RHODIUS APOLLONIUS

THE ARGONAUTICA

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Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Gabriel Fox

EAN 8596547311607

Edited and published by DigiCat, 2022

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Introduction

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Between oar-stroke and omen, The Argonautica traces how collective ambition steers individuals into the crosscurrents of desire, duty, and divine design. Apollonius of Rhodes crafts an epic where the quest becomes a mirror for the risks of cooperation and the price of fame. Instead of one invincible champion, we follow a crew whose talents are indispensable and whose flaws are contagious. Councils, sea passages, and first contacts hinge on negotiation as much as strength, while gods advise and argue rather than simply decree. The voyage keeps testing whether a planned course can survive unpredictable feeling and the pull of competing loyalties.

Written in Greek during the Hellenistic era, likely in the third century BCE, Apollonius of Rhodes—also known as Apollonius Rhodius—composed The Argonautica, a four-book epic that reimagines heroic narrative for a cosmopolitan age. Its setting stretches from Iolcus in Thessaly across the Aegean and into the Black Sea, as the ship Argo undertakes a royally mandated mission to reach Colchis and return with the famed Golden Fleece. The poem stands at the crossroads of tradition and innovation: recognizably epic in scale and machinery, yet deeply attentive to geography, ritual procedure, and the practicalities of voyaging. Its historical context informs curiosity about distant coasts, shifting alliances, and new centers of power.

The premise is straightforward and inviting: Jason gathers renowned companions, fits out a remarkable ship, consults rites and oracles, and sets sail to petition a foreign ruler for an extraordinary prize. The reading experience, however, feels distinct from archaic models. Apollonius writes with a learned, polished voice that balances ceremonial invocations and catalogues with quick, revealing character sketches. Nautical routines, diplomatic protocols, and the hush of dawn landfalls receive as much care as episodes of combat. The tone often turns reflective and understated, even wry, making victories provisional and losses complicated, while moments of lyric tenderness illuminate the private costs of public endeavor.

Among the poem’s central themes is the recalibration of heroism from solitary prowess to coordinated action. Leadership appears as persuasion, morale keeping, and risk management, the art of turning many temperaments toward a single objective. Divine forces remain vivid, yet their signs are ambiguous, and human counsel often proves decisive, stressing deliberation over impulse. Reputation is won not only in duels but in fair dealing, seamanship, and ritual correctness. The narrative foregrounds law, custom, and oath as tools for survival at sea and abroad, suggesting that prudence, adaptability, and cooperative discipline are as crucial to glory as audacity.

The poem’s most penetrating psychological study gathers around Medea, introduced in Colchis as a young woman whose knowledge and conscience collide with sudden, overwhelming feeling. Apollonius opens her interior world with unprecedented attention for epic, tracing

hesitation, shame, calculation, and courage without reducing her to a symbol. She becomes a vantage point from which the risks of the expedition appear intimate and irreversible, and from which love itself looks like a hazardous technology. Divine pressures mingle with human motives, so that choice feels both compelled and freely made. Through her, the narrative tests how agency survives within family, custom, and fear.

Equally striking is the poem’s Hellenistic curiosity about the wider world. Ports, rivers, and winds are named with cartographic care, and encounters with foreign courts unfold through ritual etiquette and negotiation. The narrative lingers on technology, from shipbuilding to navigation, and on practices of healing, sacrifice, and storytelling that circulate between communities. Allusion links this voyage to earlier poetry while acknowledging new realities of distance and exchange. The result is an epic that functions as a cultural atlas as well as an adventure, conscious of borders and translations, and attentive to how news, goods, and reputations move along the same currents.

For contemporary readers, The Argonautica matters because it models how shared ventures succeed or fail, how desire can rewire duty, and how persuasion outlasts brute force. Its clear architecture and four-book scale make it an approachable epic, yet its choices echo widely in later literature, shaping Roman and postclassical myths of voyaging and love. More urgently, it speaks to a world of crossings: migration, diplomacy, scientific mapping, and cultural translation. The poem invites reflection on leadership without hero worship, on consent and complicity

within unequal exchanges, and on the price of glory when its rewards must be carried home and lived with.

