

Abstract: Apollonius of Rhodes' portrayal of the sea goddess Thetis in the Argonautica (3rd century BCE) clearly builds on her representation in Homer's Iliad. In this presentation I argue that Apollonius also alters the behavior and narrative role of Thetis in connection with the Ptolemaic reconceptualization of the sea and sea deities, particularly the cult of Arsinoe-Aphrodite-Zephyritis as a protector of sailors. Translations mine except where otherwise noted.

1. Posidippus 39 AB 2002

καὶ μέλλων ἄλα νηὶ περᾶν καὶ πείσμα καθάπτειν
χερσόθεν, Εὐπλοῖαι· 'χαῖρε' δὲς Ἀρσινόη,
[πό]ττιαν ἐκ νηοῦ καλέων θεόν, ἣν ὁ Βοῖσκου
ναυαρχῶν Σάμιος θήκατο Καλλικράτης,
ναυτίλε, σοὶ τὰ μάλιστα· κατ' εὐπλοῖαν δὲ διώκει (5)
τῆσδε θεοῦ χρήζων πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλος ἀνὴρ·
εἴνεκα καὶ χερσαῖα καὶ εἰς ἄλα δῖαν ἀφιεῖς
εὐχὰς εὐρήσεις τὴν ἐπακουσομένην.

Whether you are about to cross the sea in a ship or to fasten the cable
From the shore, say 'greetings' to Arsinoe of Fair Sailing,
Invoking the revered goddess from her temple, which was dedicated
By the Samian captain Callicrates son of Boiscus,
For you, sailor, especially. And in pursuit of a fair journey
Other people too often address a demand to this goddess.
And that is why, whether you are heading for dry land or the divine sea,
You will find a Lady ready to listen to your prayers.
(Austin-Bastianini 2002)

2. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.873-79

αὐτὰρ ὅγ' ἐξ εὐνῆς ἀναπάλμενος εἰσενόησεν
παῖδα φίλον σπαίροντα διὰ φλογός, ἦκε δ' αὐτὴν
σμερδαλέην ἐσιδών, μέγα νήπιος· ἡ δ' αἰούσα, (875)
τὸν μὲν ἄρ' ἀρπάγδην χαμάδις βάλε κεκλιγῶτα,
αὐτὴ δὲ, πνοιῇ ἱκέλη δέμας, ἡύτ' ὄνειρος,
βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐκ μεγάρου θοῶς καὶ ἐσῆλατο πόντον
χωσαμένη· μετὰ δ' οὐ τι παλίσυτος ἵκετ' ὀπίσσω.

But he [Peleus] sprang from the bed, looked at
His own son struggling because of the flame, and let loose
A fearsome roar at the sight, the overgrown child. Hearing him
She hurled the squalling baby to the ground,
Then she herself, like a breeze, like a dream,
Flew from the chamber and dove into the sea
In her anger, and after that she never again returned.

3. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.833-68

Ἦς φάτο· τὴν δὲ Θέτις τοῖω προσελέξατο μύθῳ·
"Εἰ μὲν δὴ μαλεροῖο πυρὸς μένος ἡδὲ θυέλλαι
ζαχρηεῖς λήξουσιν ἐτήτυμον, ἦ τ' ἂν ἐγωγε 835
θαρσαλέῃ φαίην καὶ κύματος ἀντιόωντος
νῆα σωσέμεναι, ζεφύρου λίγα κινυμένοιο.
ἀλλ' ὦρῃ δολιχὴν τε καὶ ἄσπετον οἶμον ὁδεύειν,
ὄφρα κασιγνήτας μετ' ἐλεύσομαι αἰ μοι ἄρωγοί
ἔσσονται, καὶ νηὶς θοὴ πρυμνήσι' ἀνῆπται, 840
ὥς κεν ὑπηῤοι μνησαῖατο ναυτίλλεσθαι."
Ἦ, καὶ ἀνείξασα κατ' αἰθέρος ἔμπεσε δίναις
κυανέου πόντοιο, κάλει δ' ἐπαμυνέμεν ἄλλας
αὐτοκασιγνήτας Νηρηίδας· αἰ δ' αἰούσαι
ἦντεον ἀλλήλησι, Θέτις δ' ἀγόρευεν ἐφετμὰς 845
Ἦρης, αἴψα δ' ἱάλλε μετ' Αὐσονίην ἄλα πάσας.
αὐτὴ δ' ὠκυτέρῃ ἀμαρῦγματος ἡδὲ βολῶν
ἡελίου δτ' ἀνεισι περαίνης ὑπόθι γαίης,
σεύατ' ἴμεν λαυπηρὰ δι' ὕδατος, ἔστ' ἀφίκανεν
ἀκτὴν Αἰαίην Τυρσηνίδος ἡπείροιο. 850
τοὺς δ' εὗρεν παρὰ νηὶ σὺλῳ ῥιπῆσσι τ' οἰστών
τερπομένους· στή δ' ἄσπον, ὀρεξαμένη χερὸς ἄκρης,
Αἰακίδαο Πηληϊός, ὁ γὰρ ῥά οἱ ἦεν ἀκοίτης·
οὐδέ τις εἰσιδέειν δύναιτ' ἀμφοδόν, ἀλλ' ἄρα τῷγε
οἶφ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν εἰείσατο, φώνησέν τε· 855
"Μηκέτι νῦν ἀκταῖς Τυρσηνίσιν ἦσθε μένοντες,
ἡδῶθεν δὲ θοῆς πρυμνήσια λύετε νηός,
Ἦρῃ πειθόμενοι, ἐπαρηγόνοι· τῆς γὰρ ἐφετμῆς
πασσίδι κοῦραι Νηρηίδες ἀντιώσιν
νῆα διέκ πέτρας αἰ τε Πλαγκταὶ καλέονται 860
ῥυσόμεναι· κείνῃ γὰρ ἐναῖσιμος ὅμμι κέλευθος.
ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ τῷ ἐμὸν δείξης δέμας, εὖτ' ἂν ἴδῃαι
ἀντομένην σὺν τῇσι, νόφ' ὅς' ἔχε, μὴ με χολώσης
πλεῖον ἔτ' ἢ τὸ πάροιθεν ἀπηλεγέως ἐχόλωσας."
Ἦ, καὶ ἔπειτ' αἰδήλος ἐδόσσατο βένθεα πόντου· 865
τὸν δ' ἄχος αἰνὸν ἔτυπεν ἐπεὶ πάρος οὐ μετιούσαν
ἔδρακεν ἐξότε πρῶτα λίπεν θάλαμόν τε καὶ εὐνὴν,
χωσαμένην Ἀχιλῆος ἀγαυοῦ νηπιάρχοντος.

So she spoke, and Thetis answered with this statement:

"If it is true that the might of glowing fire and the raging winds
Will actually cease, then I for my part
In good confidence can say that I will save the ship
Even with an opposing sea, if the zephyr sweetly stirs.
But now it is time to travel a great distance
To join my sisters, who will be my helpers,
And to the place where the ship's mooring lines are fixed,
That at dawn they may remember their voyage."

She spoke, leapt up through the air and dove into the eddying
Dark sea, and called to others for help,
Her own Nereid sisters. Hearing her
They met each other, and Thetis announced the commands
Of Hera and quickly sent all of them to the Ausonian sea.
But she, swifter than a flash or rays
Of the sun, when it rises above earth's edge,
Sped lightly through the water, until she reached
The Aeaeon headland on the Tyrrhenian shore.
She found them beside the ship, delighting in throwing stones and
shooting arrows. She stood nearby and reached for the hand
Of Peleus, son of Aeacus, for he was her husband.
And no one else could regard her openly, but to him
Alone she became visible, and said:

"No longer now sit waiting on the Tyrrhenian headland,
But at dawn release the mooring lines of the ship,
And obey Hera, who aids you, for by her command
With all speed the young Nereids are coming,
To draw your ship through the rocks called the Planktae,
For this journey, for you, is a good omen.
But don't you go pointing me out to anyone, when you see
Me coming with them, if you don't want me even madder
Than the last time you in your thoughtlessness made me mad."
She spoke, and disappeared in the depths of the sea,
But a terrible pain struck him, for until now he had not seen
Her attend since she first left their chamber and their bed,
Angered because of noble Achilles, when he was a child.

4. Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.930-55

930
 ἔνθα σφιν κοῦραι Νηρηίδες ἄλλοθεν ἄλλαι
 ἦντεον, ἥ δ' ὅπιθε πτέρυγος θίγε πηδάλιοιο
 δῖα Θέτις, Πιλαγκτῆσιν ἐνὶ σπινθήδεσσιν ἔρυσθαι.
 ὥς δ' ὁπότεν δελφίνες ὑπὲξ ἁλὸς εὐδιόωντες
 σπερχομένην ἀγγελιδὸν ἐλίσσωνται περὶ νῆα,
 ἄλλοτε μὲν προπάροιθεν ὁρώμενοι ἄλλοτ' ὀπίσθην 935
 ἄλλοτε παρβολάδην, ναύτησι δὲ χάρμα τέτυκται—
 ὥς αἱ ὑπεκπροθέουσαι ἐπήτριμοι ἐλίσσοντο
 Ἀργῶν περὶ νηΐ· Θέτις δ' ἴθυνε κέλευθον.
 καὶ ῥ' ὅτε δὴ Πιλαγκτῆσιν ἐνχιρίμψεσθαι ἔμελλον,
 αὐτίκ' ἀνασχόμεναι λευκοῖς ἐπὶ γούνασι πέζας, 940
 ὑψοῦ ἐπ' αὐτῶν σπινθῶδων καὶ κύματος ἀγῆς
 ῥῶοντ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διασταδὸν ἀλλήλησιν.
 τὴν δὲ παρηγορήν κόπτεν ῥόος· ἀμφὶ δὲ κύμα
 λάβρον ἀειρόμενον πέτραις ἐπικαχλάζεσκεν,
 αἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν κρημνοῖς ἐναλίγκιαι ἡέρι κύρον, 945
 ἄλλοτε δὲ βρύχια νεάτω ὑπὸ κεῦθεϊ πόντου
 ἡρήρεινθ', ὅθι πολλὸν ὑπείρεχεν ἄγριον οἶδμα.
 αἱ δ', ὥστ' ἡμαθόεντος ἐπισχεδὸν αἰγιαλοῖο
 παρθενικαί, δίχα κόλπων ἐπ' ἰζύας εἰλίξασαι,
 σφαίρῃ ἀθύρουσιν περιηγέει· τῇ μὲν ἔπειτα† 950
 ἄλλῃ ὑπ' ἐξ ἄλλης δέχεται καὶ ἐς ἡέρα πέμπει
 ὕψι μεταχρονίην, ἥ δ' οὐ ποτε πύλνεται οὐδεὶς—
 ὥς αἱ νῆα θέουσιν ἀμοιβιδίς ἄλλοθεν ἄλλῃ
 πέμπτε διηγερίην ἐπὶ κύμασιν, αἰὲν ἄπωθεν
 πετρῶων· περὶ δὲ σφιν ἐρευγόμενον ζέεν ὕδωρ.

From here and there other young Nereids were
 Coming to them, and she, behind the ship, grasped the rudder blade,
 Shining Thetis, to draw it amid the Wandering Rocks.
 Like a school of dolphins up from the sea when skies are bright
 Whirling around a speeding ship,
 Now visible before, now behind,
 Now beside, delighting the crewmen,
 So they raced on ahead in throngs, whirling
 Around Argo, and Thetis held their course.

And as they were converging on the Planktae
 At that moment, as they pulled their skirts to their white knees
 High above the crags themselves and breaking surf
 They coursed here and there apart from each other.
 The surge beat the sides of the hull, and all around
 Mighty waves were heaving and splashing against the Rocks,
 Sometimes like tall cliffs in the mist,
 But other times deep below, in the lowest ocean abyss,
 Fixed in place, with the wild swell flooding above them.

And they, like girls by dunes along the shore,
 After dividing their skirts, wound in at the waist,
 Play with a spinning ball, † it then †
 One takes up from another and tosses in the air
 High above, but it never comes near the ground—
 Like this they sent back and forth one to another
 The running ship through the air on the combers, always away from
 The Rocks, as the gushing water churned around them.

5. Homer, *Iliad* 18.101-4

νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὐ νέομαι γε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
 οὐδέ τι Πατρόκλῳ γενόμεν φάος οὐδ' ἐτάροισι
 τοῖς ἄλλοις, οἳ δὴ πολέες δάμεν Ἑκτορι δίῳ,
 ἀλλ' ἦμαι παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης,

"Now, since I am not going back to the beloved land of my fathers
 Since I was no light of safety to Patroclus, nor to my other
 Companions, who in their numbers went down before glorious Hector,
 But sit here by my ships, a useless weight on the good land."
 (Lattimore 1961)

