize that he was very old when he joined the Argonauts.

The battle of the Lapiths against the Centaurs is also referred to in the entry on Coronus in AR 1.57-64, describing the exploits of his father Caeneus, who was beaten into the ground by the Centaurs while still alive¹⁵. Here the idea that the generation of Lapiths was extremely strong, which was already brought to the reader’s attention in the entry on Polyphemus, is noted explicitly in 58 ἐοῦ ... οὐ πατρὸς ἀμείνων (“no braver than his father”). The claim that Coronus was not better than his father recalls the passages on hereditary qualities quoted in section 1, especially Hector’s remark in *Il.* 6.479 πατρὸς ... πολλὸν ἀμείνων (“far better than his father”).

Another character from the generation before the Argonauts is Periclymenus (AR 1.155-160), the eldest son of Neleus from Pylos. He is hence an elder brother of Nestor¹⁶, for whom the Lapiths were the contemporaries of his youth. Periclymenus is then said to have received great strength and a special gift from his grandfather Poseidon, enabling him to change shapes in a fight, but in the *Argonautica* he is not mentioned again. The message about Periclymenus’ minor role could be that his skills are not wanted by the Argonauts, because he belongs to another generation now past its prime. In AR 1.101-104 Theseus and Peirithous, two other heroes from Nestor’s list of Lapiths, are mentioned and praised for their exceptional qualities: they would have helped the Argonauts greatly, but did not join the expedition.

15 — On the importance of this entry in connection with the sequence of generations see also Thalmann 2011, 56: “A connection is made here between the *Argonautika* and earlier epic poems as well as between the Argonautic expedition and the exploits of heroes of the preceding generation. The catalogue thus places its heroes within a network of interlocking stories. It locates their deeds chronologically between past and future”.

16 — Lists of the twelve sons of Neleus are well-attested in the mythographic tradition: cf. Hes. fr.33a; Σ AR 1.156-60b; Ps.-Apollod.1.9.9.

A sequence involving a longer range of generations appears in the genealogy of Nauplius in AR 1.133-138. The son of Clytoneus, he was, as readers of Apollonius would know from earlier literature (but not from Homer)¹⁷, the father of Palamedes, a hero of the Trojan War, whose treacherous death Nauplius cruelly avenged by shipwrecking the Greeks on the journey home. The entry contains an elaborate Argive genealogy, which goes back several generations and links him to the distant past: Danaus > Amymone, who had a child with Poseidon > Nauplius 1 > Proetus > Lernus > Naubolus > Clytoneus > Nauplius 2, the Argonaut. In the text the genealogy works backwards and ends with the Danaid Amymone and Poseidon, the parents of the first Nauplius¹⁸. The long genealogy has been accorded a mythological explanation¹⁹. It bears no relation to the importance of Nauplius for the expedition, as later in the *Argonautica* he appears only in 2.896, where he is eager to succeed Tiphys as helmsman, but is passed over in favour of Ancaeus. Consequently, he seems to be presented as less capable than his ancestor and namesake Nauplius, the son of Poseidon, whose exceptional nautical skills are mentioned in AR 1.138 ὅς περὶ πάντας ἐκαίνυτο ναυτιλιησιν (“who far surpassed all men in the art of sailing”).

To summarize so far: when the Argonauts are compared to heroes of earlier generations the superior strength of the earlier heroes is emphasized. One gets an impression of deterioration, either within the course of the older hero's life, as with Polyphemus, or in the sons or descendants, as with Coronus and Nauplius 2. At the same time there could be a hint that skills possessed by members of the older generation, like those of Periclymenus, are less important for the generation succeeding it. In this respect we might wish to cite recent research on the more modern kind of heroism displayed by Jason and the Argonauts, with its emphasis on harmony and communicative skills²⁰.

17 — E.g. E. *Hel.* 1126-1131 suggests that this story was well-known already in the fifth century BCE, possibly through the *Nosti*; see Kannicht 1969 ad loc. and for references also L.Käppel, in *Der Neue Pauly* 8, 2000, 755 s.v. Nauplios.

18 — The beginning of the genealogy with one of the daughters of Danaus also hints at the Egyptian roots of Nauplius and may be related to the move to Libya of the descendants of Euphemus (see section 3.6).

19 — See e.g. Händel 1954, 25-26, who observes that there was a problem because Nauplius was a son of Poseidon and Amymone, a daughter of Danaus, i.e. a character from a distant past, but also the father of Palamedes, who fought in the Trojan War and that Apollonius solved this by assuming that there were two Nauplii, whereas others gave Nauplius a very long life (so Ps.-Apollod. 2.1.5, who calls him μακρόβιος “long living”). On the confusion as to the chronology of Nauplius see also L.Käppel, in *Der Neue Pauly* 8, 2000, 755 s.v. Nauplios.

20 — See e.g. Hunter 1993, 8-45 and 162-169; Glei 2001, 6-13 (with references to earlier literature). The notion that the ethos of a hero could belong to an earlier period and is not suitable for the *Argonautica* is very clear in the character of Idas, on whom see Fraenkel 1960.

3. *Argonauts as fathers and ancestors*

As shown in section 1, there is a clear distinction between the generations of the Argonauts in the *Argonautica* and the heroes of the Trojan War in Homer. As a result, Apollonius' catalogue does not mention the sons of the Argonauts who fathered Trojan heroes, perhaps leaving his readers to presuppose that most of them had not yet been born at the time of the Argo's expedition (apart from Achilles, who, as we have seen, is mentioned twice later in the *Argonautica*, but not here)²¹. Even so his readers would recall the later sons because: (1) at a basic level the catalogue of Argonauts recalls the catalogue of ships in the second book of the *Iliad* and thus reminds the reader of the next generation of heroes in a general way²²; (2) the names of the fathers were familiar from Homer, where they appear with the names of their sons²³; (3) there are passages in which the Homeric narrator or Homeric heroes talk about these fathers at some length; and (4) the text of Apollonius contains allusions to passages in Homer in which the sons of the Argonauts figure. Thus the next generation is evoked in a number of ways, allowing readers to compare the fathers to their sons in the *Iliad* or to ponder on the old age of the now still vigorous Argonauts, an important topic in the *Iliad*, and the passing of generations implied by the portrayal of aging men.

