

## Herodotean Reception in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius

### 1. *Argo*. 2. 1015- 1029<sup>1</sup>

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.

ἄλλοιή δὲ δίκη καὶ θέσμια τοῖσι τέτυκται.  
ὅσσα μὲν ἀμφοδίη ῥέζειν θέμις ἢ ἐνὶ δήμῳ  
ἄλλοιή δὲ δίκη καὶ θέσμια τοῖσι τέτυκται.  
ὅσσα μὲν ἀμφοδίη ῥέζειν θέμις ἢ ἐνὶ δήμῳ  
ἢ ἀγορῇ, τάδε πάντα δόμοις ἐνὶ μηχανόωνται·  
ὅσσα δ' ἐνὶ μεγάροις πεπονήμεθα, κείνα θύραζε  
ἀμπεγέως μέσσησιν ἐνὶ ῥέζουσιν ἀγυιαῖς.  
οὐδ' εὐνήσ ἀιδῶς ἐπιδήμιος, ἀλλὰ σύες ὡς  
φορβάδες, οὐδ' ἡβαιὸν ἀτυζόμενοι παρεόντας,  
μίσγονται χαμάδις ξυνῆ φιλότητι γυναικῶν.  
αὐτὰρ ἐν ὑψίστῳ βασιλεὺς μόσσυι θαάσσω  
ἰθείας πολέεσσι δίκας λαοῖσι δικάζει,  
σχέτλιος· ἦν γὰρ πού τι θεμιστεύων ἀλίτηται,  
λιμῶ μιν κείν' ἤμαρ ἐνικλείσαντες ἔχουσιν

### 2. *Ana*. 5.4. 32-34<sup>2</sup>

These Mossynoecians 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.

ἐζήτουν δὲ καὶ ταῖς ἑταίραις ἃς ἦγον οἱ Ἕλληνας, ἐμφανῶς συγγίνεσθαι· νόμος γὰρ ἦν οὗτός σφισι.  
λευκοὶ δὲ πάντες οἱ ἄνδρες καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες. τούτους ἔλεγον οἱ στρατευσάμενοι βαρβαρωτάτους διελθεῖν  
καὶ πλεῖστον τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν νόμων κεχωρισμένους. ἐν τε γὰρ ὄχλῳ ὄντες ἐποιοῦν ἅπερ ἂν ἄλλοι ἐν  
ἐρημίᾳ ποιήσων, μόνοι τε ὄντες ὅμοια ἔπραττον ἅπερ ἂν μετ' ἄλλων ὄντες, διελέγοντό τε αὐτοῖς καὶ  
ἐγέλων ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ὠρχοῦντο ἐπιστάμενοι ὅπου τύχοιεν ὥσπερ ἄλλοις ἐπιδεικνύμενοι.

### 3. *Hdt*. 2.35.2-3<sup>3</sup>

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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<sup>1</sup> Translated by William H. Race

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Carleton L. Brownson

<sup>3</sup> 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.

Αἰγύπτιοι ἄμα τῷ οὐρανῷ τῷ κατὰ σφέας ἐόντι ἑτεροίῳ καὶ τῷ ποταμῷ φύσιν ἀλλοίην παρεχομένῳ ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι ποταμοί, τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ἔμπαλιν τοῖσι ἄλλοισι ἀνθρώποισι ἐστήσαντο ἤθεά τε καὶ νόμους· ἐν τοῖσι αἱ μὲν γυναῖκες ἀγοράζουσι καὶ καπηλεύουσι, οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες κατ' οἴκους ἐόντες ὑφαίνουσι· ὑφαίνουσι δὲ οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι ἄνω τὴν κρόκην ὠθέοντες, Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ κάτω. τὰ ἄχθεα οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες ἐπὶ τῶν κεφαλέων φορέουσι, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων. οὐρέουσι αἱ μὲν γυναῖκες ὀρθαί, οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες κατήμενοι. εὐμαρεῖη χρέωνται ἐν τοῖσι οἴκοισι, ἐσθίουσι δὲ ἔξω ἐν τῇσι ὁδοῖσι ἐπιλέγοντες ὡς τὰ μὲν αἰσχρὰ ἀναγκαῖα δὲ ἐν ἀποκρύφῳ ἐστὶ ποιεῖν χρεόν, τὰ δὲ μὴ αἰσχρὰ ἀναφανδόν.

#### 4. Hdt. 2.91.1

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

Ἑλληνικοῖσι δὲ νομαίοισι φεύγουσι χρᾶσθαι, τὸ δὲ σύμπαν εἰπεῖν, μὴδ' ἄλλων μηδαμὰ μηδαμῶν ἀνθρώπων νομαίοισι.

#### 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.

ὁτέοισι δὲ τὸ πάλαι ἐκόσμεον τὰς παρθένους πρὶν ἢ σφι Ἑλληνας παροικισθῆναι, οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν, δοκέω δ' ὅν Αἰγυπτίοισι ὅπλοισι κοσμεῖσθαι αὐτάς· ἀπὸ γὰρ Αἰγύπτου καὶ τὴν ἀσπίδα καὶ τὸ κράνος φημὶ ἀπῆχθαι ἐς τοὺς Ἑλληνας.

