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In recent years the subtlety and complexity of Apollonius' *Argonautica* have been better appreciated, but in Dr Hunter's view the purposes and aesthetic of the epic are still not readily understood and much basic analysis remains to be done. The present book seeks both to offer some of that analysis and to place the *Argonautica* within its social and intellectual context. A series of studies deals with notions of heroism; with *eros* and the suffering of Medea; the role of the divine; poetic voice and literary self-consciousness; and the Ptolemaic context of the poem. A pervasive theme of the book is Apollonius' creative engagement with Homer, and a final chapter sketches out an approach to Virgil's use of Apollonius in the *Aeneid*. The *Argonautica* emerges as a brilliant and original experiment.

This book is the only advanced study of the *Argonautica* currently available. Scholars of Greek and Roman literature, especially Alexandrian poetry and the epic, will find it essential reading. All Greek is translated.

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THE *ARGONAUTICA* OF
APOLLONIUS

Literary studies

RICHARD HUNTER

*University Lecturer in Classics, University of Cambridge,
and Fellow of Pembroke College*



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Preface

Why I have written this book is set out in the Introduction. Here is rather the place to acknowledge debts and give thanks to those who have helped in one way or another, and I hope that Alan Cameron, Susan Moore, Peter Parsons and two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press will accept this small token of my gratitude for their much larger help. Parts of this book have been inflicted on many audiences over the past few years on both sides of the Atlantic. I have got far more from this experience than they have; where I am conscious of a particular debt, I have sought to acknowledge it, but these occasions have often identified weaknesses and obscurities in ways which I can no longer associate with a particular individual. The final version was prepared during an idyllic few months at Princeton University as a guest of The Council of the Humanities and the Department of Classics; I am deeply indebted to Elaine Fantham, Froma Zeitlin and all their colleagues for offering me the chance to work in such a *locus amoenus*, for the warmth of their welcome and the stimulus of their company.

As I read over what I have written, I recognise one debt which outweighs all others. For many years now I have been lucky enough to have the chance to discuss ancient literature week in and week out with a group of Cambridge friends. Unlike the Argonauts, they require no Catalogue but, like good Greeks, they will know who they are; Orpheus, for example, comes in all shapes and sizes. I am very conscious how much they have taught me, though this book may make them wish to deny it; I offer it to them, nonetheless, with gratitude and affection.

Earlier versions of parts of Chapters 2 and 3 appeared in *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987) and 38 (1988), and are here reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

Cambridge
February, 1992

R.L.H.

Abbreviations

1. The text of Apollonius is cited, unless otherwise stated, from the Budé edition of Francis Vian (Paris 1974–81). Reference is made to the three volumes of this edition as Vian I, II and III.
2. Unless otherwise specified all translations are my own. The *Iliad* is normally cited from the translation by Martin Hammond (Harmondsworth 1987) and the *Odyssey* from the version of Walter Shewring (Oxford 1980).
3. Abbreviations for periodicals usually follow the system of *L'Année Philologique*.
4. In the spelling of Greek names, ease of recognition rather than consistency has been the principal aim. Thus, familiar names are usually latinised, whereas less familiar ones may simply be transliterated.
5. Modern works cited in the notes by author and date only are listed in the Bibliography.
6. Standard abbreviations for collections of texts and works of reference are used, but the following may be noted:

CA	J. U. Powell (ed.), <i>Collectanea Alexandrina</i> (Oxford 1925)
Ebeling	H. Ebeling (ed.), <i>Lexicon homericum</i> (Leipzig 1880–5)
KRS	G. S. Kirk, J. Raven and M. Schofield, <i>The Presocratic Philosophers</i> (edn 2, Cambridge 1983)
LIMC	<i>Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae</i> (Zurich/Munich 1981–)
Roscher	W. H. Roscher (ed.), <i>Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie</i> (Leipzig 1884–1937)
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (eds.), <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> (Berlin/New York 1983)