Within the group of fathers and sons one can distinguish various categories: (1) prominent Argonauts with prominent sons in the *Iliad*: Peleus, the father of Achilles, and Telamon, the father of Ajax Maior; (2) prominent Argonauts with not so prominent sons: Heracles and Jason; (3) less prominent Argonauts with prominent sons: Menoetius, the father of Patroclus, and Oileus, the father of the Lesser Ajax; (4) less prominent Argonauts with not so prominent sons, who nevertheless get more attention in the *Iliad* than their fathers get in the *Argonautica*: Iphiclus, Admetus, Iphitus, Coronus and the non-Argonaut Peirithous; (5) the special case of Meleager, who seems to fall between the generations. He leaves no son when he dies between the Argonautic expedition and the Trojan War, where his people are led by Thoas. Thus the picture is varied, like the views on heredity in the earlier texts discussed in section 1.

21 — See also Fraenkel 1968, 42 n. 41; Levin 1971, 32. By implication also Patroclus the son of Menoetius, who in *Il.* 11.785-789 is said to be older than Achilles, must already have been born at the time of the Argonauts' expedition.

22 — Intertextual connections help to link the passages even more closely; see Scherer 2006, 125-134.

23 — See also Fraenkel 1968, 42.

3.1. Telamon and Peleus

AR 1.90-94 lists Telamon and Peleus, the sons of Aeacus from Aegina, and the well-known fathers of Ajax Maior (and Teucrus) and Achilles. The narrator adds that both come from different places, since they were exiled from Aegina after killing their brother Phocus, Telamon from Salamis (called “the Attic island” in 93) and Peleus from Phthia. One version of the story portrays them as envying Phocus for his skill at games and killing him²⁴. But the noun ἀφραδίη (translated “recklessly”) at line 93 implies an act of thoughtless folly, somewhat mitigating the act of murder without further specifying the details²⁵. In any case, both Telamon and Peleus are prominent among the Argonauts and mentioned again a number of times in the course of the *Argonautica*, in ways that seem to correct the possibly unfavourable impression created by the emphasis on the killing of Phocus in the catalogue entry. One thus gets the impression that both are complex and ambivalently presented figures, like their sons Ajax and Achilles, who in spite of being assets to the Greek army at some stage both caused difficulties to others owing to anger and intransigence²⁶.

Telamon appears as a valiant and impulsive, but ultimately reliable and loyal hero. In AR 1.1043 he kills one of the Doliones (just after Peleus has killed another) and in 2.121-122 he fights with Peleus against the Bebrycians. In 1.1289-1334 he gets angry with Jason for leaving Heracles behind, but after the prophecy of Glaucus readily admits that he was wrong and is reconciled with Jason. In book 3 we see that the renewal of friendship in book 1 was serious, inasmuch as Telamon is described as a trusted and important helper for Jason on three occasions: (1) in 196-197 Jason selects him to go with him to the town of Aeetes; (2) in 515 Telamon volunteers to take Jason’s place in the contest demanded by Aeetes immediately after Peleus has offered himself²⁷; (3) in 1172-1190 he goes to Aeetes with Aethalides to fetch the dragon’s teeth. Comparison with his son Ajax, who – particularly in Sophocles’ *Ajax* – is presented as an outsider and in the earlier *Iliad* mainly stands out as a fighter, suggests that Telamon is more responsible and involved with his fellow soldiers, and hence somewhat better than his son, though he, too, is inclined to anger. Comparison with Teucrus is also interesting in the

24 — For the evidence see e.g. Mori 2008, 212 n.82; Harder 2012 on Call. *Aet.* fr. 24.20-21.

25 — Mori 2008, 212 thinks that Apollonius presents the murder here as accidental, but it rather seems to have been an act of hasty and thoughtless anger if one compares AR 1.1332. There Telamon uses the plural ἀφραδίησιν when he is apologizing for his own behaviour towards Jason in 1.1289-1297, where he angrily accused him of deliberately leaving Heracles behind.

26 — Their ambivalence seems to mirror that of Jason and Heracles, on which see Hunter 1993; Gleis 2001.

27 — The way in which Telamon twice comes just after Peleus seems to reflect the situation in the *Iliad*, where Ajax is second to Achilles; cf. *Il.* 2.768-769.

light of Sophocles' *Ajax*. In the *Iliad* Teucus does not play a prominent role, but he is called "capable with the bow" (*Il.* 12.350), fights bravely at the side of Ajax (*Il.* 15.436-483) and takes part in a shooting contest with Meriones in *Il.* 23.850-883, where he comes second because he does not promise to sacrifice to Apollo. In *S. Aj.* 975-1417, however, Teucus behaves more diplomatically, taking a leading part in defending Ajax's right to a proper burial. Thus his devoted conduct in the *Ajax* resembles the loyalty shown by Telamon in the *Argonautica*. In the *Iliad* Telamon is only described as father of Ajax and Teucus and gets no further mention. But Sophocles' *Ajax* furnishes a picture of Telamon as a famous old man, who is both irascible and commonsensical²⁸, traits neatly linking him to the younger Telamon of the *Argonautica*.

