Herodotean Reception in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius

1. *Argo.* 2. 1015-1029

They have strange laws and customs. Everything that is right for us to do openly, either in public or in the market place, they carry out at home. Everything we perform indoors, they do outdoors, without censure, in the middle of the streets. There is no public shame in lovemaking, but like pigs that feed in herds, they are not in the slightest abashed with others present and have promiscuous intercourse with women right on the ground. But the king sits in the highest tower and renders straight judgments to the multitude, the poor man, for if he happens to make some mistake in his adjudication, they keep him locked up without food for that day.

ἀλλοίη δὲ δίκη καὶ θέσμια τοίσι τέτυκται.
ὸςα μὲν ἀμφαδὴ βέεζιν θέμις ἤ ἐνί δήμῳ
ἀλλοίη δὲ δίκη καὶ θέσμια τοίσι τέτυκται.
ὸςα μὲν ἀμφαδὴ βέεζιν θέμις ἤ ἐνί δήμῳ
ἢ ἀγορῆ, τάδε πάντα δόμοις ἐνι μηχανόντας
ὸςα δ᾿ ἐνι μεγάροις πεπονθήθη, κεῖτα θύραζε
ἀνεγέως μέσησιν ἐνι ρέζουσιν ἀγναίας.
οὐδὲ εὐνής αἰῶν ἐπιδοίμος, ἄλλα σὺν ὑς
φορβάδες, οὐδ᾿ ἡμεῖς ἀτυχοῦνει παρεσοντας.
μίσονται σακάδις ξυνη φιλότητι γυναικῶν.
αὐτάρ ἐν υγίστοι βασιλεῖς μόσον θαᾶςων
ἰθείας πολέσσι δίκας ιαδοίς δικαίοις,
σχέδιο:· ἤν γάρ ποῦ τι θευστεύον ἄληται,
λιμῷ μιν κεῖν ἡμαρ ἐνικλείσαντες ἔχουσιν

2. *Ana.* 5.4. 32-34

These Mossynoeceans wanted also to have intercourse openly with the women who accompanied the Greeks, for that was their own fashion. And all of them were white, the men and the women alike. They were said by the Greeks who served on the expedition as the most uncivilized people whose country they traversed, the furthest removed from Greek customs. For they habitually did in public the things that other people would do only in private, and when they were alone they would behave just as if they were in the company of others, talking to themselves, laughing at themselves, and dancing in whatever spot they chanced to be, as though they were giving an exhibition to others.

ἐξῆτον δὲ καὶ ταῖς ἐταίραις ἓς ἦν οἱ ὭΕλληνες, ἑμφανὸς συγγίγνεσθαι· νόμος γάρ ἦν οὕτως σφις.
λεικοὶ δὲ πάντες οἱ ἄνδρες καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες, τοῦτος ἠλεγον οἱ στρατευσάμενοι βαρβαρωτάτους διελθείν
καὶ πλείστον τῶν ὍΕλληνικῶν νόμον κεχορισμένους. ἐν τε γάρ ὅλω ὄντες ἐκοίνουν ἄπερ ἢν ἄλλοι ἐν ἄρημι ποιήσαν,
μόνοι τε ὄντες ὡμοί έπιρτον ἀπερ ἢν ἢν ἢν ἄλλου ὄντες, διελέγοντο τε αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐγέλην ἐφ᾿ ἐαυτοῖς καὶ ὄργοντο ἐφιστάμενοι ὃποι τύροιν ὄσπερ ἄλλοις ἐπιδεικνύμενοι.

3. *Hdt.* 2.35.2-3

As the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so have they made all their customs and laws of a kind contrary for the most part to those of all other men. Among them, the women buy and sell, the men abide at home and weave; and whereas in weaving all others push the woof upwards, the Egyptians push it downwards. Men carry burdens on their

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1 Translated by William H. Race
2 Translated by Carleton L. Brownson
3 Translated by A.D. Godley
heads, women on their shoulders. Women make water standing, men sitting. They relieve nature indoors, and eat out of doors in the streets, giving the reason, that things unseemly but necessary should be done in secret, things not unseemly should be done openly.

4. Hdt. 2.91.1
The Egyptians shun the use of Greek customs, and (to speak generally) the customs of any other men whatever.

5. Hdt. 4.180.4
With what armour they equipped their maidens before Greeks came to dwell near them, I cannot say; but I suppose the armour to have been Egyptian; for I hold that the Greeks got their shield and helmet from Egypt.

6. Hdt. 4.189.3
The Greeks also learned from the Libyans the yoking together of four horses.

7. Argonautica 4. 267 – 281
In the days when Egypt, the mother of men of long ago, was called grain-rich Eërie and the wide-flowing river was called Triton, by which all of Eërie is watered, for Zeus’ rain never wets it, but thanks to its streams the fields bear bountiful crops. From here, they say, a man traveled all around Europe and Asia, relying on the strength, might, and courage of his soldiers. He founded countless cities on his way, some of which are perhaps still inhabited, others not, for a great stretch of time has since passed. Aea, at least, has continued to exist to this day, along with the descendants of those men whom that king settled to dwell in Aea. They, in fact, preserve their forefathers’ writings, pillars on which are found all the routes and boundaries of the sea and land for those who travel around them.
οἵ δὲ τοῖς γραπτῖς πατέροις ἔθεν εἰρύονται, κύρβιας, οἷς ἐναὶ πάσαι ὁδοὶ καὶ πεῖρατ᾽ ἔσασιν ὑγρῆς τε τραφερῆς τε πέρις ἐπινισσομένουσιν.