Synopsis

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Apollonius Rhodius, a Hellenistic Greek poet of the third century BCE, composed The Argonautica as an epic in four books recounting the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts to seize the Golden Fleece from Colchis. Ordered by Pelias to undertake the mission, Jason gathers renowned companions—Heracles, Orpheus, Castor and Polydeuces, Telamon, Peleus, and others—aboard the Argo, a ship built by Argus with Athena's guidance and fitted with sacred timber from Dodona. Favored by Hera and aided by Athena, they depart from Iolcus, steering through known and newly charted waters. The poem's measured tone stresses leadership, cooperation, and the complexities of initiating a heroic enterprise.

Early stages bring the crew to Lemnos, where a community of women ruled by Hypsipyle receives them with unusual warmth. Domestic comforts and mutual attraction threaten to delay the expedition, probing the tensions between desire and duty that the poem repeatedly tests. Counsel and conscience prevail, and the Argonauts resume their course, their fame growing but their cohesion already under strain. Apollonius underscores the fragile balance between individual impulses and collective purpose, showing a band of celebrated figures learning to act as one. The voyage gathers ethnographic detail and ritual color as it threads islands and straits toward less familiar seas.

Hospitality and hazard intermingle among the Doliones, where King Cyzicus welcomes the Argonauts before a stormy night leads to tragic, mistaken conflict upon their return to shore. Mourning and atonement follow, and the ship presses on to the Bebrycian coast, where the brutish Amycus challenges all comers until Polydeuces answers in a regulated bout that restores civic norms. In Mysia, the loss of Hylas and Heracles' fruitless search separate the strongest hero from the company, a sober reminder that prowess cannot master chance. The poem tracks costs as well as achievements, revealing leadership tested by grief, absence, and capricious winds.

Guidance arrives through the blind seer Phineus, tormented by Harpies until the winged sons of Boreas intervene. In return, Phineus foretells safe tactics for navigating the Symplegades, where the Argonauts prove their prudence by sending a bird before the ship and time their passage between the clashing rocks. Emerging onto the Black Sea, they advance toward Colchis and the court of Aeetes, ruler and guardian of the Fleece. Divine politics intensify as Hera and Athena solicit Aphrodite's aid; Eros' intervention directs Medea's emotions toward Jason, entwining personal passion with larger designs and pivoting the narrative toward negotiation and trial.

At Colchis, Jason offers embassy and accepts stringent conditions: he must yoke fire-breathing bulls, plow a field, sow dragon's teeth, and withstand the emergence of earthborn warriors. Apollonius moves inward, detailing the turmoil of Medea, a priestess and daughter of Aeetes, skilled in medicines yet divided by loyalty, fear, and desire. The

gods’ pressures sharpen her conflict while Jason’s leadership depends on persuasion as much as strength. The epic lingers on counsel, craft, and the ethics of promises, presenting heroism as poise under impossible terms rather than simple domination, and preparing the ground for choices that will propel the flight to come.

With the trials engaged, attention shifts to the Fleece itself, kept in a sacred grove and guarded by an unsleeping serpent. Strategies, oaths, and sudden departures reshape alliances as pursuit begins across intricate waterways and open sea. The Argonauts confront questions of law and ritual, undertaking purifications and submitting to judgments when required, while navigation demands constant ingenuity. Encounters with distant monarchs and liminal landscapes broaden the epic’s compass from contest to evasion. The poem emphasizes the reliance on divine indications and human counsel alike, reserving definitive outcomes while the company labors to carry their prize beyond the reach of adversaries.