In the *Argonautica* Peleus appears in various roles, which to a certain extent seem to foreshadow the picture of Peleus as the old father of Achilles in the *Iliad*. A number of details illustrate this aspect of his character:

(1) he appears as the father of the infant Achilles, who is present at his departure in AR 1.553-558 and destined to be better than his father (AR 4.801-802 ὡς δὴ τοι πέπρωται ἄμεινονα πατρὸς ἑοίοι | παῖδα τεκεῖν "how in fact it was fated for you to bear a son greater than his father")²⁹. He is also described as the husband of Thetis and father of Achilles in the episode in AR 4.773-881, where Hera tells Thetis that she gave her the best of the men on earth as a husband and asks her to stop her anger at him. Upon encountering these passages readers would remember not only the frequent references to Achilles as the son of Peleus in the *Iliad*, but also the passage where Thetis discloses her unhappiness with her marriage and its consequences, and refers to both Peleus, who is now afflicted with grim old age, and Achilles, who has lost his beloved Patroclus and is destined to die at Troy (*Il.* 18.428-461). The picture emerging from these complaints can be compared with the that of the already split and troubled young family in the *Argonautica*³⁰. More specifically in AR 4.805-806, where Hera says that she gave Peleus to Thetis, Apollonius seems to allude to *Il.* 24.59-61, where Hera says that she gave Thetis to Peleus;

(2) he appears as a valiant fighter in AR 1.1042, where he kills one of the Doliones, 2.121-122, with Telamon against the Bebrycians, and

28 — In Sophocles' *Ajax* the contrast between father and son is thematized in e.g. *S. Aj.* 462-465, where Ajax feels ashamed to meet his famous father, and in 764-765, where Telamon is said to have offered sensible advice to his son Ajax. Telamon's vulnerable old age is mentioned by Tecmessa in 506-507 and by Ajax in 849 and Teucer fears the old man's anger in 1007-1020. The influence of the tragic Telamon on the characterization of this hero in the *Argonautica* is worth exploring further; see also n. 33 about possible tragic antecedents of Apollonius' Peleus. I intend to explore these issues in a different paper.

29 — Cf. also *Pi. I.* 8.31-34.

30 — See also n. 6 on the troubles of Peleus and Thetis as marking the end of the heroic age.

in 2.829-830, where he aims his spear at the boar attacking Idmon. The hunting-spear he employs against the boar must be different from the large spear given to him by Chiron, which only Achilles can use in the *Iliad* and was therefore not taken by Patroclus (*Il.* 16.140-144). Peleus' employment of a spear could remind the readers of another spear of Peleus later wielded by his son at Troy;

(3) he often offers advice and encouragement and thus helps the progress of the expedition at difficult moments. His words are often crucial in keeping the Argonauts on track, as in e.g. AR 2.864-898. There, as the Argonauts are despairing of the expedition after the deaths of Idmon and Tiphys, Ancaeus approaches Peleus and together they arrange for Ancaeus to become the new helmsman³¹. This role of the young Peleus of the *Argonautica* fits in with the picture of the old Peleus in the *Iliad*, where other heroes refer to his advice to the next generation³² and his friendly and sociable behaviour. Thus in *Il.* 9.252-258 Odysseus reminds Achilles of the advice of his old father to practice φιλοφροσύνη ("gentle courtesy", emphasizing by the use of the particle ἦ in 252 that this was "truly" what Peleus told him); in 438-443 Phoenix says that Peleus sent him with Achilles to teach him to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds; in 480-484 he recalls how Peleus looked after him when he came to him as an exile; and in 11.783-784 Nestor recalls how Peleus advised Achilles always to be the best. The contrast between the behaviour of Achilles and the advice of his father, sharply delineated in the *Iliad*, becomes even clearer when the son's angry withdrawal from the battle is compared to the responsible behaviour of the father in the *Argonautica*³³;

(4) on the whole, the Peleus of the *Argonautica* is a successful and energetic young man, notwithstanding the flaws in his character as exemplified in his troubled marriage with Thetis and his exile following the killing of Phocus (AR 1.90-94). His portrayal seems to be inspired by the ambivalent picture of Peleus in the *Iliad*, which affords glimpses of the younger Peleus as a favourite of the gods, lavished with precious gifts (*Il.* 16.143-144 a spear from Chiron; 17.443-444 and 23.276-278 horses from the gods, particularly Poseidon; 18.82-85 armour from the gods; 24.534-537 riches and power from the gods and a goddess for a wife), yet

31 — Similarly in 2.1217-1225, when Argus has told the Argonauts about the dangers that await them in Colchis, Peleus encourages the Argonauts, emphasizing their prowess in war and kinship with the gods; in 3.502-515, when Jason has told the Argonauts about the task imposed on him by Aeetes and their despair considering how to tackle the rest of the journey home after the death of Apsyrtus, Peleus is the first to provide good advice which the Argonauts accept; finally in 4.1368-1379 Peleus explains that the Argonauts have to carry the Argo on their shoulders to escape from the Syrtes.

32 — On this role of Peleus (and Menoetius) in the *Iliad* see De Jong 2018, 29-35.

33 — As with Telamon one can also look at tragic sources and recall the sensible and helpful Peleus of Euripides' *Andromache*.

we see that the horses and armour are now utilized in a brutal war and Peleus has become a sad old man who will lose his son (*Il.* 19.321-337; 24.538-542).

As to Peleus' later fate as the old father of a hero who will not return from the war, two other passages in the catalogue seem relevant. Both remind the readers of men who experienced similar fates: in AR 1.97-100 the position of Alcon as father of an only son, whom he sends to excel among heroes, although it means that he has no one left to care for him in his old age, recalls the circumstances of Peleus in the *Iliad*, subtly reminding readers about this aspect of his fate, which is of course not mentioned in the entry in 90-94. In AR 1.165-166 ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἤδη | γηράσκοντ' Ἄλεον λίπετ' ἄμ πόλιν ὄφρα κομίζοι ("but Lycurgus was left in the city to care for Aleus, who was already growing old") Lycurgus stays behind to look after his old father Aleus. The wording and idea recall *Il.* 24.540-541 οὐδέ νυ τόν γε | γηράσκοντα κομίζω ("I am not looking after him in his old age")³⁴, where Achilles says that he is not looking after his old father Peleus, because he is at war in Troy. These passages again evoke the passing of generations. One can easily relate them to the passages about the baby Achilles. While at the time of the Argo's journey Peleus is a vigorous young man and Achilles a small child, in the *Iliad* Peleus will be a lonely old father and Achilles a powerful young man, albeit doomed to die young.

The prominence of both Telamon and Peleus in the *Argonautica* would seem to reflect their status as fathers of important Homeric heroes, Ajax and Achilles. The greater prominence of Peleus in the *Argonautica* also reflects the greater prominence of Achilles in the *Iliad*³⁵. When compared with their sons they seem more responsible and more involved with the general interests at stake, although their youthful folly in killing Phocus links them to the impulsive behaviour of Achilles and Ajax. Coming between the 'war generations' of the Lapiths and the heroes of the Trojan War, they seem to exhibit virtues that are more suitable to a difficult, but basically peaceful enterprise like the expedition of the Argonauts. In book 4 the picture is complicated by the fact that in AR 4.801-802 the readers are also reminded of the prophecy about Achilles surpassing his father.

