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Unstable Geographies: The Moving Landscape in Apollonius' *Argonautica* and Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*[*]

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Modern geological research has demonstrated that the topography of the Earth evolved through the workings of plate tectonics. Eons of gradual movement, contradicting the seeming solidity of landmarks such as mountains and islands, resulted in the geologic features we see today. Although in antiquity it was not yet known that island chains arose from the movement of the earth's crust over volcanic hotspots, the resulting earthquake-prone islands helped to put the fixedness of islands in doubt. This doubt is demonstrated by the large number of floating islands and other mobile geographical sites in ancient mythologies.[1]

Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes inherited narratives in which islands moved and rocks wandered; thus, with the Hellenistic fondness for oddities, it is not unexpected that their geography would be mobile. There is, however, a notable emphasis on these phenomena. Callimachus' Delos literally dances on the waves, and Apollonius chose to include moving landmarks although he had a choice of alternatives. While the prevalence of moving geographical formations may reflect a geological reality, it may also reflect a worldview in which the chaotic nature of moving geographical features, challenging assumptions about the solidity of rock, suggests a return to primordial disorganization.

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[1]Cook III.975–1015 collects attestations of moving landmarks, including various rock formations, Delos, Rhodes, Patmos, and the Egyptian island of Chembis that was, like Delos, sacred to Apollo.

Undifferentiated matter is equated with chaos and early phases of the cosmogony. Evolution begins with the separation of land, air, and sea from a mixed cosmic mass. In many cases, this original mass is aquatic; bodies of water are uniquely ambiguous in that they are beautiful but dangerous, a pathway and yet a barrier. Ocean, frequently described as being misty or foggy, blurs the boundary between sea and sky.[2] Similarly, clashing rocks and floating islands blend normally disparate elements in a manner that revives ancient chaos. The eventual stilling of many of these landmarks, moreover, does not create a sense of evolved order; it is not a matter of human reason triumphing over the irrationality of nature. Instead, rooting is shown to be the result of arbitrary divine action and may be of questionable benefit to the principals. Most significantly, Apollonius and Callimachus leave open the possibility of future movement.[3]

The Hellenistic treatment of mobile formations reflects a distrust of the physical world as well as a self-conscious relationship with the literary traditions that described that world. These two impulses, both arising from a sense of discontinuity between the ancient past and the Alexandrian present,[4] combine to form a deep-seated sense of deracination. This metaphoric rootlessness is reflected in the literal lack of roots under Delos, other floating islands, and the Clashing Rocks.

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[2]See Buxton 97–104 on the ambiguity of the sea; Detienne and Vernant 144–46 and Romm 20–26 on the differentiation of a primordial chaotic mass; Moret 42–44 on floating islands mediating between sea and sky; also Hunter (1996) 17 and Clauss *passim* on chaos in the *Argonautica*.

[3]Hunter (1993) 162–69 makes a compelling case for the *Argonautica* being an unsteady progression from primeval chaos towards order. Thus the passage of the Rocks is "on one hand…a triumph of Greek technology and the human spirit; on the other, it marks the original hybristic foolishness of men who refuse to accept divinely ordained limits, and is the start of moral decay" (138). I feel that Apollonius subordinates the former aspect of the journey and emphasizes the latter by depicting a still-developing world. As such, the lurking presence of chaos is not unexpected; Rabinowitz 159 states that "chaos continues to exist on the borders of the newly created world; and there is always the danger that chaos may erupt and challenge the newborn order." Clauss' discussion of evolution most closely meshes with my view. On the optimistic and pessimistic views of the Argo's passage through the Rocks, see Detienne and Vernant 170 n. 111 and Fantuzzi 127–28; Quint 53–55 discusses the stability and familiarity of formerly mobile islands in Verg. *A.* 3.

[4]Bing offers the best analysis of the feelings of "rupture and revival" that characterize Hellenistic writings.

Asteria/Delos

The most famous of the floating islands, perhaps, was Delos. Nevertheless, Delos' mobility, while a canonical part of her mythology in later times, was not an established fact in the beginning. The Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* tells of Apollo's birth and subsequent cult activities on Delos, but does not focus on the aetiology of the island itself; as a result, it offers no suggestion of its movement.[5] Pindar's poetry offers the first evidence of Delos' floating and subsequent rooting when he attests to the immortal name of Asteria for the nymph who becomes the island of Delos. A curious characteristic of Delos is her resistance to earthquakes; Pindar attributes this immobility to Asteria's act of anchoring (frr. 33c–d SM).[6] The poem contrasts Delos' fixedness (ἀκίνητον τέρας, fr. 33c.2) with her previous movement (φορητά, fr. 33d.1); it also contrasts her mortal and immortal names:

> ...ἄν τε βροτοί
> Δᾶλον κικλήσκοισιν, μάκαρες δ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
> τηλέφαντον κυανέας χθονὸς ἄστρον. (fr. 33c.4–6)
>
> ...whom mortals
> call Delos, but the blessed ones on Olympos call
> a star of the dark earth, seen from afar.[7]

By using the patronymic Κοιογενής (fr. 33d.3), Pindar reminds his audience (albeit somewhat obliquely) of the relationship of Leto and Asteria that is attested in Hesiod (*Th.* 404–10).[8] Finally, the unusual compound word ἀδαμαντοπέδιλοι (fr. 33d.8), with its adamantine prefex, implies stability, but it also encompasses the word πέδιλον, "sandal," suggesting a movement as well

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[5]It is possible that *h.Ap.* refers to the tradition of a floating island when Delos says she fears that Apollo will spurn her and make her sink into the sea (70–75); an instability that would allow the island to be kicked over suggests that it was not firmly rooted. Delos' miraculous gilding, expressing her joy at Apollo's birth (44–45), is a radical change in the island's material that could be a metaphor for the island's rooting.

[6]*Pae.* 5; the fragmentary *Pae.* 7b.42–48 also appears to link Asteria with Delos: it mentions the daughter of Koios (referring to Asteria, since, according to Hes. *Th.* 404–10, Koios and Phoibe are the parents of Asteria, Leto, and Hekate) and Ortygia (an island with a long association with the births of Apollo and Artemis, and sometimes conflated with Delos). That Delos was known for her resistance to earthquakes is attested by Hdt. 6.98, Th. 2.8, Plin. *Nat.* 4.66; see Barchiesi 440–41 on Delos' "prodigious immobility."

[7]This and all other translations are my own.

[8]Also Call. *Del.* 150.

well as a slight anthropomorphism of the island; only islands with feet would need such footwear.

Because of her contrasting characterizations, Delos offered a tempting model for Hellenistic treatments of moving geographical formations. Callimachus selected aspects of his predecessors' poetry to create his own *Hymn to Delos* that focuses more on the island than the god.[9] The poem starts by depicting Delos as the ringleader of a clique of islands that roam the Mediterranean (16–22). Apparently she is not the only island who wanders since the others, too, seem to cruise around the sea. The use of physical images such as 'in the footsteps' (μετ᾽ ἴχνια, 19) is humorously anthropomorphic; it extends the traditional conflation of place and eponymous god. In Callimachus' hymn, it is never clear whether these islands are to be considered geological formations or divine beings. The insistently ambiguous treatment of islands creates a chaotic image.[10] Callimachus soon explains Delos' mobility (although not the movement of the other islands)[11] with an aetiological story:

…σὲ δ᾽ οὐκ ἔθλιψεν ἀνάγκη,
ἀλλ᾽ ἄφετος πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεες· οὔνομα δ᾽ ἦν τοι
᾽Αστερίη τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπεὶ βαθὺν ἤλαο τάφρον
οὐρανόθεν φεύγουσα Διὸς γάμον ἀστέρι ἴση.
τόφρα μὲν οὔπω τοι χρυσέη ἐπεμίσγετο Λητώ,
τόφρα δ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ᾽Αστερίη σὺ καὶ οὐδέπω ἔκλεο Δῆλος. (Call. *Del*. 35–40)

…Need did not confine you,
you floated, released in the sea; and your name
of old was Asteria because you darted into the watery depths

[9]Haslam 117–18 notes how Callimachus has split material from *h.Ap*. into two hymns, his own *Hymn to Apollo* and the *Hymn to Delos*. See also Bing 103–10.

[10]In antiquity there was already an impulse to rationalize such images; a scholium ad *Del*. 18 clarifies: οὐχ ὅτι αἱ νῆσοι ἀθροίζονται, ἀλλ᾽ οἱ ἔξαρχοι θεοί. Cf. Zanker 28–29, 189–90 on the combination of realism and the fantastic. Modern scholarship has continued to be bewildered by this depiction of islands, from Wilamowitz II.66 to Bulloch 218–19. Among those who see the sly humor in Callimachus' characterization of Delos are Bing 91–143 and F. Williams 221–22; Haslam 118 comments on Delos as "a metaphor extravagantly reified." Apollonius discusses Makris in much the same way (4.1131–40). See also Larson 19 on the transformation of mortals into natural formations such as rivers and caves as a process similar to that of heroization.