The homeward leg compounds dangers: detours to the world’s margins, hospitality from helpful hosts, a bronze giant at Crete whose threat must be neutralized, and renewed attention to obligations awaiting at Iolcus. The conclusion acknowledges completion of the quest while leaving future reckonings outside the poem’s bounds. Apollonius reshapes epic for a learned age, privileging teamwork, interiority, and precise geography over relentless warfare. His Argonautica influenced later poets and sustained the myth’s vitality, offering an enduring meditation on leadership, love, and fate. It suggests that

success rests on counsel and cohesion, and that voyages alter crews as much as coasts.

Historical Context

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Apollonius Rhodius composed the Argonautica in the mid-third century BCE, within the scholarly milieu of Ptolemaic Alexandria. The poem recounts the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts in dactylic hexameter, the meter of Homer, yet it is a Hellenistic reimagining rather than an archaic relic. Apollonius is associated with Alexandria's intellectual institutions and later with Rhodes, from which he takes his epithet. The poem belongs to a milieu of readers and patrons connected to the Ptolemaic court. Its composition dates align with the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his successors, when poetry, scholarship, and royal display were tightly intertwined.

Alexandria's Museum and Library fostered systematic philology, cataloging, and textual criticism that reshaped how Greeks engaged their past. Scholars such as Zenodotus edited Homer; Callimachus compiled the Pinakes, a comprehensive catalogue of authors and works. This environment prized learned allusion, precise language, and careful research. Poets operated amid grammarians, antiquarians, and geographers, producing verse that conversed with scholarship. The Argonautica reflects this world through its attention to variant myths, place names, and ritual detail, pairing narrative with erudition. It is a literary artifact of institutions that sought to collect, compare, and refine the Greek tradition under royal patronage.

In the Hellenistic world after Alexander's conquests, power was divided among kingdoms, notably the Ptolemies in Egypt, the Seleucids in Asia, and the Antigonids in Macedon. The Ptolemies cultivated maritime strength across the eastern Mediterranean, maintaining naval bases and influence over islands and sea lanes that linked Egypt to the Aegean and beyond. Commerce, settlement, and diplomacy extended Greek contact with the Black Sea and Near Eastern regions evoked by the Argonaut myth. Audiences in Alexandria and Rhodes could recognize a voyage narrative aligned with their era's seaborne horizons, mapping heroic travel onto contemporary interests in navigation and distant administration.

Apollonius wrote under the influence of Alexandrian aesthetics that favored polish, learned brevity, and innovation within tradition. Callimachus famously championed refined, smaller-scale forms, though epic persisted as a prestigious mode. The Argonautica reconciles these currents: it adopts Homeric meter and myth while integrating concise episodes, catalogic precision, and understated style. The poem's narrative voice is more restrained than heroic battle epics, showing interest in motive, persuasion, and ritual correctness. Such choices mirror a culture that prized erudition and subtlety, testing how a long poem might meet the standards of a critical, text-centered scholarly audience.

Apollonius inherited a rich Argonaut tradition from archaic and classical poetry and mythography. Pindar's Pythian 4 offered a celebrated account of the expedition; tragedians and historians preserved episodes and

genealogies; and local cults commemorated heroes along the route. Alexandrian scholars collected such materials, comparing variant accounts and regional claims. The Argonautica deploys this archive with precision, negotiating competing versions of places, lineages, and etiologies. By organizing diverse traditions into a single voyage, the poem models an Alexandrian synthesis, demonstrating how learned curation could generate coherent narrative while acknowledging the plurality of sources that the Library made visible.

Contemporary science informed Hellenistic poetics. Eratosthenes and his peers advanced geography and mathematical cartography; periploi and navigational handbooks circulated among mariners; and Aratus' Phaenomena popularized astronomical knowledge in verse. The Argonautica integrates this climate of description through detailed coastlines, rivers, winds, and seasonal markers. Its interest in routes to the Black Sea, the Propontis, and the eastern Mediterranean echoes scholarly fascination with mapping the oikoumene. Such features anchor the mythic voyage in plausible space, aligning heroic travel with the observational habits prized by Alexandrian research, without reducing the narrative to science.