3.2. Heracles and Jason

Heracles (AR 1.122-132) had several sons at Troy. Tlepolemus the son of Heracles and Astyocheia is dealt with at some length in *Il.* 2.653-670, which includes the story of how he went to colonize Rhodes, threatened

³⁴ — My translation.

³⁵ — As is clear throughout the *Iliad* and briefly stated in *Il.* 2.768-769; see also n. 27.

by the other sons and grandsons of Heracles after killing Licymnius. In *Il.* 5.627-669 Tlepolemus challenges Sarpedon as a coward and a false son of Zeus, inferior to his own father Heracles, who was one of the men born from Zeus in earlier times (636-637 πολλὸν κείνων ἐπιδεύει ἀνδρῶν | οἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο ἐπὶ προτέρων ἀνθρώπων “you are so far inferior to those fathered by Zeus among the men of old”) and destroyed Troy with only a small army³⁶. He then quickly dies at the hands of his foe Sarpedon, after wounding him first. Both men are carried away from the battlefield. In *Il.* 2.676-680 Pheidippus and Antiphus, the sons of Thessalus, another son of Heracles, are mentioned in the catalogue, but there is no reference to either elsewhere in the *Iliad*. Clearly none of these sons and grandsons was the equal of Heracles. Thus it is interesting to see how Tlepolemus addresses the notion of the decreasing merit displayed by subsequent generations in his speech to Sarpedon, while his own character reflects the impetuous and courageous character of his father, but not his father’s ability to fight a strong opponent successfully³⁷.

Readers of the *Iliad* familiar with Euripides’ *Medea* could project the killing of Jason’s sons on the pre-history of the *Iliad* and conclude that therefore there were no surviving sons of Jason to lead Thessalian contingents. There was, however, another son of Jason: AR 1.904-909 hints at a son of Jason and Hypsipyle (whom she is asked to send to Iolcus if Jason should not return). In *Il.* 7.467-471 this Euneus, explicitly called a son of Jason and Hypsipyle³⁸, sends ships from Lemnos to provide the Greek forces with wine. In 23.740-749 Achilles promises as prize in the foot-race a silver vessel from Sidon, given to the Lemnian king Thoas by the Phoenicians and to Patroclus by Euneus, the son of Jason, as a ransom for Lycaon. In *Il.* 8.229-234 Agamemnon reminds the Greeks of how, while eating large quantities of meat and drinking lavishly from a full vessel at Lemnos, they were boasting about the way in which they would fight the Trojans. There is no mention there of Euneus, but the references to wine and a vessel summon to mind the other two passages, implying that he

36 — See on this episode also Sammons 2019, 50.

37 — Another son of Heracles, who got involved with the Greeks in their first attempt to go to Troy and became well known through Greek tragedy, but is not mentioned in Homer, was Telephus, the king of Mysia. He was born of Auge, a priestess of Athena at Tegea and daughter of the Arcadian king Aleus. For a survey of the evidence on Telephus see L. Käppel, in *Der Neue Pauly* 12/1, 2002, 93-94 s.v. Telephos. Interestingly Aleus is mentioned also at some length in AR 1.161-171: he sends his sons Amphidamas and Cepheus to join the Argonauts, but their older brother Lycurgus stays at home to look after Aleus. Lycurgus does, however, send his own son Ancaeus, although Aleus tries to prevent this by hiding Ancaeus’ armour. His daughter Auge and his other grandson Telephus are not mentioned, but his machinations to keep Ancaeus at home recall his attempts to prevent the birth and/or survival of Telephus.

38 — According to Kirk 1990 ad loc. he is “probably a Homeric fiction”. Even so, he may have been familiar to Apollonius’ readers as one of the two sons with whom Hypsipyle was re-united in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*.

acted as the host. Readers of the *Argonautica* could recall this passage as a mirror episode of the Argonauts' stay at Lemnos, which included similar festivities (AR 1.857 ἄστν ... εἰλαπίνησι γεγήθει “the city was celebrating with ... feasts”), which foreshadows the sequel of this visit in the next generation.

3.3. Menoetius and Oileus

Menoetius, the son of Actor, is mentioned only in AR 1.69-70 and does not appear elsewhere in the *Argonautica*. As the father of Patroclus he is often referred to with the patronymic Μενουτιάδης (e.g. *Il.* 1.307 and *Od.* 24.77) or by his actual name (e.g. *Il.* 9.202 Μενουτίου υἱέ, said by Achilles to Patroclus) in the Homeric epics. Thus this entry would strongly remind the reader of the next generation and the Trojan War. There are also a few passages in the *Iliad*, which deal with the role of Menoetius as the father of Patroclus in more detail, so that, in fact, the reader who wanted to know more about Menoetius would need to consult the *Iliad* rather than the *Argonautica* and in doing so would be made aware of his later role as an old father of a hero of the Trojan War.

In *Il.* 11.785-789 Menoetius, here also referred to as the son of Actor, addresses Patroclus and tells him to offer advice to Achilles, because he is older, though Achilles is stronger and can claim nobler descent. In *Il.* 18.324-332 Achilles regrets that he promised Menoetius in vain that he would bring back his son to Opus, because Patroclus has died and he himself will die at Troy too. With his phrasing Apollonius subtly hints at a parallel between Actor and his son Menoetius and Menoetius and his son Patroclus in the *Iliad*, as in Ἄκτωρ υἱά ... | ὤρσεν, ἀριστήεσσι σὺν ἀνδράσιν ὄφρα νέοιτο (“Actor sent his son Menoetius from Opus to travel with the heroic men”, AR 1.69-70), he varies the usual verbs of coming or not staying behind to introduce a new Argonaut by drawing attention to the father's role. With ἀριστήεσσι σὺν ἀνδράσιν he may intimate a somewhat secondary role for Menoetius, recalling that of Patroclus in *Il.* 11.785-789, cohering with the lack of prominence awarded Menoetius in the rest of the *Argonautica*, yet at the same time he implies a notion of progress, inasmuch as Patroclus is much more prominent and important in the *Iliad* than Menoetius in the *Argonautica*. Besides, as Patroclus must already have been born (see n.21), Apollonius' readers could have recalled that, like Peleus, Menoetius left a young son at home. What is more, the two fathers, who are old and bereft in the *Iliad* and left behind in their turn, are here still young and vigorous. Apollonius hereby raises issues of heredity, repetitive life patterns and growth and decay across the generations.