[11]Their movement is puzzling because the narrator states that they were rocks pried up and rolled into the sea, then rooted to the seabed (30–34). A similar fate is threatened for Peneios (124–40), indicating that rooting was a punishment; thus the islands' movements seem to flout their sentence.

from heaven like a star, fleeing Zeus' amorousness.
Golden Leto did not yet associate with you;
you were still Asteria and not yet called Delos.

The proleptic comments at the end of this passage emphasize her change of name and status. Asteria presumably had another name before she fled Zeus; she then floats throughout the Mediterranean as an island until she shelters Leto during Apollo's birth, at which point she settles down and her name is changed again:

ἡνίκα δ' Ἀπόλλωνι γενέθλιον οὔδας ὑπέσχες,
τοῦτό τοι ἀντημοιβὸν ἁλίπλοοι οὔνομ' ἔθεντο,
οὕνεκεν οὐκέτ' ἄδηλος ἐπέπλεες, ἀλλ' ἐνὶ πόντου
κύμασιν Αἰγαίοιο ποδῶν ἐνεθήκαο ῥίζας. (Call. *Del*. 51–54)

But when you gave your land for Apollo's birth
sailors gave this changed name to you,
because you no longer floated unseen (A -Delos), but in the waves
of the Aegean Sea you sank the roots of your feet.

The birth of Apollo acts as the catalyst for the final metamorphosis into a fixed island named Delos.[12] The steadiness of her later existence contrasts with her earlier, nomadic lifestyle, and the emphasis on naming offers a semblance of order.[13] However, some tension between her various incarnations remains in Callimachus' playful way of describing her steadiness. Delos keeps her nymph-like characteristics as she plants her feet on the ocean floor (53–54 above), retaining the feet she had when she wandered:

ἔστι διειδομένη τις ἐν ὕδατι νῆσος ἀραιή,
πλαζομένη πελάγεσσι· πόδες δέ οἱ οὐκ ἐνὶ χώρῃ,
ἀλλὰ παλιρροίῃ ἐπινήχεται ἀνθέρικος ὥς,
ἔνθα νότος, ἔνθ' εὖρος, ὅπῃ φορέῃσι θάλασσα. (Call. *Del*. 191–94)

There is a slender island seen in the water,
wandering on the sea; her feet are not in one place,

[12]Apollod. 1.21 alters the sequence somewhat by narrating the metamorphosis of Asteria into a quail first (thus explaining the association of Ortygia with the myth of Apollo and Artemis' divine birth) before she throws herself into the sea to escape Zeus. The polis that is named after her is called Asteria, but it later adopts the name Delos.

[13]As Dougherty 159 states, "to give something a name is to stake out one's ownership of it—it is a kind of colonization." Unfortunately, the loss of Callimachus' narrative work Κτίσεις νήσων καὶ πόλεων καὶ μετονομασίαι robs us of much information about islands' name changes.

but she swims to and fro like flowering asphodel.
There the South Wind, there the East Wind, wherever the sea carries her.

At the climactic moment of her rooting, the time when she truly becomes a geological formation, Callimachus describes her in anthropomorphic terms. The emphasis on her feet extends the anthropomorphism suggested by Pindar's ἀδαμαντοπέδιλοι (fr. 33d.8).[14] After Asteria welcomes Leto, she becomes rooted, and her final words affirm her new name and identity:[15]

… δυσήροτος, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐμεῖο
Δήλιος Ἀπόλλων κεκλήσεται...
...καὶ ἔσσομαι οὐκέτι πλαγκτή. (Call. *Del*. 268–69, 273)

…I am hard to plow, but from me
Apollo will be called the Delian...
...and I will no longer be a wanderer.

The wandering island willingly gives up her freedom in order to be honored as the birthplace of Apollo. She is compensated for her voluntary rooting by becoming a destination for other travelers;[16] although she will no longer dance in a circle with her sister islands, she is eternally ringed by them.[17] She says that

[14]Gigante Lanzara *ad* 53–54 calls the conjunction of feet and roots in these two passages a redundancy, one necessary for showing the dual aspect of the island. Henrichs 142–44 finds that Callimachus draws attention to body parts throughout the *Hymns*, and claims that this emphasis is because "they are central to the anthropomorphic conception of divinity" (143). He does not mention Asteria, but her feet are clearly part of this trend; the fact that she still has feet after rooting privileges her divine form over her geological evolution. The fact that Callimachus emphasizes her feet, rather than her legs or some other part of her body, may suggest a self-conscious comment on metric feet; see Bassi 228–31 on Apollo's feet in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo.*

[15]Delos' apparent modesty about her soil quality may in fact be linked to her immobility. The narrator earlier has called her ἄτροπος (11), for which the scholia offer two definitions. The first, "ἀκίνητος καὶ ἄσειστος" ("unmoved and unshaken") refers to the belief that Delos was immune to earthquakes, and echoes Pindar's belief in her stability (ἀκίνητον, fr. 33c.4). The second, "ἀγεώργητος" ("uncultivated," supported by Mineur *ad loc*.) is a more logical definition for the context: the narrator is listing Delos' unfortunate attributes (11–14). It is possible that both definitions were current, thus connecting the concepts of immobility and lack of cultivation.

[16]Call. *Del*. 316–23. See F. Williams 223.

[17]The idea of Delos being encircled is prefigured by the narrator's image of bards circling the island with song (περιτροχόωσιν, 28). Later swans circle the island as Apollo is being born (ἐκυκλώσαντο, 250); the other islands surround her like a chorus (κύκλον

she will no longer be πλαγκτή, 'roving' or 'wandering' (from πλάζω), a word that will be pertinent to my discussion of Apollonius' clashing rocks.

Asteria's change in status parallels the female experience in antiquity, but with a new aspect of empowerment. For Greek women, as in many other cultures, marriage marks the passage from youth into maturity. Asteria settles down and receives a new name when she roots, completing her journey into "adulthood." In both myth and reality, this life-transition was often marked by the ritual of bride-theft that is seen, among other places, in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, in which Hades abducts Persephone to be his bride.[18] In such myths, the powerlessness of the young woman is contrasted with the overwhelming control of the male. Asteria, however, voluntarily alters her status; Callimachus depicts her making a carefully-considered choice.[19] The pattern is further subverted by the fact that she surrenders her freedom so that Leto may stop suffering and Apollo may be born. Her action appears motivated more by feminine solidarity or even martyrdom than as an inevitable transfer of power to a male superior. Apollo is the one who will be called the Delian; she will not take *his* name (4.268–69). Furthermore, her new role is that of nurse, not wife.[20] While a wife would clearly be subordinate to her husband and master, a nurse dominates her relationship with an infant, even a divine one.

At the same time, Asteria's wanderings recall the journeys of mythological women whose insanity causes them to roam apart from human civilization and outside the confines of patriarchal society. Such women were considered a threat to male-dominated society. Ancient gynecology associated this behavior with hysteria, a condition in which the uterus becomes displaced and causes havoc as it roams throughout the body. The cure was thought to be impregnation; only

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ἐποιήσαντο καὶ ὡς χορὸν ἀμφεβάλοντο, 301); and Theseus establishes a circle dance there (310–13). Bing 125–28 discusses some interesting implications of this imagery.

[18]Shelmerdine 34 offers a list of commonalities in this type of myth; Foley discusses this mythic pattern in her analysis of the *h.Cer.* 5–14; Lefkowitz 41–47 delineates the few choices of life patterns open to women. The myth of Kyrene at 2.500–509 is an example of bride-abduction within the *Argonautica*; her story is also told at Call. *Ap.* 90–96 and Pi. *P.* 9.5–28. See also Dougherty 61–80 for a fascinating discussion of the parallel between marriage and colonization, "institutions of integration and acculturation"; she draws upon duBois' analysis of metaphors for the female body.

[19]Haslam 120 notes that Callimachus' Asteria is far more self-sacrificing than Pindar's, whose Asteria is reluctant to help Leto until she is promised honors. In both depictions, her actions, whether motivated by altruism or greed, are clearly the result of her own decision.

[20]She is called τιθήνης (10) and κουροτρόφος (2 and 276).

then would the uterus remain fixed in place so that order might be restored.[21] Callimachus divides these characteristics between Asteria and Leto. Both of them wander, but Asteria is the one who has rejected patriarchal authority; Leto roams the Aegean in search of a birthing place and a return to social order. Leto is the one who is pregnant, but Asteria becomes "impregnated" (that is, fixed) and then nurtures the baby Apollo. Asteria's subjugation and transformation mirror the maturation process of a young woman; this change, furthermore, reflects (albeit through a somewhat skewed lens) the teleological evolution of the cosmos from chaos to appropriate order.

