

NOTES ON THE POPYRI OF APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

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Arg. 1, 219-220:

τὼ μὲν ἐπ' ἀκροτάτοισι ποδῶν ἐκάτερθεν ἑρεμνάς
σεῖον ἀειρομένω πτέρυγας, μέγα θάμβος ἰδέσθαι

Translation by R.C. Seaton (*Apollonius Rhodius, The Argonautica*, Loeb edition, London, 1955 [repr.], p. 17):

"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 κροτάφοισι instead of ἐπ' ἀκροτάτοισι. 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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¹ Cf. *ICS* 3, 1978, p. 52.

² Cf. G. Giangrande, *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, vol. 3, p. 223, and H. White, *New Chapters in Hellenistic Poetry*, Athens, 1996, p. 42 f.. Cf. also my commentary on Theocritus' *Idyll* 24, p. 39 and 112.

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:

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δμῶεσσιν ἐπαρτέα πάντ' ἐτέτυκτο,
ὅσσα περ ἐντύνονται ἐπαρτέες ἐνδοθι νῆες

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 ἐπαρτής. 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 ὀξὺ δ' ἐκάστην need not be altered: *cf.* *Arg.* 1, 240 ὦδε δ' ἕκαστος.

Arg. 3, 1299-1301:

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐνὶ τρητοῖσιν ἐύρρινοι χοάνοισιν
φῦσαι χαλκῆων ὅτε μὲν τ' ἀναμαρμαίρουσιν,
πῦρ ὀλοὸν πιμπρᾶσαι, ὅτ' αὖ λήγουσιν αὐτμῆς

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. ἀναμορμύρουσιν. Thus the bellows are said to roar as they kindle the fire. I

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

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 transitive⁵ meaning. Hence the bellows are said to “cause the ravening fire to gleam” when they blow (πιμπρᾶσαι). Note that the preverb ἀν- has been used to strengthen the force of the verb: cf. LSJ, s.v. ἀναέξω (Q.S. 1, 460).

Arg. 3, 1225:

καὶ τότ' ἄρ' Αἰήτης περὶ μὲν στήθεσσιν ἔεστο
θώρηκα στάδιον

Translation by Seaton:

“Then Aetes 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: *Il.* 12, 464, λάμπε δὲ χαλκῶ / σμερδαλέω, τὸν ἔεστο περὶ χροῖ κτλ.” I would like to add that Apollonius has deliberately repeated a Homeric ἄπαξ 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:

ἡματα δὲ τρία πάντα γόων τίλλοντό τε χαίτας
κείρου[το 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 κείροντό τε χαίτας. He then added that at *Od.* 24, 46 κείροντο is a

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.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 59.

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:

καί σφισι κυανέοιο δι' ἠέρος ὄμματα θέλγει
καλὸν ἔρευθόμενος
αιθερος P.Amh. : ἠέρος 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 κυανέοιο δι' αἰθέρος recalls *Arg.* 3, 1265 ζοφεροῖο κατ' αἰθέρος. Moreover, at *Arg.* 4, 927 the aether is said to be "misty with smoke" (καπνῶ δ' ἀχλύεις αἰθήρ πέλει). It should also be added that in the Hellenistic period the distinction between the nouns αἰθήρ and ἄήρ 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.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 54.