In AR 1.74-76 σὺν καὶ τρίτος ἦεν Ὀιλεὺς, | ἔξοχος ἠγορέην καὶ ἐπαῖξαι μετόπισθεν | εὖ δεδαῶς δῆμοισιν, ὅτε κλίνειε φάλαγγας (“and third with

them came Oileus, peerless in courage and well skilled at rushing upon the enemy from behind when they broke ranks”) Apollonius reminds the reader of an Argonaut’s son through an allusion. His description of Oileus, skilled in the attack of fleeing enemies, recalls that of his son, the Lesser Ajax, in *Il.* 14.520-522 πλείστους δ’ Αἴας εἶλεν, Ὀϊλῆος ταχὺς υἱός· | οὐ γάρ οἱ τις ὁμοῖος ἐπισπέσθαι ποσὶν ἦεν | ἀνδρῶν τρεσσάντων, ὅτε τε Ζεὺς ἐν φόβον ὄρσηι (“but Aias the swift runner, son of Oileus, killed more than any: none could chase as he could a soldier panicked in that god-sent rout”), with similar emphasis on his skills in the pursuit of fleeing enemies³⁹. Hence these details about the Argonaut father suggest hereditary skills. Referring to Oileus as not only excelling in courage but also good at attacking fleeing enemies warrants comparison with the picture of Ajax in *Il.* 14.520-522. Terming a warrior as only good at attacking fleeing enemies would not be altogether flattering, as is also suggested by the discussion of this passage in Eustathius 3.686.18-687.5 vdValk⁴⁰. The emphasis on Oileus’ courage may, therefore, suggest that the father was braver than the son. On the other hand, Apollonius gives no further evidence of Oileus’ courage, since in the *Argonautica* the only act by Oileus mentioned is when he drops his oar upon being wounded by a feather from a bird sacred to Ares (AR 2.1033-1038).

Medon, a bastard son fathered by Oileus with Rhene, appears in *Il.* 2.726-728, and is said to have taken charge of the men under Philoctetes, who has been left behind on Lemnos (716-725). In *Il.* 13.694-700 this Medon is leading the Phthians together with Podarces the son of Iphiclus (on whom see 3.4); Apollonius relates that although he was a bastard son of Oileus, Medon lived in Phylace, because he had killed a man who was related to his stepmother Eriopis, Oileus’ wife. *Il.* 15.332 briefly states that Aeneas kills him; in 333-336 the story of his exile is told again. His short and not particularly glorious career can be contrasted with the epithet πτολιπόρθωι (“destroying cities”) attributed to Oileus in *Il.* 2.728⁴¹.

3.4. Iphiclus, Admetus, Iphitus, Coronus and Peirithous

Apart from the fathers of well-known heroes, several Argonauts are also fathers of less well-known heroes of the *Iliad*⁴². Here too one can detect various references to sequence of generations.

39 — See also Fraenkel 1968, 42 n. 42.

40 — See on this issue Janko 1992 on *Il.* 14.521-522, who also refers to Eustathius. It is conceivable that Apollonius hinted at such a discussion in his time.

41 — There is no evidence of Oileus “destroying cities”, but he shares this epithet with heroes like Odysseus (*Il.* 2.278) and Achilles (*Il.* 8.372) and the god of war Ares (*Il.* 20.152), so that it seems to frame him as a similar kind of character.

42 — The survey given here is based on the lists of Fraenkel 1968, 42 and Levin 1971, 31 (who refers to earlier literature).

Il. 2.695-710 mentions two sons of Iphiclus, the son of Phylacus (AR 1.45-48), concisely narrating their fate at Troy. One is Protesilaus, the first Greek to die, immediately after disembarking from his ship, leaving behind a mourning wife in Phylace, an episode dealt with by several later Greek and Latin authors⁴³ and presumably well known to the readers of Apollonius. The other is his younger brother Podarces, who after Protesilaus has been killed takes his place as leader of the contingent. Later in the *Iliad* the fate of Protesilaus is recalled in *Il.* 15.705-706, describing the ship he will never bring home. Podarces is briefly mentioned as taking part in a fight, together with Medon the bastard-son of Oileus (on whom see 3.3), and is called μενεπτόλεμος (“staunch”) in *Il.* 13.693. AR 1.45-48 gives the reason that Iphiclus joined the Argonauts: a family connection, as Aeson married his sister Alcimedea. This detail suggests that Iphiclus was one of the older heroes (unless he was much younger than his sister). In any case he has no further role in the *Argonautica* and thus seems of even less significance than his sons in the *Iliad*.

Il. 2.711-715 represents Eumelus, the son of Admetus (briefly mentioned in AR 1.49-50) and Alcestis, the most beautiful of the daughters of Pelias, as leading the contingent from Pherae. His horses are praised in *Il.* 2.763-767 as by far the best of the Greek army, raised by Apollo; accordingly he is a prominent participant in the chariot-race in *Il.* 23.287-650, where he is the first to offer himself and is called an excellent horseman (288-289). In the race he quickly takes the lead, followed closely by Diomedes (375-381)⁴⁴, but then Apollo hinders Diomedes and Athena retaliates by damaging the chariot of Eumelus (382-400). Thus Eumelus ends last, walking and pulling his chariot, causing Achilles to take pity on him and attempt to give him the second prize instead of Antilochus (532-538). The latter protests⁴⁵ and Achilles then gives Eumelus the harness of Asteropaeus instead, which he gladly accepts (558-565). Though the *Argonautica* says little about Admetus, the notion of his wealth in sheep is hinted at in the phrase Φεραῖς ... ἐυρρήνεσσιν (AR 1.49 “sheep-rich Pherae”). This adjective could also recall Apollo’s special care for all his animals, including horses, as described in Call. *h.* 2.47-54 and *Il.* 2.766 (τάς ... θρέψ’ “had bred them”, probably alluded to by Call. *h.* 2.48 ἔτρεφεν ἵππους “he tended the ... mares”)⁴⁶. That Apollo’s assistance turns out rather disastrously for Eumelus in the chariot race, and has unforeseen