The most conspicuous models for Callimachus' Delos may be found in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and, most unmistakably, in Pindar's poetry.[22] Like Pindar, Callimachus focuses on the island rather than Apollo. Callimachus also imports the name Asteria and hints at the relationship between Leto and the island with a patronymic epithet. Finally, whereas the Homeric Hymn does not mention that Delos moves, Callimachus emphasizes this tradition. His version of Delos does not merely bob up and down; she scoots throughout the Aegean along with her fellow islands. His whimsical description crosses and re-crosses the line between inanimate island and animate nymph. Even when she roots, she still has feet; although we are told that this is a permanent state, the knowledge that feet underlie rock reminds us of her erstwhile movement.

The sandals in Pindar's version become cavorting feet; Callimachus presents a dancing island in all its illogical glory. While such an image is an amusing conceit, the ambiguity of such a geological formation—nymph or island?—does not allow for a comfortable world order in which nature was once chaotic and has now stabilized. The heroine's physical detachment may further suggest an Alexandrian sense of being adrift from literary and cultural antecedents. Nevertheless Callimachus takes a whimsical approach to Delos' story that renders her underlying feet entertaining rather than monstrous. Apollonius, however, uses geographical ambiguity to portray a world in which order is tentative at best and where the very foundation of civilization, the earth, can move at will. Such mobility suggests the lack of boundaries in the primeval stage of cosmic evolution.

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[21]Lefkowitz 12–25 discusses the "wandering womb." On the primeval and chthonic connotations associated with the inner organs, see Padel 99–113. Solomon convincingly argues that Delos is the geographical embodiment of the wandering womb.

[22]Despite Depew's assertion that Callimachus' allusions to the *h.Ap* are more obvious than those linked to the Pindaric models, I find the opposite to be true.

The Plotai

The first confrontation between the Argonauts and a mobile geography occurs in Book 2 of the *Argonautica*. It is a limited encounter; only two members of the crew, the sons of Boreas, are involved.[23] The Argonauts as a group meet Phineus, a prophet who is plagued by daily visitations of the Harpies that befoul his meals. The Boreads volunteer to help the old man; they are particularly appropriate volunteers because they, like the Harpies, are winged.[24] They lie in wait and when the Harpies arrive they spring into action, chasing the creatures until they catch them at the Plotai:

> καί νύ κε δή σφ᾽ ἀέκητι θεῶν διεδηλήσαντο,
> πολλὸν ἑκὰς νήσοισιν ἐπὶ Πλωτῇσι κιχόντες,
> εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὠκέα Ἶρις ἴδεν, κατὰ δ᾽ αἰθέρος ἆλτο
> οὐρανόθεν. (*Arg.* 2.284–87)
>
> Contrary to the gods' wishes they would have torn [the Harpies] apart
> when they caught them very far away at the Plotai,
> if swift Iris had not seen and darted down through the aither
> from heaven.

After Iris swears that the Harpies will no longer harass Phineus, the Boreads turn back to rejoin the other Argonauts. The islands receive a new name that commemorates this event:

> Στροφάδας δὲ μετακλείουσ᾽ ἄνθρωποι
> νήσους τοῖο ἕκητι, πάρος Πλωτὰς καλέοντες. (*Arg.* 2.296–97)
>
> Because of this mortals call them the Turning-Point Islands,
> which before they had called the Floaters.

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[23]Hurst 69–71 explains the tangential nature of this story by its position; his structural analysis of the episode finds that Iris' speech, not the aetion of the Strophades, is central.

[24]Although Hesiod says that the Harpies are full sisters of Iris and daughters of Thaumas (*Th.* 265–9), their names, Ἀελλώ and Ὠκυπέτης, suggest that the Harpies are storm-winds personified, as at *Od.* 1.241 (= 14.371), ἅρπυιαι ἀνηρείψαντο; *Od.* 20.66 and 77 show that this phrase is equivalent to ἀνέλοντο θύελλαι. With a similar genealogy, Pherekydes of Syros (7B5) claims that the Harpies were fathered by Boreas, and names a third Harpy, Θύελλα—another wind-name. This would suggest that the Boreads, the Harpies, and perhaps Iris are all brothers and sisters. Cf. Green 1997a *ad* 2.266–73, where the Harpies are considered to be largely avian in character. The familial relationship between the Boreads and Phineus further makes them appropriate saviors. Oreithyia is said to have been the mother of not only Zetes and Calais, but also a daughter, Cleopatra (yet another sibling!), who was married to Phineus (S. *Phineus* fr. 704 Radt; see Gantz 351–52. Phineus makes reference to the relationship at 2.235–39).

The scholia *ad* 2.296–7a–b attest that Apollonius' source was Antimachus, whose *Lyde* reported a similar aetiological story. The fact that the scholia do not specify the original name for these islands suggest that Antimachus also called them the Plotai.[25] Hesiod, however, attests a name change with a different original name: in his *Ehoiai*, the islands were the Echinades before they became the Strophades.[26] This suggests that Apollonius had a choice of traditional names associated with these islands, and that he selected the name "Plotai" rather than "Echinades."[27]

Omission of the name Echinades implies an omission of their myths. The islands figure prominently in two myths: those of their origins through metamorphosis and those in which they give sanctuary to Alkmeon. They appear as the Echinai in the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships (2.625–66) and E. *IA* 286–87, and the various scholiasts provide yet another alternate name, the Oxeiai. This nomenclature, like "Plotai" and "Strophades," is descriptive, referring to the islands' roughness or, perhaps, their plethora of hedgehogs (ἐχῖνοι).[28] In many instances, they are said to have been built up from silt flowing out from the

[25]The scholiast's comment *ad* 2.285 is lacunose but perhaps suggests yet another name for the islands, νήσους τε Καλυδνάς.

[26]αὕτη [Ὠκυθόη] κατὰ τὴν Προποντίδα φεύγουσα μέχρι Ἐχινάδων ἦλθε νήσων, αἳ νῦν ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνης Στροφάδες καλοῦνται (fr. 155 MW). Apollod. 1.123 reports the same metamorphosis. Hes. fr. 156 MW places the islands near Cephallenia while Antimachus apparently located them in the Sicilian Sea (Σ A.R. 2.296–97b; supported by Strabo 8.4.2, where he specifies that the Strophades are two islands located off Cyparissia, in the Libyan and Southern seas). These may not be two separate locations, depending on how broad a view of the Sicilian Sea was current.

[27]That Apollonius followed an Antimachean source is not surprising. Matthews 54–56 discusses the relationship of the *Argonautica* to Antimachus' *Thebaid*; see Wyss xix–xx for Apollonius' use of the *Lyde*.

[28]Eust. *ad* 2.625–26: ταύτης πρὸς ἕω αἱ Ἐχινάδες ἵδρυνται νῆσοι, ὧν καὶ τὸ Δουλίχιον, ὃ νῦν, φησί, Δολίχαν καλοῦσι, καὶ αἱ Ὀξεῖαι καλούμεναι νῆσοι, ἃς θοὰς ἐν Ὀδυσσείᾳ εἶπεν ὁ ποιητής. St.Byz. 292.10 offers the suggestion about the large number of hedgehogs: διὰ τὸ τραχὺ καὶ ὀξύ, παρὰ τὸν ἐχῖνον, ἢ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἔχειν ἐχίνων. However, there is no reason to think that the name reflects anything more than the common type of island chain that is often named after the spiky creatures that they resemble, such as hedgehogs or sea-urchins; see Delage 253. E. *IA* 286–87 states that the islands are dangerous for sailors but does not indicate the reason for danger (τὰς Ἐχίνας λιπὼν / νήσους ναυβάταις ἀπροσφόρους). It is possible that this refers to movement; as I will discuss below, the Clashing Rocks also were treacherous for sailors because of their mobility.

Achelous River.[29] A more fanciful account of this rather mundane genesis survives only in later sources. Ovid preserves the most complete version when he tells of the metamorphosis of five naiads who were swept out to sea for neglecting worship of Achelous and there were transformed into islands (*Met.* 8.577–610). Their story is merely a prelude to the main metamorphosis, that of Achelous' lover, Perimele; her father casts her into the sea after she loses her virginity, and Achelous saves her by requesting that Poseidon turn her into an island.[30] The second myth associated with these islands locates Alkmeon's settlement on the alluvial deposits left by the Achelous River. After his matricide and purification at Delphi, he seeks land that did not exist at the time he killed his mother. Thus the newly-created landfill becomes the site of his home and the further tragic events of his life.