8. Hdt. 2.102.1-3
Passing over these, therefore, I will now speak of the king who came after them, Sesostris. This king, said the priests, set out with a fleet of long ships from the Arabian Gulf and subdued all the dwellers by the Red Sea, till as he sailed on he came to a sea which was too shallow for his vessels. After returning thence back to Egypt, he gathered a great army (according to the story of the priests) and marched over the mainland, subduing every nation to which he came.

Παραμειψάμενος ἃν τούτους τοῦ ἑπί τούτοις γενομένου βασιλέως, τῷ οὖνοιμα ἦν Σέσωστρις, τούτου μνήμην ποιήσαμε· τὸν ἔλεγον οἱ ἱερεῖς πρῶτον μὲν πλοῖοις μακροῦσι ὑμηρθέντα ἐκ τοῦ Ἀραβίου κόλπου τοῦ παρὰ τὴν Ἑρυμῆνα ἥθαλασσαν κατοικημένους καταστρέφεσθαι, ἐς δὲ πλέοντα μὲν πρόσω ἀπεκόμισαι ἐς ἥθαλασσαν σύνεται πλωτήν ὑπὸ βραχέων. ἔνθευτην δὲ χρὸνος ἅπεκέκοι ἐς Αἰγύπτου, κατὰ τὸν ἱερέων τὴν φάτιν, πολλὴν στρατήγη τὸν… ἔλεγον ἦλαυνε δία τῆς ἤπειρου, πᾶν ἐθνὸς τὸ ἐμποδόν καταστρέφομενος.

9. Hdt. 2.104.1-2
For it is plain to see that the Colchians are Egyptians; and this that I say I myself noted before I heard it from others. When I began to think on this matter, I inquired of both peoples; and the Colchians remembered the Egyptians better than the Egyptians remembered the Colchians; the Egyptians said that they held the Colchians to be part of Sesostris’ army. I myself guessed it to be so, partly because they are dark-skinned and woolly-haired; though that indeed goes for nothing, seeing that other peoples, too, are such; but my better proof was that the Colchians and Egyptians and Ethiopians are the only nations that have from the first practised circumcision.

Φαίνονται μὲν γὰρ ἐόντες οἱ Κόλχοι Αἰγύπτιοι, νοῆσας δὲ πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἢ ἀκοῦσας ἀλλον λέγω, ὡς δὲ μοι ἐν φροντίδι ἐγένετο, εἰρήμην ἁμορτέρους, καὶ μᾶλλον οἱ Κόλχοι ἐμεμναύοντο τὸν Αἰγυπτίαν ἢ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τῶν Κόλχων· νομίζειν δὲ ἠφασαν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τῆς Σέσωστριος στρατηγῆς εἶναι τοὺς Κόλχους. αὐτὸς δὲ εἶκασα τήδε, καὶ διὸ μελαγχροες εἰσὶ καὶ οὐλότριχες. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐς οὐδὲν ἄνηκεν· εἰσὶ γάρ καὶ ἔτεροι τοιοῦτοι· ἀλλὰ τοιοῦτα καὶ μᾶλλον, ὅτι μοῦνοι πάντων ἄνθρώπων Κόλχοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ Αἰθιοπεῖς περιπάτων ἄρχης τὰ αἰόδια.

10. Hdt. 2.47.1
Swine are held by the Egyptians to be unclean beasts. Firstly, if an Egyptian touch a hog in passing by, he goes to the river and dips himself in it, clothed as he is and secondly, swineherds, native born Egyptians though they be, are alone of all men forbidden to enter any Egyptian temple; nor will any give a swineherd his daughter in marriage, nor take a wife from their women; but swineherds intermarry among themselves.

"Ὑν δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι μιαρὸν ἤγγεται θηριόν εἶναι, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἢν τις ψαύσῃ αὐτῶν παρὶ υός, αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἰμισίοις ἂπ᾽ ὅν ἔβαψε ἐωτὸν βάς ἐς τὸν ποταμόν· τοῦτο δὲ οἱ συνοίκνοι ἐόντες Αἰγύπτιοι ἐγγενεῖς ἐς ἱδίον οὐδὲν τὸν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἐσέχρονοι μοῦνον πάντων, οὐδὲ σφι ἐκδιδόσθαι οὐδὲς θυγάτερα θέλει οὐδ᾽ ἄγγεθαι ἐς αὐτῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκδιδόνται τε ὅσοι συνοίκοι καὶ ἄγονται ἐς ἄλλην.