43 — For a brief survey see Harder 2007, 415. Just possibly AR 1.45 οὐδὲ μὲν Ἴφικλος Φυλάκη ἐνὶ δηρὸν ἔλειπτο (“nor was Iphiclus left behind for long in Phylace”) is an allusion to *Il.* 2.700 Φυλάκη ἐλέλειπτο (“at Phylace ... his bride was left”) about the wife of Protesilaus.

44 — The passage was apparently famous and inspired later poets like Callimachus; see Harder 2012 on Call. *Aet.* fr. 54.8-10.

45 — See on this episode and its impact on Callimachus’ sixth hymn Harder 2019.

46 — See Williams 1978 ad loc.

and unhappy consequences for Admetus in Euripides' *Alcestis*, suggests a certain continuity of fate within the family.

Iphitus from Phocis (AR 1.207-210) was the father of Schedius and Epistrophus, who are mentioned in *Il.* 2.517-526. There Iphitus, who plays no further part in the *Argonautica*, is described as the mighty (μεγαθύμου) son of Naubolus. The places ruled by his sons are mentioned, among them Pytho, where Iphitus hosted Jason according to AR 1.208-210. Apollonius adds another ancestor by calling Naubolus the son of Ornytus, so that the full familial picture spans four generations. We find the death of Schedius described in *Il.* 17.304-311, where Hector aims at Ajax, the son of Telamon, but hits Schedius instead. The scene includes a brief eulogy of Iphitus in 306-307 *μεγαθύμου Ἰφίτου ... | Φωκίων ὄχ' ἄριστον* ("mighty Iphitus ..., by far the best of the Phocians")⁴⁷. Here the unfortunate son, not honoured by any epithet, appears as somewhat less valorous than his father. Of Epistrophus nothing more is heard.

Two other fathers are the potential Argonaut Peirithous, the son of Zeus, whose absence from the Argonautic expedition Apollonius regrets (AR 1.101-104), and Coronus, the son of Caeneus (AR 1.57-64), mentioned only in the catalogue. Each had a son who went to Troy, where they fought together, sharing a Lapith background. In *Il.* 2.738-747 we read about Polypoetes, the son of Peirithous, and about Leonteus, the son of Coronus (746 *υἱὸς ὑπερθύμοιο Κορώνου Καινείδαο* "the son of mighty Coronus, the son of Caeneus")⁴⁸, who joins Polypoetes in leading forty ships. By drawing attention to the absence of Peirithous as well as adding that Coronus was brave (*ἔσθλος*), but less so than his father Caeneus (AR 1.57-64; see 2), and making him inconspicuous among the Argonauts, Apollonius seems to counteract the favourable impression given of their sons given in the *Iliad*. There the achievements of both men clearly surpass those of Peirithous and Coronus in the *Argonautica*: Polypoetes is mentioned: first in *Il.* 6.29, where he kills a man and is called a staunch hero, and then in *Il.* 12.127-194 where the two men share a brief *aristeia* as they stand watch at the Greek gate and kill a number of invading Trojans. They are described in heroic terms with emphasis on their Lapith background, as they are introduced as *δύ' ἀνέρας ... ἄριστους, | υἱὰς ὑπερθύμους Λαπιθάων αἰχημάτων, | τὸν μὲν Πειριθόου υἱά, κρατερὸν Πολυποίτην, | τὸν δὲ Λεοντήα, βροτολογίῳ ἴσον Ἄρηι* ("two Lapith spearmen, champions, Polypoetes, the son of Peirithous, and Leonteus, tough as the war-god", *Il.* 12.127-130) and then compared to sturdy oak-trees (*Il.* 12.131-136) and to wild boars (*Il.* 12.146-150). In *Il.* 12.182-188 Polypoetes is again called *Πειριθόου υἱός, κρατερός Πολυποίτης* and Leonteus *ὄζος Ἄρης*

47 — My translation.

48 — My translation.

(“war-bred”). In *Il.* 23.826-849, when both men participate in a game of discus throwing, Polypoetes wins amid loud cheers, surpassing even the spectacular throw of Ajax the son of Telamon, who had easily surpassed Epeius and Leonteus.

Thus both heroes are depicted as contributing to the war effort and generally doing well on the battlefields in the *Iliad*. In the case of Leonteus one gets the impression that hereditary skills can skip one generation and then come back with full force in the next. As for Polypoetes one may observe that he seems to follow the example of his father Peirithous (praised by Nestor in *Il.* 1.263) in the battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths, but that according to Apollonius this father (or, possibly, his fighting capacities) had no role in the generation of the Argonauts.

3.5. Meleager

In the *Argonautica* Meleager is a young hero potentially equal to Heracles, but needing another year to grow up (AR 1.190-201), and plays no further role. At the time of the Trojan War both he and his father Oeneus are dead. Therefore in *Il.* 2.638-644 Thoas, the son of Andraemon, leads the Aetolians⁴⁹. AR 1.190-198 reminds the readers of the fragility of Meleager’s life, as his father Oeneus sends his own half-brother Laocoon with him to look after him. Laocoon’s role here recalls the way in which Patroclus and Phoenix in 524-525 accompany Achilles in the *Iliad* and thus may remind the reader of Phoenix’ role in the embassy to Achilles, where he tells the story of Meleager in *Il.* 9.524-605. Apollonius also seems to allude to this passage through verbal reminiscences as (1) in the opening words of Phoenix 524-525 τῶν πρόσθεν ... κλέα ἀνδρῶν | ἡρώων (“the fame of the heroic men of old”) and 527 μέμνημαι (“I remember”)⁵⁰ are recalled by AR 1.1-2 παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν | μνήσομαι (“I shall recall the famous deeds of men born long ago”) and (2) in 533-537 we read about the anger of Artemis, which caused the war between the Aetolians and the Curetes over the spoils of the Calydonian boar, because she was the only god to whom Oeneus had not sacrificed. She thus resembles Hera in AR 1.13-14, who was neglected by Pelias. The death of Meleager,