While the unusual topography of the area encouraged the development of some evocative myths, these particular stories do not add anything to our understanding of the Harpy episode. By choosing the adjectival name "Plotai" instead of "Echinades," a name with mythological baggage, Apollonius prevents his audience from being distracted from the narrative.[31] In doing so, he privileges the adjectival designation πλωτός, meaning "floating" or "swimming," thus emphasizing the movement of the islands in a way that did not exist in earlier incarnations of the Harpy myth. Since we know nothing about them but their name, that name acquires an increased significance. Consequently, the change of nomenclature reflects a change in the identifying characteristic of the islands. Their claim to fame becomes the encounter between Iris and the Boreads whereas previously, we presume, they were known for floating. Renaming the islands shifts emphasis from their movement to another feature; in this way, they are stilled. They do not, however, take root; just as the nature of their movement is left unclear, the symbolic end of their floating is comparably vague.

The movement and subsequent rooting of Asteria/Delos informs our reading of Apollonius' aetiological story about the Plotai. However, Delos is not

[29]St.Byz. 292.10; Eust. *ad* 2.625–26; Hdt. 2.10 says that by his time, silt from the Achelous River had joined half of the islands of the Echinades group to the mainland.

[30]It is unclear whether Perimele is to be counted as one of the Echinades; the figure named Perimede (*sic*) attested in Hes. *Ehoiai* (frr. 10a.34, 96, 100 MW) is one of five sisters, and Apollod. 1.7.3 links this Perimede with Achelous.

[31]My curiosity is piqued by the interesting interpretation of Griffiths 231, where he claims that *Del.* 155 is a reference to Eriphyle's necklace, the cause of her murder and Alkmeon's settlement on these islands.

Apollonius' only model.[32] The island home of Aiolos in the *Odyssey* also floats:

> Αἰολίην δ' ἐς νῆσον ἀφικόμεθ'· ἔνθα δ' ἔναιεν
> Αἴολος Ἱπποτάδης, φίλος ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
> πλωτῇ ἐνὶ νήσῳ· πᾶσαν δέ τέ μιν πέρι τεῖχος
> χάλκεον ἄρρηκτον, λισσὴ δ' ἀναδέδρομε πέτρη. (*Od.* 10.1–4)[33]
>
> We arrived at the Aiolian island; there lived
> Aiolos son of Hippotas, beloved of the immortal gods,
> on a floating island. Around it all was a wall,
> bronze and unbreakable, and sheer cliffs shot upwards toward it.

Homer identifies the island by means of two adjectives: πλωτῇ (10.3) and Αἰολίην (10.1, 10.55). He does not belabor the point that it floats,[34] nor does he give it a formal name. Since geographical formations are often identified by an adjectival name, these adjectives may be all the name the island needs, for they denote the island's ownership and a physical characteristic.[35] The names of Aiolos' island therefore offer a precedent for multiple names for a mobile geographical feature. Apollonius uses the name Plotai twice, which both times modifies the word for island (νῆσος) rather than acting as a substantive. In doing so, he does not entirely reject the name "Echinades," since an adjectival name can coexist with a proper name. Nevertheless, he subordinates the name "Echinades," and the myths associated with that name, by omitting it and leaving it for an educated audience to fill in.

The Plotai are significant landmarks because they float and undergo a change of name. Because of these characteristics, their resemblance to Delos is clear; they, too, appear to be emblematic of an Alexandrian discomfort with

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[32]For a complete discussion of floating islands attested in ancient literature, including Roman and Egyptian islands, see *RE* s.v. "Plotai" and Cook III.975–1015.

[33]Σ *ad* 10.3 demonstrates that already in antiquity there was some question as to the movement of the island; Aristarchus is credited with the amendment πλωτῇ instead of φορητῇ, linking Aiolos' island with Delos, although this movement would make it more difficult for Odysseus to find the island a second time.

[34]The island's mobility may be clarified more subtly through the similarity of its description with the portrayal of the Planktai, as noted by Delage 241–43. In fact, Aiolos' island was associated with the Planktai at least from the time of Thuc. 3.88; see Vian IV.43–44, Cook III.975–98, and Moret 46–48.

[35]Romm 32–41 discusses Herodotus' use of substantive adjectives to denote areas of the world. See also Cordano 193–99 on the ancient use of schemata (geometric "figure o forme") to describe geographic formations.

geography and tradition. This view is supported by the fact that they are one of a number of such formations in the *Argonautica*.

The Clashing Rocks

While the Plotai merely floated—not terribly threatening, except in the general sense that they upset our understanding of geology—the Clashing Rocks actively crash together. A passage through such rocks was considered a traditional and therefore expected part of the Argonautic voyage. Furthermore, the passage through the Rocks stands as a metonymic reference to the journey as a whole in many ancient sources,[36] making it an indispensable episode of the story. Despite the close association of the quest with such a passage, however, the exact nature of the episode is indeterminate since it appears in many different guises. In this section, I will consider depictions of the Clashing Rocks in the Argonautic myth before examining Apollonius' means of deploying the Rocks in his version.

When Circe warns Odysseus of the upcoming perils in the *Odyssey*, she tells him that after he escapes the Sirens, there will be two paths (ὁππότερη . . . ὁδός, 57; ἀμφοτέρωθεν, 58). The first of these (ἔνθεν μέν, 59) goes between the rocks that the Argo once passed:

> ἔνθεν μὲν γὰρ πέτραι ἐπηρεφέες, προτὶ δ' αὐτὰς
> κῦμα μέγα ῥοχθεῖ κυανώπιδος Ἀμφιτρίτης·
> Πλαγκτὰς δ' ἦ τοι τάς γε θεοὶ μάκαρες καλέουσι.
> τῇ μέν τ' οὐδὲ ποτητὰ παρέρχεται οὐδὲ πέλειαι
> τρήρωνες, ταί τ' ἀμβροσίην Διὶ πατρὶ φέρουσιν,
> ἀλλά τε καὶ τῶν αἰὲν ἀφαιρεῖται λὶς πέτρη·
> ἀλλ' ἄλλην ἐνίησι πατὴρ ἐναρίθμιον εἶναι.
> τῇ δ' οὔ πώ τις νηῦς φύγεν ἀνδρῶν, ἥ τις ἵκηται,
> ἀλλά θ' ὁμοῦ πίνακάς τε νεῶν καὶ σώματα φωτῶν
> κύμαθ' ἁλὸς φορέουσι πυρός τ' ὀλοοῖο θύελλαι.
> οἵη δὴ κείνῃ γε παρέπλω ποντοπόρος νηῦς
> Ἀργὼ πασιμέλουσα, παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα·
> καὶ νύ κε τὴν ἔνθ' ὦκα βάλεν μεγάλας ποτὶ πέτρας,
> ἀλλ' Ἥρη παρέπεμψεν, ἐπεὶ φίλος ἦεν Ἰήσων. (*Od.* 12.59–72)

> From there are overhanging rocks, and on them
> roar the great waves of dark blue-eyed Amphitrite;
> the blessed gods call them the Planktai.
> There no winged creatures go through, not even the
> timid doves which bring ambrosia to father Zeus, but

[36] One exception is Ennius, who avoids them altogether, as discussed by Fantuzzi.

> the sheer cliffs always make an end of them;
> but the father sends in another to fill up the number.
> There no ship of men has ever fled, which first approached,
> but the waves of the sea and the whirlwinds of parching fire carry away
> beams of ships together with bodies of people.
> The only seagoing ship to sail through that way was
> Argo, who is known to all, on her way from Aietes;
> and even she would have swiftly struck against the great rocks then, but
> Hera sent her through, since Jason was dear to her.

According to Circe's depiction, the Rocks do not move. Two or more rocks create treacherous ocean currents which cause ships to be dashed against the sheer faces. Even Zeus' doves meet a bad end on the rocks, presumably buffeted against them by savage wind currents that parallel the ocean currents. Flames from an unnamed source—perhaps volcanic action?[37]—devour any remaining debris. With such an introduction, the Argo's passage through these same rocks becomes a unique triumph. The brevity of Circe's acknowledgment of the Argonautic journey implies its ubiquity (πασιμέλουσα, 70).[38]

Although Circe's description does not specify the rocks' mobility, she gives a name that implies that the rocks move: she says that the gods call the rocks "Planktai," an adjective that probably means "wandering" or "roving" (12.61; cf. Call. *Del.* 273).[39] Certainly movement would be consistent with Circe's account: wandering rocks could cause dangerous surf, and colliding rocks would be a more persuasive means of killing doves than air turbulence. Nevertheless, this name is the only evidence that the rocks are not fixed in place. A scholium *ad Od*. 12.61 demonstrates that the conflict between the description and the name was noticed in antiquity.[40] These contradictory explanations for the rocks could well reflect an ongoing debate that would have influenced Apollonius.

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[37]Delage 241–42 argues that Aiolos and Hephaistos inhabited neighboring volcanic islands, with Hephaistos' forge accounting for the volcanic activity; he concludes that the similarity of Homer's descriptions of Aiolos' island and the Planktai caused them to be conflated in later literature.

[38]Meuli proposed the theory that the *Odyssey* is based on an earlier version of the Argonautic story; Dräger 64–149 attempts a reconstruction of this original *Argonautica*. Kyriakou 19–33 discusses the Homeric passage and its impact on Apollonius' composition.