6. Homer, *Iliad* 1.413-30

Τὸν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα Θέτις κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα·
 ὦ μοι τέκνον ἐμόν, τί νύ σ' ἔτρεφον αἰνὰ τεκοῦσα;
 αἶθ' ὄφελος παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀδάκρυτος καὶ ἀπῆμων 415
 ἦσθαι, ἐπεὶ νύ τοι αἶσα μίνυνθά περ οὐ τι μάλα δὴν·
 νῦν δ' ἅμα τ' ὠκύμορος καὶ οἴζυρος περὶ πάντων
 ἔπλεο· τὼ σε κακῇ αἴσῃ τέκον ἐν μεγάροισι.
 τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέουσα ἔπος Διὶ τερπικεραύνῳ
 εἶμ' αὐτῇ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἄγάννιφον αἶ κε πίθηται 420
 ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν νηυσὶ παρήμενος ὠκυπόροισι
 μήνι· Ἀχαιοῖσιν, πολέμου δ' ἀποπαύεο πάμπαν·
 Ζεὺς γὰρ ἐς Ὀκεανὸν μετ' ἀμύμονας Αἰθιοπῆας
 χθιζὸς ἔβη κατὰ δαῖτα, θεοὶ δ' ἅμα πάντες ἔποντο· 425
 δωδεκάτῃ δέ τοι αὐτὶς ἐλεύσεται Ὀλύμπῳ δέ,
 καὶ τότε ἔπειτα τοι εἶμι Διὸς ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ,
 καὶ μιν γουνάσομαι καὶ μιν πείσεσθαι οἶω.
 ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας ἀπεβήσето, τὸν δὲ λίπ' αὐτοῦ
 γαώμενον κατὰ θυμὸν ἐὺζῶνοιο γυναικὸς

Thetis answered him then, letting the tears fall: "Ah me,
 My child. Your birth was bitterness. Why did I raise you?
 If only you could sit by your ships, untroubled, not weeping,
 Since indeed your lifetime is to be so short, of no length.
 Now it has befallen that your life must be brief and bitter,
 Beyond all men's. To a bad destiny I bore you in my chambers.
 But I will go to cloud-dark Olympus and ask this
 Thing of Zeus who delights in thunder. Perhaps he will do it.
 Do you therefore continuing to sit by your swift ships
 Be angry at the Achaeans and stay away from all fighting.
 For Zeus went to the blameless Ethiopians at the Ocean
 Yesterday to feast, and the rest of the gods went with him.
 On the twelfth day he will be coming back to Olympus,
 And then I will go for your sake to the house of Zeus, bronze-
 founded,
 And take him by the knees and I think I can persuade him."
 So speaking she went away from that place and left him
 Sorrowing in his heart for the sake of the fair-girdled woman...
 (Lattimore 1961)

7. References to the Zephyr in Apollonius and Homer

Apollonius

- 2.276 the Harpies are faster than the Zephyr (cf. *Il.* 19.415)
 2.721 favoring Zephyr 3 days after Homonoia offering
 2.900 favoring Zephyr 12 days after Ancaeus replaces Tiphys as pilot
 4.768 Hera tells Iris to ask Aeolus for a favoring Zephyr to Phaeacian Drepane
 4.821 Hera tells Thetis that only the Zephyr will blow
 4.837 Thetis says she can save the Argo if the Zephyr is steady
 4.886 The Argo sails with the favoring Zephyr
 4.910 Zephyr and waves bear Argo past the Sirens
 4.1624 favoring Zephyr after Triton's epiphany
 4.1627 a favoring Notos takes over after the Zephyr of 4.1624 ceases

Cf. 4.1098: Zeus sends Boreas vs. sons of Phrixus
 2.1125 & 3.320-21 Argus speaks of fierce windstorms

8. Anyte, Palatine Anthology 9.144

Κύπριδος οὗτος ὁ χῶρος, ἐπεὶ φίλον ἐπλετο τήνᾳ
 αἰὲν ἀπ' ἡπείρου λαμπρὸν ὄρην πέλαγος,
 ὄφρα φίλον ναύτησι τελῇ πλὺν· ἀμφὶ δὲ πόντος
 δειμαίνεται, λιπαρὸν δερκόμενος ξόανον.

9. Apollonius of Rhodes, Fragments

Κάνωβος. Steph. Byz. s.v. χώρα

Ἀπολλώνιος ἐν τῷ Κανώβῳ·

τέρπει δὲ νηῶν ὁ γλυκὺς σε χωρίτης
 πλὺς κομίζων δῶρα πλουσίου Νείλου.

Homer

- Il.* 2.147 the Zephyr strips wheat fields (simile)
Il. 9.5 Boreas and Zephyr cause a storm at sea (simile)
Il. 4.276 Storm cloud driven by the Zephyr (simile)
Il. 4.423 the Zephyr drives storm from sea to land (simile)
Il. 7.63 Troops darken like the Zephyr over water (simile)
Il. 11.305 Zephyr at odds with south wind in storm (simile)
Il. 23.200 storm-blowing Zephyr hosts feast for winds
Il. 23.208 Iris asks Boreas and blustery Zephyr to light Patroclus' funeral pyre (cf. 23.195, 214-18)

Od. 2.421 Athena sends Telemachus a favoring Zephyr

Od. 4.402 Zephyr precedes epiphany of Proteus

Od. 4.567 Zephyr's winds sing in Elysium

Od. 5.295, 332 Poseidon sets all 4 winds against Odysseus

Od. 7.119 Zephyr ripens Alcinous' garden

Od. 10.25 Aeolus looses favoring Zephyr alone

Od. 12.289 Possibility of cyclone from Notos or the stormy Zephyr

Od. 12.408, 426 Screaming Zephyr destroys Odysseus' crew

Od. 14.458 the Zephyr brings rain storm

Od. 19.206 the Zephyr brings snow storm

This country belongs to Cypris, for dear it was to her
 Always from the land to behold a clear sea,
 To make the voyage dear to crewmen, but the circling ocean
 Eyes her shining icon in fear.