49 — Thoas is mentioned several times in the *Iliad* and seems a worthy replacement, recalling the early promise of Meleager hinted at by Apollonius. He kills a man, though he is not able to take his armour (*Il.* 4.527-435); he is one of nine men volunteering to fight Hector (*Il.* 7.168); Poseidon disguises himself as Thoas in order to encourage Idomeneus (*Il.* 13.215-238, including a brief remark by the narrator about his rule among the Aetolians, who honoured him like a god, and recognition by Idomeneus of his capacity of being brave and encouraging people); in *Il.* 15.281-299 he is described as the bravest of the Aetolians, a good fighter as well as a good speaker, and suggests that the majority of the men will go back to the ship, but that he himself and the other ἀριστοὶ will stand up to Hector; he is also mentioned in groups of heroes in *Il.* 13.92 and 19.239.

50 — My translations.

connected to this war⁵¹, is not mentioned by Phoenix, but implied by his absence from the rest of the *Iliad*. He was apparently too young to have much impact as an Argonaut (as Apollonius seems to emphasize), had his *aristeia* during the events at Calydon between the Argonautic expedition and the Trojan War and, though married (as in *Il.* 9.556-596 his wife plays a crucial role in his withdrawing from and rejoining the battle), left no sons to fight at Troy.

Through his own description and the references to the *Iliad* Apollonius thus presents Meleager as a representative of another major Greek mythic event. He also reminds his reader of another group of heroes, the hunters of the Calydonian boar, which numbered several Argonauts. Earlier texts like *Il.* 9.544 and B.5.111 hint at the diverse collection of heroes gathered for the hunt. Stes. *PMG* 221-222 survives from a poem on this subject that may well have contained a list of participants, but the only extensive lists are of much later date. They are found in mythographic sources, which probably go back on earlier literary sources, in Ps.-Apollod. 1.8.2 and Hyg. *Fab.* 173, and in a poetic treatment in Ov. *Met.* 8.299-323, which may have made use of similar sources. It would be worthwhile to investigate how Apollonius related the Argonauts to this group of heroes, which to a large extent belonged to the same generation, but owing to lack of further evidence there is no way to do so. Two passages at least suggest that Apollonius took account of the Calydonian boar hunt and the ensuing war: (1) the glimpse of Meleager's fate discussed above and (2) a reference to Atalanta in AR 1.769-773, where in a kind of appendix to the catalogue Jason is said to have gladly accepted the spear she gave him, but did not take her on the Argo as he feared rivalry and quarrels⁵². Call. *b.* 3.215-220 hints of stories in which Atalanta's role in the Calydonian hunt was disputed. The same image of Atalanta recurs in Ov. *Met.* 8.267-546. There a large part of the catalogue is devoted to Atalanta, who is mentioned last (317-323), strikes Meleager with her beauty (324-328) and unwittingly causes a fight between the heroes when Meleager offers her the spoils of the boar because she had been the first to hit it. Jason's considerations suggest that he avoided the kind of conflict that was reported to have taken place.

51 — See for a survey of the different versions of Meleager's death R.L.Gordon in *Der Neue Pauly* 7, 1999, 1177-1179 s.v. Meleagros [1]. An important source is B.5.76-175, where Meleager meets Heracles in the underworld and tells him about his death. As Thalmann 2011, 37 observes another hint at Meleager's death is the mention of his uncle Iphitus in AR 1.199-201, who was to be killed by Meleager and thus caused the wrath of the young man's mother Althaea.

52 — In other sources she went with the Argonauts; cf. Ps.-Apollod. 1.9.16; D.S. 4.41.2 and 48.5.

3.6. Euphemus

Just as in his portrayal of Nauplius, Apollonius hints at a sequence of earlier generations of which the Argonaut is a descendant. He depicts the character of Euphemus as an ancestor of subsequent generations, though without explicitly mentioning the names of his descendants. In AR 1.179-184 Euphemus of Taenarus, a son of Europa and Poseidon, is first mentioned. Here we read only that he is the swiftest of men, able to run across the sea without wetting his feet. But, as it turns out, he is one of the more prominent Argonauts. The reader is frequently reminded of him through descriptions of how he performs small actions. Thus he is mentioned again in e.g. AR 2.536, 556 and 562 where he holds the dove the Argonauts are taking with them and sets it free to fly through the Symplegades⁵³. Finally, in AR 4.1550-1570 and 1731-1764 Euphemus looms large as the recipient of a clod of earth from Triton and the ancestor of people who, descending from his union with a Lemnian woman, will, in the course of the generations, go from Lemnos to Sparta and from there to Thera. From Thera they will found Cyrene, an event not mentioned by Apollonius, but well-known to his readers from Pindar's *Fourth Pythian Ode*, and of topical interest for the Greeks in Egypt. Taken together the genealogies of the Argonauts Nauplius and Euphemus span the period between the time when Danaus and his daughters left Egypt and the return of the Greeks to Libya when they founded Cyrene⁵⁴.

4. Conclusion

By relating the Argonauts in his catalogue to the earlier generation of heroes as well as to the next generation of the men who fought in the Trojan War Apollonius shows how they are part of a longer sequence of generations. His epic touches on issues of heredity and continuity, progress and deterioration in the course of generations as well as on the movements from youth to old age within the life of men, which also coincide with the passing of generations: the young men of one generation are old or dead in the next.

There is a general scheme of four major events which were the focal point of subsequent generations and to which the catalogue draws attention. The war of the Centaurs and Lapiths (a period represented by older heroes like Polyphemus and Periclymenus, Caeneus, the father of

53 — Other references to Euphemus include AR 2.896, where he is one of those volunteering to steer the Argo after the death of Tiphys and 4.1466 and 1483, where he, being swift-footed, is one of a group of five Argonauts searching in vain for Heracles in Libya. See further on Euphemus Köhnken 2005.