[39]The meaning of this word is uncertain; the scholia ad *Od*. 12.61 offer two derivations, from προσπλήσσεσθαι (to strike) or πλάζεσθαι (to wander). For my argument, however, it does not matter since both verbs imply movement. See Heubeck and Hoekstra *ad* 10.5–72 and Gantz 356–57.

[40]Πλαγκτὰς, διὰ τὸ προσπλήσσεσθαι αὐταῖς τὰ κύματα· οἱ δὲ νεώτεροι πλανηθέντες, Πλαγκτὰς ἤκουσαν παρὰ τὸ πλάζεσθαι εἰς ὕψος καὶ βάθος (H); ὁ

Circe's brief statement has one further implication. She has introduced this peril by saying that she would not tell them which route to follow (οὐκέτ' ἔπειτα διηνεκέως ἀγορεύσω, 12.56). The adverb διηνεκέως suggests that she will not go through all the details with them—that is, she will withhold some information.[41] By specifying that "Planktai" is the name used by the gods, then, Circe leaves open the possibility that the rocks are known by a second name among mortals.[42] Delos, after all, has different names among the gods and among mortals (Pi. fr. 33c.4–6). Her omission of the mortal name could well be because, as she has just said, everyone knows about the adventures of the Argo, and it would be otiose for her to mention something so well-known. The resulting lexical gap surely would have attracted the notice of Apollonius.

Although it seems clear that Circe envisions a choice between paths, her explanation is somewhat misleading. She prefaces her description of the Planktai with ἔνθεν μέν (59), which clearly acts as a correlative with the ἔνθα δ' ἐνί (85) before her description of Scylla and Charybdis. In between the correlatives, however, she speaks of a set of sharp rocks:

> οἱ δὲ δύω σκόπελοι ὁ μὲν οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἱκάνει
> ὀξείῃ κορυφῇ, νεφέλη δέ μιν ἀμφιβέβηκε
> κυανέη· τὸ μὲν οὔ ποτ' ἐρωεῖ, οὐδέ ποτ' αἴθρη
> κείνου ἔχει κορυφὴν οὔτ' ἐν θέρει οὔτ' ἐν ὀπώρῃ·

μὲν Κράτης, ὅτι πλάζεται περὶ αὐτὰς τὸ κῦμα, οἱ δὲ ὡς τὴν Δῆλον κινεῖσθαι καὶ φέρεσθαι (V); ἀπὸ τοῦ προσπλήσσεσθαι ἐν αὐταῖς τὰ κύματα (B). More recent interpretations of the Rocks include scholarship by Smid (followed by Rostropowicz 111–13) and Pickard which suggests that the appearance of movement by the rocks was caused by a tsunami or a seiche, respectively. While such studies are interesting, I find that they are not particularly useful for my purpose. I prefer Vian's point of view: "Les Planctes n'existent pas plus que les Symplégades du Bosphore….n'étaient-elles pas d'ailleurs des 'Iles errantes'?" (IV.45).

[41]On the use of the phrase διηνεκέως ἀγορεύω in the *Argonautica*, see Nishimura-Jensen, especially 467–68; for a discussion of Apollonius' use of διηνεκές, see DeForest 86–106.

[42]Heubeck 215–16 believes that the mortal name of the Planktai must be "Symplegades," and that this name was concealed in order to emphasize the rocks as *Klappfelsen* rather than *Prallfelsen*. The *Iliad* includes four instances of dionumia, where both mortal and immortal names are given for figures of mythology, geography, and nature. The *Odyssey*, in contrast, contains no examples of dionumia, but instead has two items that are given divine names only, μῶλυ (*Od*. 10.302–6) and the Planktai. It is interesting to note that both these divine words occur on Circe's island. For more general discussions of Homeric dionumiai, see Clay, Fowler, and Heubeck and Hoekstra *ad* 12.55–72.

οὐδέ κεν ἀμβαίη βροτὸς ἀνήρ, οὐδ᾽ ἐπιβαίη,
οὐδ᾽ εἴ οἱ χεῖρές τε ἐείκοσι καὶ πόδες εἶεν·
πέτρη γὰρ λίς ἐστι, περιξεστῇ ἐϊκυῖα. (*Od.* 12.73–79)

But of the two rocks, one reaches wide heaven
with its pointed peak, and a dark-blue cloud has surrounded it;
it never withdraws, nor does the aither ever
reach its peak either in summer nor in harvest season;
nor can a mortal man climb it nor stand upon it,
not if he had twenty hands and feet;
for the rock is sheer, like highly polished stone.

Initially it is not clear if these σκόπελοι are a further description of the Planktai or the second route that Odysseus might follow.[43] A series of verbal reminiscences link the Planktai and the σκόπελοι, suggesting that they are the same formation (λίς πέτρη, 64 and πέτρη . . . λίς, 79;[44] κυανώπιδος, 60 and κυανέη, 75, although they refer to Amphitrite and the cloud, respectively, rather than the rocks; less strongly with the idea of mortals being unable to pass, 66 and 77). As Circe continues, however, she explains that one of the rocks provides a home for Scylla while Charybdis lives next to the other (80–100). The σκόπελοι, although they are doublets of the Planktai and fearsome in appearance, do not present any specific danger to sailors; it is the monsters, not the rocks, that will be a problem on that route. Circe creates a momentary conflation by delaying her correlative, thus linking Scylla and Charybdis with the Planktai. In this way, the rocks—although inanimate—are animated, and they are positioned as a terrible threat. After all, Circe ostensibly suggests the less dangerous of two passages; in light of Odysseus' subsequent losses as he passes Scylla and Charybdis, the Planktai must be monstrous indeed.

The Odyssean description provided a model for later poetic treatments of the Rocks. By Apollonius' time, numerous versions of the Argonautic passage had arisen.[45] The range of names, locations, and actions of the rocks became so great in antiquity that Ovid acknowledged it in his *Metamorphoses*; his Medea, speaking of the rocks, expresses her confusion:

[43]Although most scholars agree that Circe has two separate paths in mind, Bollack suggests that the Planktai, Scylla and Charybdis form a sort of interlocked obstacle course.

[44]These words recall the description of Aiolos' island, which also features λισσὴ . . . πέτρη (*Od.* 10.4).

[45]One of the best catalogues of literary references to the rocks may be found at Lindsay 5–37.

> quid quod nescio qui mediis incurrere in undis
> dicuntur montes.... (*Met.* 7.62–63)
>
> What about the I-don't-know-what mountains which
> are said to run into each other in the middle of the waves....

This is, perhaps, the logical extension of the literary debate surrounding Homer's ambiguous treatment of the rocks. Nevertheless, as for any myth, some core characteristics have to remain constant in order for that myth to retain its basic structure. For the rocks, those characteristics are their perilous nature (because of their movement, or the movement of the water around them) and their connection with the myth of the Argonauts. Within this framework, however, the rocks receive various names and appearances. Pindar, for instance, does not provide the rocks with a name but instead describes them as living rocks that collide (συνδρόμων κινηθμὸν ἀμαιμάκετον...πετρᾶν, *P.* 4.208–9). Simonides may have called them Synormades (546 *PMG*), another name that indicates that they crashed together. Herodotus notes the legend of moving rocks:

> ἔπλεε ἐπὶ τὰς Κυανέας καλευμένας, τὰς πρότερον πλαγκτὰς
> Ἕλληνές φασι εἶναι. (4.85.1)
>
> He sailed to the (rocks) called Dark, which before the Hellenes say
> were clashing.

His statement is ambiguous, since it is not clear whether he records a name-change (from "Planktai" to "Kuaneai") or simply a process of rationalization: whereas in earlier times the rock formation was said to have moved, now it is simply called "dark." He thus combines the visual and kinetic adjectives used by Homer for two different sets of rocks, the Planktai and the σκόπελοι housing Scylla and Charybdis (*Od.* 12.60 and 75).

Euripides further combined these elements in his descriptions of the Rocks. The characters in *Iphigeneia in Taurus* provide the Rocks with three different names: Symplegades (241,[46] 260, 355, 1389); Kuaneai (746, 889), and Syndromades (421). However, Euripides' most prominent reference to them occurs in the opening lines of his *Medea*:

> Εἴθ' ὤφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος
> Κόλχων ἐς αἶαν κυανέας Συμπληγάδας.... (E. *Med.* 1–2)
>
> Would that the skiff of the Argo never have flown through the
> dark Symplegades into the land of the Colchians...

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[46]In this case, there is only one Rock (Συμπληγάδα), an anomaly explained by Rusten.

This passage in the *Medea* is our first evidence for the name Symplegades being connected to the Argonautic story; it is another adjectival form meaning "crashing together." The nurse adds a second adjective, "dark" (κυανέας), perhaps reflecting the name attested by Herodotus. In this way, Euripides integrates several different descriptions into a coherent picture of dark, clashing rocks.

