

## Two Tripods and the Colonization Narrative in Apollonius of Rhodes

In Book 4 of the *Argonautica*, the narrator informs the reader that Apollo gave Jason two tripods to take on his voyage with the Argonauts to Colchis. One of the tripods was given to the Hylleans and the other was given to Triton. Scholars tend not to talk about the tripod given to the Hylleans. In the case of the one given to the god Triton, it has been explained to be a literary device that Apollonius only uses to introduce a reconciliation scenario. The Argonauts' offering of the tripod to Triton is considered a mark of repentance after the murder of Medea's brother Apsyrtus. Steven Jackson argues that the show of repentance made it possible for the god Triton in turn to give them the clod of earth as a sign of forgiveness (Jackson, 1987). Thus, having been forgiven, the Argonauts were helped by Triton to navigate their way out of the shallows of Lake Tritonis.

I shall argue that the basis for the two tripods in the *Argonautica* is the Greeks' focus on colonization of Libya, and Herodotus' *Histories* helps the reader to appreciate how Apollonius creatively weaves a colonization narrative into the voyage of the Argo. Herodotus introduces the story of Jason and his companions in the *Histories* when reporting on the prophesy given to the Lacedaemonians that they colonize a place in Libya. Although the story of the Argonauts' arrival in Libya is presented as unplanned, and the story itself may seem to be the typical Herodotean digression, Herodotus makes the basis for the story very clear. The basis for the story is the Greeks' focus on colonization of Libya. In a sort of ring composition, Herodotus tells this story starting with the prophesy about colonization given to the Lacedaemonians and ending with exactly the same thing, that is, Triton's prophesy about colonization of hundred cities in Libya. Since Herodotus and Apollonius have a similar introduction to the arrival of Jason and the

Argonauts in Libya, my paper will suggest to the Apollonian reader to look at other aspects of the Libyan episode in which Apollonius and Herodotus also seem to agree, and to ask whether there is an overarching theme at play.

Both Herodotus' *Histories* and Apollonius' *Argonautica* agree that the Argonauts were stranded in the shallows of Lake Tritonis but had the help of the god Triton after they had offered him the tripod on board. However, there are slight differences. In the *Histories*, Triton asked for the tripod in exchange for helping the Argonauts, and he does not offer the clod of earth to the Argonaut Euphemus as it is the case in the *Argonautica*. There is also no reference to Euphemus' dream and its interpretation by Jason. But while continuing his conversation with the Argonauts in the same passage, Triton does give a prophesy which appears to cover the essence of the interpretation of Euphemus' dream. Triton's prophesy over the tripod refers to the colonization of Libya whenever a descendant of the Argonauts carried off the same tripod. In the *Argonautica*, Euphemus was given a clod of earth by Triton, and the Argonaut's dream led to Jason prophesying that Euphemus' descendants would colonize Thera which would become the mother-city to Cyrene. My paper will show what Apollonius does with the tripod that makes his account very close to Herodotus, and also explain how the two tripods presented in the *Argonautica* serve exactly the same function as the only tripod that is found in Herodotus' *Histories*. The prophesy in the *Histories* says the carrying off of the tripod would bring about colonization of Libya by the Greeks, and that leads to the Libyans hiding the tripod in order to prevent the building of Greek cities in Libya. In the *Argonautica*, Apollonius manipulatively comes up with a prophesy that makes the tripod apotropaic. It would avert enemy invasions. So, in one, the Libyans hid the tripod in order to prevent the building of Greek cities in Libya, but in the other, the Hylleans hid the tripod so that their city might not be ravaged by enemy invasions.

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