54 — Another Argonaut whose descendants were important for Ptolemaic Egypt was of course Heracles, but there are no explicit references to the Heraclids in the *Argonautica*.

Coronus, and the absent Theseus and Peirithous) is followed by the expedition of the Argonauts. The Calydonian boar hunt and its ensuing war (hinted at by the entry on Meleager and the “appendix” about Atalanta) took place between the expedition of the Argonauts and the Trojan War (pervasively evoked by the names of the Argonauts who were known to be fathers of heroes at Troy and later in the poem by the references to the baby Achilles)⁵⁵. The period before the war of the Centaurs and Lapiths is briefly included in the genealogy of Nauplius; the period after the Trojan War is hinted at through the mention of Euphemus, but this subtle reference will become clear only towards the end of the *Argonautica*.

Within this framework the catalogue alerts the readers to various aspects of the vicissitudes of human life across the generations. Thus the genealogy of Nauplius indicates that the descendant was much less capable than his semi-divine namesake, the son of Poseidon. Here, therefore, we have a clear, though isolated, case of deterioration. As to the generation before the Argonauts, when the war between the Centaurs and Lapiths took place, here too we are given the impression that these heroes were stronger and better than their descendants, particularly at fighting, as is clearly stated in the case of Coronus. It also becomes apparent that the time of these heroes is over, as we can see in the case of the older Argonauts who flourished in the earlier generation, but now have little to contribute, such as Polyphemus and Periclymenus and the absent Theseus and Peirithous. There is also a hint that, although their qualities were perhaps not quite what the Argonauts needed, they proved useful again in the generation of the Trojan War, where sons of Peirithous and grandsons of Caeneus enjoyed military success.

Several issues seem to be addressed in connection with the heroes of the Trojan War, as becomes particularly clear when one reads the catalogue against the background of the *Iliad* (and in some cases Attic tragedy as well) and the rest of the *Argonautica*. Sometimes there are hints of continuity, as we observe in the case of Jason and his son Euneus, whose contribution to the Trojan War does not involve fighting; of Oileus and his son the Lesser Ajax, who, like his father, is good at pursuing enemies; of Telamon and his son Teucrus, who, like his father, is capable of great loyalty; and of Admetus and his son Eumelus, who, like his father, suffers owing to a well-meant intervention by Apollo. Sometimes the fathers appear more sociable and responsible to others than their sons, though they share a few character traits with them, like Telamon and Peleus, who are impetuous and fight bravely, but also act in a responsible way. Both do their best to assure that all goes well with the expedition and

55 — On the way in which the catalogue helps to embed the Argonauts' journey in this temporal scheme see also Vian 1974, 8.

thus display a somewhat different kind of ethical outlook than their sons Ajax and Achilles, an outlook more suitable for the joint enterprise of the Argonauts' expedition. In other cases the Argonaut fathers are clearly superior to their descendant, as in the case of Heracles, whose (grand) sons in the Trojan War are not impressive, or Iphitus (whose full impact, however, becomes clear only when one reads the *Iliad*). However, there are also instances of fathers being surpassed by their sons, whose impact on the fighting in the *Iliad* is much greater than their fathers' successes in the *Argonautica*, like Menoetius and Iphiclus. The picture, however, is varied. Apollonius seems to be rethinking the idea that the heroes at Troy were the greatest leaders in all respects⁵⁶.

The movements from youth to old age within the life of a single man, which help to define a generation, are hinted at particularly in the description of Polyphemus and illustrated by characters like Peleus, Menoetius and Telamon, who are still vigorous young men in the *Argonautica*⁵⁷, but known to readers as the old fathers of the *Iliad* and Sophocles' *Ajax*. The appearance of the baby Achilles later in the poem and the hint of the birth of a son to Jason will reinforce this notion of the various stages of human life.

To summarize, Apollonius reveals a subtle and unbiased awareness of developments in human fates, values and qualities in the course of generations as well as in the course of an individual human life, by signalling instances of progress, continuity and deterioration. He suggests that history is a complex matter and that there is no clearcut line of progress or degeneration, but that both may occur alternately or simultaneously⁵⁸. Particularly in his treatment of the Lapith generation and his characterization of Peleus and Telamon he also seems to imply that for different generations and their enterprises different qualities are needed⁵⁹. Thus he seems to alert his readers to the complexities behind the passages on heredity and heroic values in earlier Greek literature such as the Homeric epics and Attic tragedy, and to provide a background to the claims of Callimachus and Theocritus about Philadelphus resembling his father,

56 — See for this notion Sammons 2019, 50, who briefly summarizes: "In general the view of the *Iliad* seems to be that the Trojan War is the greatest heroic war that ever took place, and its heroes do not linger in the shadows of their fathers".

57 — This aspect of the Argonauts is emphasized throughout the epic, as the men are often called *véoi*; see on this point Fraenkel 1968, 44 n.50, who lists the relevant passages; Vian 1974, 10.

58 — The awareness of both progress and decline ties in with the conclusions of Kotlinska-Toma 2017, which are based on a wider range of texts, particularly Hes. *Op.* 106-201 and Moschion *TrGF* 1.97 F 6, which show that in the Hellenistic period the myth of the degeneration of the human race was contrasted with a more positive view of progress from primitive circumstances towards civilization.

59 — This fits in with his treatment of the "old-fashioned" hero Idas and of Jason as a "modern hero".

covertly adding a topical element to his work⁶⁰. It is particularly striking that Apollonius conveys so much information and so many insights about the major generations of heroes within the brief framework of his catalogue, appealing to his readers' knowledge of earlier texts and stories, to which the Library at Alexandria probably provided both him and his audience ample access⁶¹.

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60 — For a similar idea see Anatole Mori in her study of the politics of Apollonius, who states that she will "demonstrate that the multiple roles and responsibilities of kings and heroes in this epic draw on the real world context of Alexander and the early Ptolemies as well as material from Homeric epic, the epic cycle, and other poetic works" (Mori 2008, 12).

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