The nurse's use of the Symplegades as a shorthand reference for the journey surely influenced Apollonius, who also places the "dark rocks" prominently in the opening passage of the *Argonautica*:[47]

> Ἀρχόμενος σέο, Φοῖβε, παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν
> μνήσομαι οἳ Πόντοιο κατὰ στόμα καὶ διὰ πέτρας
> Κυανέας βασιλῆος ἐφημοσύνῃ Πελίαο
> χρύσειον μετὰ κῶας ἐύζυγον ἤλασαν Ἀργώ. (*Arg.* 1.1–4)
>
> Starting with you, Phoibos, I shall recall the famous deeds of men
> of long ago who, through the mouth of the Pontos and between the Dark
> Rocks, at the order of king Pelias,
> drove the well-benched Argo to seek the golden fleece.

The fact that the Rocks are the only episode from the quest to be mentioned here elevates them in importance; they function here, as elsewhere, as a metonymic reference to the entire voyage. Their prominence is unsurprising, given the long literary tradition that assigned the Rocks a significant place in the myth. In view of the variety of ways in which the Rocks have been described, moreover, the manner in which Apollonius refers to them begs for closer examination. We find that, like Euripides, Apollonius has pushed them into the beginning of his work; unlike Euripides, however, Apollonius gives them only one name, the Kuaneai. In doing so, he highlights a less-famous aspect of the rocks (their appearance) rather than their movement. An audience familiar with Euripides' *Medea* would notice the omission of the name Symplegades and would supply that name for themselves. Apollonius' choice of appellation poses a mildly suspenseful question for the knowledgeable audience: will the rocks crash after all? Or will they, as stated in the opening lines, simply be dark?

The audience has to be patient. The landmark is heralded not only by the narrator's introduction at the beginning of the poem but also by Phineus' prophecy shortly before the Argonauts reach the rocks. The Argonauts' encounter with Phineus parallels that of Odysseus with Circe: both prophetic figures offer shelter and narrate upcoming perils. Jason and Odysseus face many

[47] Another set of dark rocks, the Melantian Rocks, appear at the very end of the poem (4.1706–7); see Paschalis for the connection between these rocks and Delos.

of the same challenges, thus reinforcing the larger parallels between their adventures.[48] As Circe warned Odysseus about the Planktai, Phineus tells Jason about the "dark rocks":

> πέτρας μὲν πάμπρωτον ἀφορμηθέντες ἐμεῖο
> Κυανέας ὄψεσθε δύω ἁλὸς ἐν ξυνοχῇσι,
> τάων οὔ τινά φημι διαμπερὲς ἐξαλέασθαι.
> οὐ γάρ τε ῥίζῃσιν ἐρήρεινται νεάτῃσιν·
> ἀλλὰ θαμὰ ξυνίασιν ἐναντίαι ἀλλήλῃσιν
> εἰς ἕν, ὕπερθε δὲ πολλὸν ἁλὸς κορθύεται ὕδωρ
> βρασσόμενον, στρηνὲς δὲ πέρι στυφελὴ βρέμει ἀκτή. (*Arg.* 2.317–23)
>
> After you leave me, first of all you will see the
> Dark Rocks, two in the narrows of the sea,
> through which, I tell you, no one has ever passed.
> For they are not attached by deep roots;
> but the opposing rocks frequently clash together
> into one, and above much boiling sea-water
> rears up, and the rough cliff roars harshly.

While Circe omitted specific reasons for the rocks being threatening, Phineus gives details about the danger associated with these rocks: they frequently slam into one another, endangering boats that attempt to pass between them. Nevertheless, Phineus, like the narrator, gives no name to them besides Kuaneai.[49] The puzzle posed in the opening of the poem appears to be solved: in the world of the *Argonautica*, the name of the rock formation (Kuaneai) indicates its appearance but makes no judgment about its mobility. This inverts the situation in the *Odyssey*, where Circe attaches a name that indicates movement (Planktai) to a description that does not specify whether the rocks move or not.

Circe created an ellipsis by stating that the gods called the rocks by one name, but not volunteering a mortal equivalent. Phineus leaves a similar lacuna. At the beginning of his speech, he warns the Argonauts about the danger of disclosing too much about the future (2.311–2). Phineus knows about this danger firsthand, having been blinded by Zeus for revealing more than was appropriate. This conspicuous *recusatio* alerts the audience to possible omis-

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[48]Meuli 111–13 suggests that Phineus in the *Argonautica* and Circe in the *Odyssey* both descend from a mantic figure in an earlier version of the Argonautic voyage. See also Knight 169–76.

[49]The participle ἀφορμηθέντες (2.317), describing the motion of the Argonauts, suggests that their motion is opposite that of the rocks that Simonides called the Synormades.

sions in Phineus' prophecy and creates a further parallel with Circe's prophecy. In fact, Phineus directly echoes some of Circe's words (*Od.* 12.56) at the end of his speech when he reiterates his fear of saying too much:

> Τῷ καί τε φίλα φρονέων ἀγορεύω
> ἰσχέμεν· ἀλλὰ τίη με πάλιν χρειὼ ἀλιτέσθαι
> μαντοσύνῃ τὰ ἕκαστα διηνεκὲς ἐξενέποντα; (*Arg.* 2.389–91)
>
> And so with friendly thoughts I tell you
> to stop—but why must I transgress again,
> telling each thing in sequence in a prophecy?

Thus there is a second inversion of the Odyssean model: Circe warns Odysseus that she cannot tell him which path to follow, and then offers him only the gods' name for the rocks. Phineus also speaks of his fear of overstepping boundaries and then offers a different name, the Kuaneai. What begins as a parallel episode turns into a complementary variation. The reader should presume that Phineus tells the mortal name, since it would be sacrilegious for him to reveal their immortal name. In providing an alternate name for this obstacle, Phineus fills the unspoken gap left by his colleague Circe; Apollonius' episode suggests that "Planktai" and "Kuaneai" are the immortal and mortal names for the same set of rocks.

By extension, the narrator, too, has used the mortal name for the rocks when he referred to the Kuaneai at the opening of the poem. During the actual passage through the rocks, however, the narrator gives them a different name. He calls them Πληγάδες, the Crashing Ones (2.596)—another name indicating movement, and virtually the same name used by Euripides (Symplegades).[50] And well he might: the Argonauts see the rocks close on the tail-feathers of the dove loosed by Euphemos (2.562–73), and they experience the roar and sea surge resulting from the rocks' activity. In an aetiological aside, the narrator finishes the Symplegades episode by telling the fate of the rocks:

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[50]The Apollonian Jason, too, uses the name "Plegades" after the Argo has passed safely through them (2.645). Later, when he retells his adventures in Lykos' court, he refers to them as the "dark rocks" (ἠδ' ὡς Κυανέας πέτρας φύγον, 2.770); perhaps he has learned this term from Phineus. In his Καύνου Κτίσις, Apollonius applies a different adjective to these rocks, calling them the Πληγάδας ἀξείνους and placing them in conjunction with Phineus' land (A.R. fr. 5 Powell). Clashing rocks are clearly inhospitable to strangers, but nonetheless the adjective ἄξεινος is more commonly associated with the Black (Euxine) Sea; thus Tzetzes suggests *ad* Lycophr. 1285 that Apollonius' use of the adjective implied that these locations were in or on the Sea.

πέτραι δ᾽ εἰς ἕνα χῶρον ἐπισχεδὸν ἀλλήλῃσιν
νωλεμὲς ἐρρίζωθεν· ὃ δὴ καὶ μόρσιμον ἦεν
ἐκ μακάρων, εὖτ᾽ ἄν τις ἰδὼν διὰ νηὶ περάσσῃ. (*Arg.* 2.604–6)

But the Rocks were firmly rooted together in one place
forever; for this was fated by the blessed ones,
whenever someone had seen them and sailed through.

Like Delos, the rocks become rooted in place. Human order triumphs over the irrationality of nature; once Jason and his Argonauts have tamed the natural force of the rock formation, it loses its potency and its ability to harm future travelers.[51] However, Apollonius' narrator is quick to point out that humans do not really control their surroundings. As he explains, the gods had decided that this would be the fate of the rocks. The Argonauts *were* the agents of this change, but ultimately it is the gods who maintain chaos or ordain order. As it turns out, the fact that the rocks have become fixed apart allows the Colchians to sail back through them in pursuit of Jason and Medea (4.303–4; 4.1001–3), again undermining any sense that the Argonauts' conquest of nature is beneficial to them.