#### 6. Hdt. 4.189.3

The Greeks also learned from the Libyans the yoking together of four horses.  
καὶ τέσσερας ἵππους συζευγνύναι παρὰ Λιβύων οἱ Ἑλληνες μεμαθήκασι.

#### 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.

ἦμος ὅτ' Ἑερίη πολυλήιος ἐκλήιστο  
μήτηρ Αἴγυπτος προτερηγενέων αἰζηῶν,  
καὶ ποταμὸς Τρίτων εὐρύρροος, ᾧ ὑπο πᾶσα  
ἄρδεται Ἑερίη, Διόθεν δέ μιν οὐ ποτε δευεῖ  
ὄμβρος· ἄλις προχοῆσι δ' ἀνασταχούουσιν ἄρουραι.  
ἔνθεν δὴ τινά φασι πέριξ διὰ πᾶσαν ὁδεῦσαι  
Εὐρώπην Ἀσίην τε βίη καὶ κάρτεϊ λαῶν  
σφωιτέρων θάρσει τε πεποιθότα· μυρία δ' ἄστη  
νάσσατ' ἐποικόμενος, τὰ μὲν ἢ ποθι ναιετάουσιν  
ἢ καὶ οὐ· πουλύς γὰρ ἄδην ἐπενήνοθεν αἰών.  
Αἰῶν γε μὴν ἔτι νῦν μένει ἔμπεδον υἱωνοῖ τε  
τῶνδ' ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ὅς γε καθίσσατο ναιέμεν Αἶαν·

οἱ δὴ τοὶ γραπτῶς πατέρων ἔθεν εἰρύονται,  
κύρβιας, οἷς ἐνὶ πᾶσαι ὁδοὶ καὶ πείρατ' ἔασιν  
ὕγρησ τε τραφερῆς τε πέριξ ἐπινισσομένοισιν.

#### 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 ὧν τούτους τοῦ ἐπὶ τούτοις γενομένου βασιλέως, τῷ οὐνομα ἦν Σέσωστρις, τούτου μνήμην ποιήσομαι· τὸν ἔλεγον οἱ ἱεεὶς πρῶτον μὲν πλοίοις μακροῖσι ὀρμηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ Ἀραβίου κόλπου τοὺς παρὰ τὴν Ἐρυθρὴν θάλασσαν κατοικημένους καταστρέφεσθαι, ἐς ὃ πλεοντά μιν πρόσω ἀπικέσθαι ἐς θάλασσαν οὐκέτι πλωτὴν ὑπὸ βραχέων. ἐνθεῦτεν δὲ ὡς ὀπίσω ἀπικετο ἐς Αἴγυπτον, κατὰ τῶν ἱερέων τὴν φάτιν, πολλὴν στρατιὴν τῶν . . 1 λαβὼν ἤλαυνε διὰ τῆς ἠπείρου, πᾶν ἔθνος τὸ ἐμποδῶν καταστρεφόμενος.

#### 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, νοήσας δὲ πρότερον αὐτὸς ἢ ἀκούσας ἄλλων λέγω. ὡς δέ μοι ἐν φροντίδι ἐγένετο, εἰρόμην ἀμφοτέρους, καὶ μᾶλλον οἱ Κόλχοι ἐμμενέατο τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἢ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τῶν Κόλχων· νομίζειν δ' ἔφασαν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τῆς Σεσώστριος στρατιῆς εἶναι τοὺς Κόλχους. αὐτὸς δὲ εἴκασα τῆδε, καὶ ὅτι μελάγχροες εἰσὶ καὶ οὐλότριχες. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐς οὐδὲν ἀνήκει· εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ ἕτεροι τοιοῦτοι· ἀλλὰ τοῖσιδε καὶ μᾶλλον, ὅτι μούνοι πάντων ἀνθρώπων Κόλχοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ Αἰθίοπες περιτάμνονται ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τὰ αἰδοῖα.

#### 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.

Ἔν δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι μιὰρὸν ἠγῆνται θηρίον εἶναι, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἦν τις ψαύση αὐτῶν παριῶν ὑός, αὐτοῖσι τοῖσι ἱματίοις ἀπ' ὧν ἔβαψε ἐωυτὸν βᾶς ἐς τὸν ποταμόν· τοῦτο δὲ οἱ συβῶται ἐόντες Αἰγύπτιοι ἐγγενέες ἐς ἱρὸν οὐδὲν τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἐσέρχονται μούνοι πάντων, οὐδέ σφι ἐκδίδοσθαι οὐδεὶς θυγατέρα ἐθέλει οὐδ' ἄγεσθαι ἐξ αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' ἐκδίδονται τε οἱ συβῶται καὶ ἄγονται ἐξ ἀλλήλων.