The poem emerged in a book-centered literary culture. Scroll publication, annotated editions, and scholarly commentary shaped composition and reception. Court patronage encouraged poets to craft works that rewarded rereading and philological scrutiny as much as public performance. Rhodes, with its maritime standing and intellectual life, provided another setting where a voyage

epic could resonate; Apollonius' association with the island is reflected in his epithet. Across such centers, poets interacted with scholars, librarians, and officials, producing texts designed for learned audiences who evaluated myth, language, and sources with the same care they devoted to statecraft and collection.

Through its learned voyage, the Argonautica reflects Hellenistic priorities: cosmopolitan contact, technical knowledge, and the negotiation of power through counsel as much as combat. It emphasizes planning, ritual observance, and cooperation among specialists, paralleling courtly bureaucracies and coordinated fleets. Psychological attention and delicate pathos temper martial bravado, recasting heroism for a world governed by diplomacy and expertise. While honoring Homeric precedent, the poem subjects it to Alexandrian scrutiny, suggesting that mastery in letters, maps, and institutions is as consequential as strength. In doing so, Apollonius offers a distinctly third-century vision of myth suited to the age that preserved and reinterpreted it.

The Argonautica

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INTRODUCTION

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Much has been written about the chronology of Alexandrian literature and the famous Library, founded by Ptolemy Soter**[1]**, but the dates of the chief writers are still matters of conjecture. The birth of Apollonius Rhodius is placed by scholars at various times between 296 and 260 B.C., while the year of his death is equally uncertain. In fact, we have very little information on the subject. There are two "lives" of Apollonius in the Scholia**[2]**, both derived from an earlier one which is lost. From these we learn that he was of Alexandria by birth,[1] that he lived in the time of the Ptolemies, and was a pupil of Callimachus**[3]**; that while still a youth he composed and recited in public his *Argonautica**[4]***, and that the poem was condemned, in consequence of which he retired to Rhodes; that there he revised his poem, recited it with great applause, and hence called himself a Rhodian. The second "life" adds: "Some say that he returned to Alexandria and again recited his poem

with the utmost success, so that he was honoured with the libraries of the Museum[2] and was buried with Callimachus." The last sentence may be interpreted by the notice of Suidas, who informs us that Apollonius was a contemporary of Eratosthenes, Euphorion and Timarchus, in the time of Ptolemy Euergetes, and that he succeeded Eratosthenes in the headship of the Alexandrian Library. Suidas also informs us elsewhere that Aristophanes at the age of sixty-two succeeded Apollonius in this office. Many modern scholars deny the "bibliothecariate" of Apollonius for chronological reasons, and there is considerable difficulty about it. The date of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo,* which closes with some lines (105-113) that are admittedly an allusion to Apollonius, may be put with much probability at 248 or 247 B.C. Apollonius must at that date have been at least twenty years old. Eratosthenes died 196-193 B.C. This would make Apollonius seventy-two to seventy-five when he succeeded Eratosthenes. This is not impossible, it is true, but it is difficult. But the difficulty is taken away if we assume with Ritschl that Eratosthenes resigned his office some years before his death, which allows us to put the birth of Apollonius at about 280, and would solve other difficulties. For instance, if the Librarians were buried within the precincts, it would account for the burial of Apollonius next to Callimachus—Eratosthenes being still alive. However that may be, it is rather arbitrary to take away the "bibliothecariate" of Apollonius, which is clearly asserted by Suidas, on account of chronological calculations which are themselves uncertain. Moreover, it is more probable that the words following "some say" in the second "life" are a

remnant of the original life than a conjectural addition, because the first "life" is evidently incomplete, nothing being said about the end of Apollonius' career.

[Footnote 1: "Or of Naucratis," according to Aelian and Athenaeus.]

[Footnote 2: [Greek: hôs kai tôn bibliothêkôn tou mouseiou axiôthênai auton.]]