The Argonauts appear to be completely oblivious to the outcome of their passage, whether it is their own prodigious feat or an unnatural event perpetrated by the gods.[52] This differs from the account in the Orphic *Argonautica,* which specifies that it is Orpheus' music that stops the rocks and fixes them apart (*OA* 680–711). That version displays culture defeating nature; although the Orphic version is later and clearly draws upon Apollonius' poem, it may reflect an alternate tradition that Apollonius rejected in favor of divine action.[53] Furthermore, attributing the rooting of the rocks to the gods recalls Poseidon's punishment of the Phaiakians in the *Odyssey* (13.147–83). Although Zeus dissuades Poseidon from piling a mountain on top of their island, he allows his

[51]It is significant that both Apollonius and Callimachus use words for "root" (ἐρρίζωθεν, *Arg*. 2.605; ἐρρίζωσε, *Del.* 35 and also ῥίζας, *Del.* 54) to describe the stilling of the rock formations. It suggests a natural occurrence that is, nevertheless, at odds with the typical behavior of mineral substances. The conquering of mobile geographical sites has a parallel in the story of the Sirens' suicide once Odysseus had passed them (Apollod. E.7.19, Hyg. *Fab*. 125, 141). See also M. F. Williams 129–45 on the Pindaric model for the Argonauts "killing" the rocks at *P*. 4.208–11.

[52]See Feeney 57–98 on the Argonauts' haphazard understanding of the divine aid they receive.

[53]See Schwartz, especially 65–71 and 112–16, on the ordering effect of Orpheus' music and his role in the passage through the rocks; West 36–38 on the relationship of the Orphic and Apollonian versions; also Segal *passim.*

brother to turn the Phaiakian ship into stone, rooting it (ἐρρίζωσεν, 163) in the harbor. Their squabble over its fate emphasizes the arbitrary will of the gods. His action ends Phaiakian naval mobility, stilling another unnatural—but considerably less dangerous—movement.[54]

As if a passage through the Clashing Rocks were not enough excitement for one epic, Apollonius tosses in a second set on the homeward journey. This is undoubtedly more than an attempt to add gratuitous adventure to the story. The passage through the Kuaneai/Plegades clearly recalls the episode of the Homeric Planktai; however, the initial impulse to connect the two landmarks turns out to be incorrect. The Homeric account of the Argonautic voyage appears to have included only one set of rocks, the Planktai, which continued to clash at least until the time of Odysseus. With these rooted by the Argo's passage, Apollonius was obliged to create a second set so as not to contradict the Homeric account: Odysseus has to have something to go through. Thus the parallels between Odysseus' Planktai and Jason's Kuaneai in Book 2 are misleading; they are separate (although similar) geographic formations. Jason passes through the true Planktai, the ones that Odysseus passes a generation or so later in mythical time, in Book 4. This agrees with Circe's specification that the Argo encountered the rocks on the return journey (παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα, *Od*. 12.70).[55]

The structure of the second episode again resembles that of the *Odyssey* in that a divine figure warns one of the heroes of the upcoming dangers before the actual passage through the rocks. In this case, Thetis briefly tells Peleus that the rocks are ahead:

> πασσυδίῃ κοῦραι Νηρηίδες ἀντιόωσι,
> νῆα διὲκ πέτρας αἵ τε Πλαγκταὶ καλέονται
> ῥυσόμεναι· κείνη γὰρ ἐναίσιμος ὕμμι κέλευθος. (*Arg*. 4.859–61)
>
> The Nereid maidens are swiftly coming to rescue the
> ship through the rocks which are called the Planktai;
> for that path is fated for you.

[54]The Phaiakian ability to ferry individuals between mortal and immortal realms hearkens back to the Golden Age, and thus is a threat to the current differentiation between realms. See Carnes 107–8 for a discussion of the autochthony myths connected to this episode.

[55]Contrast E. *Med.* 1–2, where the Symplegades are an obstacle for the outbound journey. Pindar also places this episode on the outbound journey, balanced by the Lemnian episode on the return journey. Complicating the matter is Callimachus' version; Pfeiffer states ad *Aet.* 1 fr. 9 that "apud Call. Argonautae eadem via redeunt qua venerant, i.e. per Bosporum, apud Apollonium per Istrum fugiunt." See Seaton and Delage for discussions on the locations of the Odyssean Planktai and Symplegades.

Her use of the passive voice, declaring that the rocks "are called the Planktai" (καλέονται, 860), recalls the active voice used by Circe, who stated that the immortal gods called them the Planktai (Πλαγκτὰς δ᾽ ἤ τοι τάς γε θεοὶ μάκαρες καλέουσι, *Od*. 12.61). The passive voice, lacking a specified agent, allows Apollonius to avoid distinguishing between mortal and immortal names for the rocks. The placement of the passage through the Planktai after the Sirens and close to the double threat of Scylla and Charybdis further strengthens the association with the Homeric passage.

Apollonius clarifies the relationship of the rocks to Scylla and Charybdis; they are the third of a trio of dangers (τῇ μέν...τῇ δ᾽...ἄλλοθι, 4.922–24).[56] Their peril seems to lie in the flames from Hephaistos' forge rather than from the movement of the rocks themselves:

> ἄλλοθι δὲ Πλαγκταὶ μεγάλῳ ὑπὸ κύματι πέτραι
> ῥόχθεον, ἦχι πάροιθεν ἀπέπτυεν αἰθομένη φλόξ
> ἄκρων ἐκ σκοπέλων πυριθαλπέος ὑψόθι πέτρης,
> καπνῷ δ᾽ ἀχλυόεις αἰθὴρ πέλεν οὐδέ κεν αὐγάς
> ἕδρακες ἠελίοιο, τότ᾽ αὖ, λήξαντος ἀπ᾽ ἔργων
> Ἡφαίστου, θερμὴν ἔτι κήκιε πόντος ἀυτμήν. (*Arg*. 4.924–29)
>
> In the other part the Planktai Rocks roared under a large
> wave; where before blazing fire spit out from
> the top of the cliffs above the flame-hot rock,
> and the aither was darkened with smoke and you could not
> have glimpsed the rays of the sun. Even after Hephaistos stopped
> his work, the sea still bubbled up its hot breath.

Since Apollonius does not specify that the rocks are moving, it appears that convection causes the rough currents.[57] His description picks up the anomalous presence of smoke in the Odyssean account (καπνόν, 12.202, presumably arising from the πυρός mentioned by Circe, 12.68) in addition to waves and a crashing sound.

Apollonius gives a meta-narrative wink to signal his recognition of his relationship with the Homeric text. Before the Argonauts reach the Planktai, Hera summons Thetis to secure her aid. She makes a puzzling statement:

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[56]As discussed by Livrea *ad loc*.

[57]Fränkel 543–48 does not believe that the rocks actually moved, but were rather fixed at their bases.

> οἵη τέ σφ᾽ ἐσάωσα διὰ Πλαγκτὰς περόωντας
> πέτρας, ἔνθα πυρὸς δειναὶ βρομέουσι θύελλαι,
> κύματά τε σκληρῇσι περιβλύει σπιλάδεσσι. (*Arg.* 4.786–88)
>
> I alone saved them on their passage through the
> Planktai Rocks, where awesome whirlwinds of fire roar
> and the waves seethe around the unyielding reefs.

Since the Argonauts have not yet traveled through the Planktai, she must be speaking of the other set of clashing rocks, the Symplegades. Why does Hera call them by the wrong name? Is she trying to take credit for Athena's actions, since Athena was the one who pushed the Argo through the Symplegades? It is unlikely that Apollonius forgot what he wrote; it is equally doubtful that he meant to imply that Hera was forgetful or attempting to win praise for an action she did not do.[58] The solution posited by Herter and Vian, among others, that ἐσάωσα represents an unreal condition, absolves Hera of the charge of mendacity but lacks conviction.[59] Instead, I believe that the ambiguity of Hera's statement reflects a long-standing confusion about the identity of the rocks, their location, their type of movement, and at what point in their journey the Argonauts passed them. These conflicting traditions pushed Apollonius to create doublet rock formations, the Planktai and Symplegades. The contradiction between Hera's words and her actions calls attention to the fact that there are two sets of rocks in the *Argonautica*, and also that both sets refer back to the Homeric Planktai: her claim reaches beyond the boundaries of Apollonius' epic back to the *Odyssey*, where Circe stated that Hera was the one to help Jason pass the Rocks (12.70–72).

As Athena gave the Argo a hard shove to get it through the Symplegades (2.598–602), Thetis and her Nereids help the ship pass the Planktai. This time, however, the narrator describes the voyage with a light-hearted simile, with the result that the Argonauts seem to experience a much less harrowing ordeal.