Canobus. Stephanus of Byzantium, entry for "country"

Apollonius says in his *Canobus*:

And the sweet voyage of ships will delight you, the one
 bringing your countrymen the gifts of the rich Nile.
 (Race 2008)

10. References to the Zephyr in Hesiod

a. Theogony 378-79

Ἀστραίῳ δ' Ἡὼς ἀνέμους τέκε καρτεροθύμους,
 ἀργεστήν Ζέφυρον Βορέην τ' αἰψηροκέλευθον

To Astraio Eos bore the stouthearted winds,
 bright Zephyr and the swift coursing Boreas

b. Theogony 869-70

ἐκ δὲ Τυφώος ἔστ' ἀνέμων μένος ὕγρὸν ἀέντων,
 νόσφι Νότου Βορέω τε καὶ ἀργεστέῳ Ζεφύροιο·

From Typhoios, the wet strength of blowing winds
 Except Notus, Boreas, and bright Zephyr

c. Erga 592-96

ἐπὶ δ' αἶθοπα πινέμεν οἶνον,
 ἐν σκιῇ ἐξόμενον, κεκορημένον ἦτορ ἐδώδης,
 ἀντίον ἀκραέος Ζεφύρου τρέψαντα πρόσωπα·
 κρήνης δ' ἀεναίου καὶ ἀπορρύτου ἥ τ' ἀθόλωτος
 τρίς ὕδατος προχέειν, τὸ δὲ τέτρατον ἰέμεν οἶνου.

And drink shining wine
 Sitting in the shade, a heart full of food,
 Turned to face the fresh blowing Zephyr.
 From an ever flowing gentle spring
 Pour out three water libations, but the fourth of wine.

11. Callimachus, Iambus 16 fr. 228 Pfeiffer

ἡνύμφα, σὺ μὲν ἄστεριαν ὕπ' ἁμαξαν ἤδη (5)
κλεπτομένην παρθένην σελάνα

] ἀτενεῖς ὁδυρμοί
] μία τοῦτο φωνή
ἀμετέρῃ βασιλείᾳ φρούδα
τῇ παθὼν ἀπέσβη; (10)
ἀ δὲ χύδα ἐδίδασκε λύπα
] μέγας γαμέτας ὁμῶν
] ἀν πρόθεσιν πύρ' αἶθειν
] λεπτὸν ὕδωρ
Θέτιδος τὰ πέρι βωμῶν (15)
]...ὡδε Θήβα.

O bride, already on its way, under
the starry Wain....past the moon
your stolen soul was speeding
....
...lamentation keen...a single voice
and this...our queen gone'
...What was the sorrow
drowned [our light]?
...pain
overflowing taught us
...and the great husband, for his wife
...fires to blaze, an offering
...the delicate water
...facing the altars of Thetis
...Thebes

(Nisetich 2001)

12. Pfeiffer's notes on fr. 228 l.15 Θέτιδος

15 suppl. Wil. e Schol. [τῆς νήσου] ἐν ἡ Θέτιδος [βωμοί (supra ἐν ἡ scr. Θέτις)]

15 insula cum Thetidis aris adhuc ignota; fort. Pharos est insula illa et portus Alexandriae regionis continentis quae contra est insulam (inde usque ad Thebas in Aegypto superioris rogorum flammæ?). Thetidem Alexandriae cultam esse nullum testimonium extat nisi Sext. Emp. Pyrrh. Hyp. III 221 (1 p. 193, 1 sq. Mutschm.) αἰουρον ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τῷ Ὀρῷ (Fabric., ἡρω codd.) θύουσι καὶ Θέτιδι σίλῳ (?)

13. Homer, Iliad 24.93-94

Ὡς ἄρα φωνήσασα κάλυμ' ἔλε δῖα θεάων
κυάνεον, τοῦ δ' οὐ τι μελάντερον ἔπλετο ἔσθος.

So she spoke and, shining among goddesses, took
a midnight blue veil; no garment was darker than this one.

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