The principal event in his life, so far as we know, was the quarrel with his master Callimachus, which was most probably the cause of his condemnation at Alexandria and departure to Rhodes. This quarrel appears to have arisen from differences of literary aims and taste, but, as literary differences often do, degenerated into the bitterest personal strife. There are references to the quarrel in the writings of both. Callimachus attacks Apollonius in the passage at the end of the *Hymn to Apollo*, already mentioned, also probably in some epigrams, but most of all in his *Ibis*, of which we have an imitation, or perhaps nearly a translation, in Ovid's poem of the same name. On the part of Apollonius there is a passage in the third book of the *Argonautica* (11. 927-947) which is of a polemical nature and stands out from the context, and the well-known savage epigram upon Callimachus.[1] Various combinations have been attempted by scholars, notably by Couat, in his *Poésie Alexandrine*, to give a connected account of the quarrel, but we have not *data* sufficient to determine the order of the attacks, and replies, and counter-attacks. The *Ibis* has been thought to mark the termination of the feud on the curious ground that it was impossible for abuse to go further. It was an age when literary men were more inclined to comment on

writings of the past than to produce original work. Literature was engaged in taking stock of itself. Homer was, of course, professedly admired by all, but more admired than imitated. Epic poetry was out of fashion and we find many epigrams of this period—some by Callimachus—directed against the "cyclic" poets, by whom were meant at that time those who were always dragging in conventional and commonplace epithets and phrases peculiar to epic poetry. Callimachus was in accordance with the spirit of the age when he proclaimed "a great book" to be "a great evil," and sought to confine poetical activity within the narrowest limits both of subject and space. Theocritus agreed with him, both in principle and practice. The chief characteristics of Alexandrianism are well summarized by Professor Robinson Ellis as follows: "Precision in form and metre, refinement in diction, a learning often degenerating into pedantry and obscurity, a resolute avoidance of everything commonplace in subject, sentiment or allusion." These traits are more prominent in Callimachus than in Apollonius, but they are certainly to be seen in the latter. He seems to have written the *Argonautica* out of bravado, to show that he *could* write an epic poem. But the influence of the age was too strong. Instead of the unity of an Epic we have merely a series of episodes, and it is the great beauty and power of one of these episodes that gives the poem its permanent value—the episode of the love of Jason and Medea. This occupies the greater part of the third book. The first and second books are taken up with the history of the voyage to Colchis, while the fourth book describes the return voyage. These portions constitute a metrical guide book, filled no doubt

with many pleasing episodes, such as the rape of Hylas, the boxing match between Pollux and Amycus, the account of Cyzicus, the account of the Amazons, the legend of Talos, but there is no unity running through the poem beyond that of the voyage itself.

[Footnote 1: Anth. Pal. xi. 275.]

The Tale of the Argonauts had been told often before in verse and prose, and many authors' names are given in the Scholia to Apollonius, but their works have perished. The best known earlier account that we have is that in Pindar's fourth Pythian ode, from which Apollonius has taken many details. The subject was one for an epic poem, for its unity might have been found in the working out of the expiation due for the crime of Athamas; but this motive is barely mentioned by our author.

As we have it, the motive of the voyage is the command of Pelias to bring back the golden fleece**[5]**, and this command is based on Pelias' desire to destroy Jason, while the divine aid given to Jason results from the intention of Hera to punish Pelias for his neglect of the honour due to her. The learning of Apollonius is not deep but it is curious; his general sentiments are not according to the Alexandrian standard, for they are simple and obvious. In the mass of material from which he had to choose the difficulty was to know what to omit, and much skill is shewn in fusing into a tolerably harmonious whole conflicting mythological and historical details. He interweaves with his narrative local legends and the founding of cities, accounts of strange customs, descriptions of works of art, such as that of Ganymede and Eros playing with knucklebones,[1] but

prosaically calls himself back to the point from these pleasing digressions by such an expression as "but this would take me too far from my song." His business is the straightforward tale and nothing else. The astonishing geography of the fourth book reminds us of the interest of the age in that subject, stimulated no doubt by the researches of Eratosthenes and others.