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[58]I agree with Hunter (1993) when, at 97 n. 107, he states that "it would be nice to believe that Hera is being deliberately deceitful, but this seems a cheap way out of the problem." This passage has confounded many worthy scholars; Fränkel *ad* 4.786–90 proposes a lacuna as the only acceptable explanation, while Delage 132 calls it one of Apollonius' "nombreuses erreures." The confusion is compounded by the scholiast's comment on Phineus' advice: τοῦτό φησιν, ἐπεὶ οὐδεὶς οὐδέποτε ἀβλαβὴς τελέως ἐξέφυγεν, ὥστε οὐδὲ ἂν ἡ Ἀργὼ καίτοι Ἥρας προνοουμένης (Σ *ad* A.R. 2.319). See Vian IV.41–43 for a discussion of the problems presented by this passage; also Green 1997a *ad* 4.784–90 for a more recent summary of scholarship on the issue.

[59]Herter 41–43 and Vian IV.41–43. More convincing are the metaliterary readings of Hunter 1993: 97 and Green 1997b: 67.

The Nereids toss the ship as if they were young girls playing with a ball (4.939–55); the sweet innocence of the image undercuts the danger of the wildly surging sea. The brevity of the passage, furthermore, suggests a relatively straightforward journey. Hera's fearful response is the only indication that the Argonauts are in any real danger (4.958–60).[60] Indeed, the audience does not see the Argonauts' response to their astonishing trajectory. Their absence from the episode is conspicuous, considering that it immediately follows Orpheus' leading role in defeating the Sirens (4.903–11) and precedes their perception of the Cattle of Helios (4.963–81). Not only do the heroes fail to defeat the ferocity of nature, but the Nereids render them superfluous to the action.

Evolution and Euphemos' Clod

By the time the Argonauts return home, they have encountered a series of mobile geographical features. Although they survive the various threats, Apollonius is careful to show that chance and arbitrary decisions, rather than bravery or righteousness, have caused their success; nature continues to be unpredictable and menacing. It is striking, then, that the final episode of Apollonius' *Argonautica* depicts the appearance of a new island. Euphemos has a bizarre dream about the clod of earth that Triton has given him, whereupon Jason tells him to toss the clod into the sea so that an island can grow from it. The narrator finishes with the last aetion of the poem, the traditional foundation story of the island Kalliste, the future home of Euphemos' descendants, arising from that lump of earth (4.1755–64).[61] The act of creation presents a sense of evolution and order, seeming to right the earlier chaos and offer a more optimistic view of the world.[62]

Apollonius undercuts even this statement, however. Kalliste will receive a new name when Theras, Euphemos' descendant, colonizes the island (4.1761–64). Her name-change recalls the mobile names of mobile geographical sites that

[60]Although I am convinced by Harder's distinction between the reassuring outbound journey and the exotic return voyage, I disagree with her characterization of the Planktai as a fearsome ordeal in contrast to the positive experience of the Symplegades (19–21). The difference between the Argonauts' active response to the Symplegades and their passive voyage through the Planktai has been noted by, among others, M. F. Williams 275–78 and Händel 88–92; see also Byre 112–14.

[61]This ktisis is particularly notable because Kalliste, later called Thera, was the mother country to the colony of Kyrene. The prominent placement of the foundation story may signify some sort of political agenda on Apollonius' part; see Green (1997a) *ad* 4.1547–61 and Hunter (1993) 152–53.

[62]Hunter (1993) 167–68.

engendered the sense of disorder throughout the epic.[63] Even more significant, however, are the final words spoken by the clod in Euphemos' dream. Taking the form of a woman, it calls

> ...εἶμι δ' ἐς αὐγάς
> ἠελίου μετόπισθε, τεοῖς νεπόδεσσιν ἑτοίμη. (*Arg.* 4.1744–45)
>
> ...And I shall go towards the rays of the sun
> when I am ready for your descendants.

This translation reflects the accepted meaning of νέποδες; from its single appearance in the *Odyssey* (4.404), it appears to mean "children." However, it is an ambiguous hapax legomenon; later writers read the prefix νε- as a privative so that the word could instead (or in addition) mean "footless." There has even been speculation that νε- refers to swimming, complicating matters still further.[64] As an adjective used substantively, τεοῖς νεπόδεσσιν could then be translated as "the footless people" or "the footless things," or perhaps "the foot-swimming people" or "the foot-swimming things." While Apollonius does not emphasize the association of feet with roots in the way that Callimachus does, nonetheless the lack of feet logically leads to a lack of stability and rootlessness. Likewise, feet that swim imply the sort of movement performed by floating islands. Thus an island that prophesies a time in which it will be ready for footless or swimming things suggests that it expects a return to a chaotic, primeval period in which islands lack feet (i.e., roots) and float free on the sea. Considering the world of rootless formations in the *Argonautica*, it is not difficult to see a double (or maybe triple) entendre in this hapax legomenon. The oblique reference to deracination closes the epic, leaving the heroic conquest of nature unfulfilled.

As poet-scholars closely connected with the Library at Alexandria, Apollonius and Callimachus had ample opportunity to study earlier incarnations of landmarks such as Delos and the Clashing Rocks. Both poets demonstrate a

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[63]The fact that she is twice called a nurse (τροφός, 4.1741, 1758) links her with Delos. See Calame 291–94 on what he calls "'marine' autochthony myths," including Delos, Rhodes, and Thera, as well as his comments on the hybrid status of islands.

[64]See *LSJ* for citations. Chantraine suggests four possible meanings for the word: ἄποδες, νηξίποδες ("qui nagent avec leur pieds"), ἰχθύες, or ἀπόγονοι; he finds the last option the most plausible. Boisacq, in contrast, comes down firmly on the side of νηξίποδες. Livrea notes that multiple meanings would have been recognized in Apollonius' time, but both he and Vian support "descendants," as do the scholia *ad* 4.1745, which comment "υἱέσιν ὠφειλε." No translation or commentary that I have found entertains the thought that it could mean anything else.

preference for versions in which geographical phenomena move rather than those in which such features are stable. Callimachus emphasizes Delos' swift movements by repeatedly mentioning her feet; Apollonius chooses to marginalize a number of myths connected with Echinades Islands by selecting the names Strophades and Plotai. He furthermore reconciles some Homeric inconsistencies by creating two sets of Clashing Rocks instead of just one. While naming an object typically offers a semblance of control over that object, these mobile geographical sites have mobile names; the blurring of appellations reflects the unconquerable force of nature and the uncertainty of the environment. Delos is also Asteria; the Plotai become the Strophades; the Clashing Rocks have a multitude of names.

Such representations of geographic formations may reflect the poets' fundamental sense of uncertainty about the world and of their place within that world. The cosmogonic evolution from indeterminate chaos to distinct physical entities gave earlier poets a belief in an organized universe.[65] Callimachus and Apollonius, however, demonstrate less confidence in such order. Thus Delos still has feet, and Callimachus displays the thought processes behind Asteria's decision to root, suggesting the arbitrary nature of her action. Apollonius' Argonauts blithely overcome obstacles in their path, but they are not directly responsible for the changes in geographical formation: the gods had preordained that the Rocks would be rooted once passed by mortals, and the Plotai are stilled through a name-change in common usage (μετακλείουσ' ἄνθρωποι, 2.296). The difference in the Argonauts' experiences with the two sets of Rocks, furthermore, underscores their lack of control over the world around them. The atmosphere created by such formations is that of primeval chaos and traditional heroic conquest is supplanted by random happenstance.[66]

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[65]Thalmann 1–73 bases his analysis of the *h.Ap* on the uniform structure of the universe described in Hes. *Th.* 720–25 and 740–44, where the distance between heaven and earth is the same as the distance between earth and Tartarus. Detienne and Vernant 152–54 contrast this tidy arrangement with Hesiod's description of the chaotic storm winds in Tartarus.

Lack of space prevents me from exploring Apollonius' other conflations of distinct materials. It is surely significant that he includes a number of anthropomorphic creatures that are made of mineral or vegetable matter rather than animal substance: the Earthborn men at Cyzicus (1.942–52) and in Colchis (3.1354–1404; comparisons of blood with irrigation waters and the sown men with broken shoots further blurs the lines between animal, vegetable, and mineral), Talos (4.1638–48), and also Circe's beasts (4.672–82).

[66]The Argonautic voyage is thought to recapitulate Bronze Age Hellenic colonial expansion, reflecting a confidence in Greek superiority; the impulse to rationalize the myth as such begins with Strabo 1.2.39. Nilsson 136–40 discusses the Mycenaean

The depiction of natural order—or the lack thereof—in the work of Apollonius and Callimachus seems to have further significance. The two Hellenistic poets present unstable geographical formations that engage prior geographical and geological writings and suggest a self-conscious relationship with those literary traditions. Their fictional worlds are in the early stages of evolution, just as the intellectual world of Alexandria was struggling to forge its own identity against the backdrop of hundreds of years of Greek culture. The literal deracination of landmarks resonates with the Hellenistic desire to depart from the well-developed system of roots supporting Greek literature.

underpinnings of the myth; see also Braund 73–118 for information on archaic Georgia. A broader discussion of heroic legends and the motifs generally associated with them can be found in Kirk 175–206.

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