

## The Race and the Rhetoric of Hypsipyle's Speech to Jason in Apollonius' *Argonautica*

Ancient readers familiar with the myths about the Argonauts' stop on all-women island of Lemnos would have come to Apollonius' *Argonautica* expecting an account of how it got that made women of the island guilty of massacring all the men. Aphrodite became angry with the women for some offense and retaliated by afflicting them with a foul odor that drove their husbands into the beds of their enslaved Thracian captives. The women's sexual jealousy led them to slaughter all the Lemnian males with their Thracian concubines. However, Apollonius thwarts his readers' expectations by presenting two new versions of the massacre that shift the blame away from the women. In the first account, the narrator is deliberately ambiguous about who incited Aphrodite's wrath and leaves out any reference to the goddess punishing the women with a foul smell. Moreover, the explicit "happy ending" of the episode, where, with the help of the Argonauts, the women repopulate the island suggest that it was the men who offended the goddess and their inordinate passion for the Thracian women was their divine punishment designed to provoke the violent response of the women. The second account by Hypsipyle, which was widely admired in antiquity, substitutes the more familiar misogynist explanation with an overtly racist one. Hypsipyle marries an argument about the filial piety that the men owe their wives and daughters to one based on eugenics and the threat of an inferior race supplanting a superior one on the island. Given that the Argonauts end up replacing the indigenous Lemnian men and fathering the next generation, the speech works as a species of racecraft justifying the Hellenization of the island as a divinely sanctioned "great replacement."