[Footnote 1: iii. 117-124.]

The language is that of the conventional epic. Apollonius seems to have carefully studied Homeric glosses, and gives many examples of isolated uses, but his choice of words is by no means limited to Homer. He freely avails himself of Alexandrian words and late uses of Homeric words. Among his contemporaries Apollonius suffers from a comparison with Theocritus, who was a little his senior, but he was much admired by Roman writers who derived inspiration from the great classical writers of Greece by way of Alexandria. In fact Alexandria was a useful bridge between Athens and Rome. The *Argonautica* was translated by Varro Atacinus, copied by Ovid and Virgil, and minutely studied by Valerius Flaccus in his poem of the same name. Some of his finest passages have been appropriated and improved upon by Virgil by the divine right of superior genius.[1] The subject of love had been treated in the romantic spirit before the time of Apollonius in writings that have perished, for instance, in those of Antimachus of Colophon, but the *Argonautica* is perhaps the first poem still extant in which the expression of this spirit is developed with elaboration. The Medea of Apollonius is the direct precursor of the Dido of Virgil, and it

is the pathos and passion of the fourth book of the Aeneid that keep alive many a passage of Apollonius.

[Footnote 1: e.g. compare *Aen.* iv. 305 foll, with Ap. Rh. iv. 355 foll., *Aen.* iv. 327-330 with Ap. Rh. i. 897, 898, *Aen.* iv. 522 foll., with Ap. Rh. iii. 744 foll.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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Two editions of the Argonautica were published by Apollonius. Of these we have only the second. The Scholia preserve a few passages of the first edition, from which the second seems to have differed only slightly. The old opinion that our MSS. preserve any traces of the first edition has long been given up. The principal MSS. are the following:—

The Laurentian, also called the Medicean, XXXII. 9, of the early eleventh century, the excellent MS. at Florence which contains Sophocles, Aeschylus and Apollonius Rhodius. This is far the best authority for the text (here denoted by L).

The Guelferbytanus of the thirteenth century, which closely agrees with another Laurentian, XXXII. 16, of the same date (here denoted by G and L^2 respectively).

There were in the early eleventh century two types of text, the first being best known to us by L, the second by G and L^2 and the corrections made in L. Quotations in the

Etymologicum Magnum agree with the second type and show that this is as old as the fifth century. Besides these there are, of inferior MSS., four Vatican and five Parisian which are occasionally useful. Most of them have Scholia; the best Scholia are those of L.

The principal editions are:—

Florence, 1496, 4to. This is the *editio princeps*, by Lascaris, based on L, with Scholia, a very rare book.

Venice, 1521, 8vo. The Aldine, by Franciscus Asulanus, with Scholia.

Paris, 1541, 8vo, based on the Parisian MSS.

Geneva, 1574, 4to, by Stephanus, with Scholia.

Leyden, 1641, 2 vols., 8vo, by J. Hölzlin, with a Latin version.

Oxford, 1777, 2 vols., 4to, by J. Shaw, with a Latin version.

Strassburg, 1780, 8vo and 4to, by R.F.P. Brunck.

Rome, 1791-1794, 2 vols., 4to, by Flangini, with an Italian translation.

Leipzig, 1797, 8vo, by Ch. D. Beck, with a Latin version. A second volume, to contain the Scholia and a commentary, was never published.

Leipzig, 1810-1813, 2 vols., 8vo. A second edition of Brunck by G.H. Schäfer, with the Florentine and Parisian Scholia, the latter printed for the first time.

Leipzig, 1828, 8vo, by A. Wellauer, with the Scholia, both Florentine and Parisian.

Paris, 1811, 4to, by F.S. Lehrs, with a Latin version. In the Didot series.

