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Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* Book I, Edited With Introduction, Translation, And Commentary by Andrew Zissos, Oxford 2008, 450 pages.

Andrew Zissos has written a very learned and interesting commentary on book I of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*. In the introduction, Zissos discusses Valerius Flaccus' treatment of the myth of the Argonauts as well as the literary models and the language which was employed by the poet. There are also many notes on the manuscript tradition and the early editions. The Latin text is then printed together with a critical apparatus and an English translation. The commentary is most informative and contains detailed discussions of many textual problems. I would now like to make the following observations concerning the text of the poem.

At line 1 the poet states that he is going to sing of the straits (*freta*) which were first traversed by the mighty sons of the gods. He is referring to the Clashing Rocks: cf. line 60 *Cyaneas* and Val. Flaccus 4.711-712 *tum freta... impervia*. Cf. also Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Middlesex 1972, vol. 2, pages 232 ff.

At line 15 perfect sense is provided by the ms. reading *gentis*. This reading was favoured by Heinsius: cf. Zissos, page 91. It should be noted that Heinsius used manuscripts in order to correct the text of Propertius: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens 2002), page 166 (note 1).

At line 22 Pelias is said to have ruled Haemonia with distinguished men (*primis*). The poet adds that Pelias was now heavy due to his years (*ab annis / iam gravis*). Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *primus* II, B: "First in rank or station, chief, principal" etc. Cf. also Lewis- Short, s. v. *ab* II, B, 1: "on account of, in consequence of".

At lines 34 ff. Hercules is said to have killed the Nemean lion and the Lernaean hydra. The poet adds that the strength of both these monsters had been broken: *et ambobus iam cornua fracta*. He then points out that the anger of the sea and the dangers of the vast ocean please young men (*iuvencis / ...placent*). Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *iuvencus* II, 2: "Sc. homo, a young man."

At line 63 it is stated that due to a foreigner (*externo*) Medea gave the dragon honey which was dark with poison. In other words, Medea poisoned the dragon for the sake of Jason. Cf. 8. 97: *mella dabam ac nostris nutribam... venenis* = I gave it honey and nourished it with poison due to our friends (*nostris*).

At line 253 Hercules is said to be distinguished due to his marriages (*conspiciusque toris Tiryinthius*). Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *torus* IV, B: "Transf., like *thalamus*, as a designation of marriage."

At line 271 the mss. reading *magis* makes perfect sense. The words *omnibus inde magis calor additus* mean “then passion was added to them all due to witches.” For Thessalian witches cf. Zissos, page 384.

At line 423 the poet alludes to the boxing match which took place between Pollux and Amycus: cf. Apollonius Rhodius, Arg. 2, 1 ff. Pollux practised boxing so that the Pagaseian vessel might see him filling the shores due to carefree sport: *spectet securo celebrantem litora ludo*. The Argonauts watched the fight which Pollux won.

At lines 481 ff. the helmsman Tiphys is said to be blessed due to the stars (*felix stellis*), and to have found a use for sluggish men (*segnibus*). The poet is referring to the fact that the helmsman sat quietly in the ship. Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *gubernator* (1): *sedet in puppi quietus*. Cf. also Tibullus I, 1, 58 *segnis inersque vocer*.

At line 493 the mss. reading *adverso* makes good sense. The tigress is hunting on “hostile” Amanus (*in adverso... Amano*). Zissos notes on page 301 that Amanus, a mountain in Cilicia, was famous for brigands. Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *adversus* B: “In hostile opposition to, adverse to, unfavourable, unpropitious.” Cf. also line 518 where the mss. reading *adversis* refers to “hostile” peoples (*gentibus*).

At line 646 the mss. reading *malis* makes good sense. The poet has employed adjectival enallage. The drowning men, who are wretched, utter cries of despair. Zissos notes that elsewhere in Valerius Flaccus *malus* does not mean *infelix* or *miser*. We are therefore faced here with the employment of a semantic *unicum*.

At line 704 Daedalus is said to have sprung forth “from the bronze-resounding shore” (*aerisona... ora*). The poet is alluding to Talos, the bronze giant who guarded Crete: cf. Apollonius Rhodius, Arg. 4, 1638 ff. Talos ran round the coast of Crete three times every day, and the shore is imagined to have resounded with the noise made by his feet.

At line 751 the mss. reading *antris* makes good sense. Aeolus is said to flit about in his secret cave (*secretisque... antris*). For the cave of Aeolus cf. Ovid, *Met.* I, 262 *Aeoliis... in antris*. Cf. also Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, vol. I, page 160.

At line 767 the variant reading *perlacrimans* means “lamenting greatly”. Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *pergaudeo* (“to rejoice greatly”).

At line 848 the mss. reading *quo... monstrat* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows: “Then he teaches them what terrible punishment awaits at the left gate. He shows on which threshold Pelias is (*Pelian quo limine monstrat*).” Note the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*. For *Elysium* cf. my

Studies In The Text Of Propertius, page 172. The fact that Propertius is referring to *Elysium* was mentioned by *Burmannus*.

Conclusion. This is an excellent edition. The author has provided us with a fascinating book, which would serve as a good starting point for future research work on the poetry of Valerius Flaccus. We look forward eagerly to further commentaries of such high quality from Andrew Zissos. It should, moreover, be noted that textual alteration is often not necessary if we have sufficient knowledge of the poet's *Sprachgebrauch*: cf. *Orpheus* 28 (2007), pages 252 ff.

Modern critics have proposed many unnecessary conjectures for Statius' *Thebaid*: cf. *Myrtia* 22 (2007), page 331 ff.

Furthermore I have attempted to demonstrate that Housman and other modern scholars suggested many unwarranted conjectures for the text of Propertius: cf. *Veleia* 23 (2006), page 399.

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