Leipzig, 1852, 8vo, by R. Merkel, "ad cod. MS. Laurentianum." The
Teubner Text.

Leipzig, 1854, 2 vols., 8vo, by R. Merkel. The second volume contains
Merkel's prolegomena and the Scholia to L, edited by H. Keil.

Oxford, 1900, 8vo, by R.C. Seaton. In the "Scriptorum Classicorum
Bibliotheca Oxoniensis" series.

The text of the present edition is, with a few exceptions, that of the Oxford edition prepared by me for the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, whom I hereby thank for their permission to use it.

The English translations of Apollonius are as follows:—

By E.B. Greene, by F. Fawkes, both 1780; by W. Preston, 1803. None of these are of value. There is a prose translation by E.P. Coleridge in the Bohn Series. The most recent and also the best is a verse translation by Mr. A.S. Way, 1901, in "The Temple Classics."

I may also mention the excellent translation in French by Prof. H. de La
Ville de Mirmont of the University of Bordeaux, 1892.

Upon Alexandrian literature in general Couat's *Poésie Alexandrine, sous les trois premiers Ptoletmées*, 1882, may be recommended. Susemihl's *Geschichte der Griechischen Litteratur in der Alexandinerzeit*, 2 vols., 1891, is a perfect storehouse of facts and authorities, but more adapted for reference than for general reading. Morris' *Life and Death of Jason* is a poem that in many passages singularly resembles Apollonius in its pessimistic tone and spirit.

oaks; the phrase 'oak of Dodona' refers to such a revered tree whose wood or voice was thought to have oracular significance.

7 Orpheus is the legendary musician and poet, here described as son of the Muse Calliope and a member of the Argonauts; in myth his music could charm animals, plants and inanimate objects, and later traditions give him a central role in mystery rites.

8 A local landmark mentioned as the rock round which the Argonauts tied their ship's hawsers; in the poem it marks the Dolionian shore and is preserved in local tradition as a named feature.

9 A people who inhabited the island visited by the Argonauts under King Cyzicus; a tragic nighttime mistake leads to a battle in which their king is slain.

10 A term used in ancient sources for various pre-Hellenic or non-Greek peoples of the Aegean and Anatolia; its precise ethnic or linguistic referent varied by author and region.

11 An epithet for Jason, son of Aeson, the leader of the Argonauts in the epic; the phrase is repeatedly used in classical poetry as a patronymic.

12 A Titaness in Greek mythology, often worshipped in Phrygian form (cf. Cybele) as a mother-goddess; in the passage she is the deity propitiated on Mount Dindymum to calm storms.

13 A seabird (classically associated with the kingfisher) whose cry is given prophetic significance here; in later tradition the halcyon is linked with calming of the sea and omens.

14 Legendary figures tied to Mount Ida, often described as metalworkers, ritual specialists, or minor deities associated with craft and fate; sources vary on their exact nature and origin.

15 Winged female monsters in Greek myth who snatch food and torment mortals; in this episode they plague the blind prophet Phineus by stealing his meals and leaving a foul stench.

16 A local epithet of Zeus linked to a coastal promontory or sanctuary; in ancient Greek geography such epithets mark a place-specific cult of Zeus and a nearby headland or sacred site.

17 An ancient people mentioned by classical authors who lived on the southern coast of the Black Sea (Pontus), generally placed in parts of what is now northeastern Turkey.

18 A tribal people of the Black Sea region described in classical sources as living in high wooden huts called mossynes (noted in the text's footnote), known for customs that struck Greeks as unusual.

19 A small island in the Black Sea region associated in myth with the war-god Ares and with hostile birds in this episode; it appears in classical geography and legend rather than as a precisely identified modern island.

20 A mythical seer and king in Greek tradition who appears in Argonautica as an adviser to the Argonauts; in other versions he is tormented by the Harpies and receives prophetic knowledge.

21 Descendants of Phrixus, the exile who brought the golden ram (and its fleece) to Colchis; in the poem they