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[Oppian], Cyn. 2, 100–158 and the Mythical Past of Apamea-on-the-Orontes


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This title is deliberately paradoxical, since Apamea on the Orontes was founded by the first Seleucus in the year 300 B.C. Previously a smaller settlement in the same place was called Pella, but that only takes us back one generation to the soldiers of Alexander the Great; a shadowy earlier name, Pharmake, reflects Persian rule. Although the archaeologists have found traces of human habitation back to the Palaeolithic age, Apamea could not claim long-established Greek connexions or heroic myths such as were boasted by e.g. Tarsus in Cilicia. So one of my themes will be that of ingenious, do-it-yourself mythology. This was often required in the Hellenistic age, and sometimes reflected royal policy, as with the fictitious heroic genealogies which almost all the Hellenistic dynasties manufactured for themselves. At the most extreme, we may find shameless hijacking of well-known myths. For example, where did Apollo's pursuit at Daphne take place? You might answer Thessaly, Arcadia or Laconia. If so, you will be surprised to learn that the chase came to its climax in the suburb of Antioch called Daphne; the cult of Apollo there was fostered by Seleucus Nicator, who claimed to be Apollo's son.

From the third century B.C. we hear of many works, both in prose and poetry, devoted to Foundations (Κτίσεις); Apollonius Rhodius is credited with no fewer than six poems of this type, on Alexandria, Caunus, Cnidos, Naucratis, Rhodes and (probably) Lesbos. Seven hundred years later the interest in foundation stories is still very much alive in the

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2 Strabo 16.2.10 p. 752 ἐκκαλέσθη δὲ καὶ Πέλλα ποτὲ ὑπὸ τῶν πρῶτων Μακεδόνων.
4 J. and J.Ch.Balty (n. 3 above), 108.
6 E.g. the descent claimed for the Attalids appears in a poetical fragment of Nicander (104) Τευθρανίδης, ὃς κλάρων αἰεὶ πατρώοις ἱέχον, ἵκαλεύθη μὲν ὑμνιὰς τὸν ὧπ’ ὅντος ὑμνὸν ἐρύξῃς, ἰ Ἁττάλη, ἐπὶ εὐο ρίζων ἐπέκλυον Ὁρειχλῆς ἐξέτει Λοιδίδης τε περιφέρον, ἦν Πελοπῆς ἴ Ἱπποδάμη ἐφύτευσεν ὅτ’ Ἀπιδώς ἱέρα τιμήν, on which Gow and Scholfield (p. 216) comment 'The genealogical pretensions of the Attalids seem otherwise unrecorded.'
8 Downey (n. 7 above), 83-86.
9 E.g. Fragmentum Erythraeum Paeanis in Seleucum (Powell, Collectanea Alexandrina, 140), 1-2 ἤμενενετε ἐπὶ σπονδαια Ἀποκλάκων κυνοπλοκάκιαν ἰ παῖδα Κέλευκον.
10 Frs. 4-12 Powell. Apollonius is believed to have had personal connexions with several of these places.
Dionysiaca of Nonnus (Nicaea, Tyre and Beirut (Beroe)), and no doubt it had not slackened in the intervening period, during which our evidence for local foundation myths is as likely to come from coins as from literary sources.\textsuperscript{11} My passage from Cynegetica 2, written at a time intermediate between the Hellenistic masters and Nonnus, has attracted little attention,\textsuperscript{12} but interests me for a number of reasons. Although composed more than 250 years after the extinction of Seleucus' dynasty, in geographical terms the Cynegetica comes from the heart of the Seleucid realm. We know a lot about poetry written under the auspices of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, but very little about any corresponding output connected with the Seleucids; perhaps here is a hint of what it might have been like. The concerns of this passage would have been entirely appropriate to a poet of the third century B.C. As it happens, we know that a substantial poet of that time was connected with Apamea on the Orontes, and I shall end by wondering whether he might be seen behind some of the more ingenious fabrications.

Our passage is not strictly about the mythical foundation of Apamea (Syrian Pella), but it seems that Κτῆσις were also receptive to post-foundation myths,\textsuperscript{13} particularly when they involved some heroic figure - here it is Heracles, in the long fragment of the Foundation of Lesbos (Ap. Rh. fr. 12 Powell), Achilles. Foundation material may also appear in other genres, such as the account in Callimachus' Second Hymn of the foundation of his own city, Cyrene. And, as well as foundations, there was a recognized genre of encomia of cities and regions, which would naturally include the mythical past. Indeed this genre is suggested by Cyn. 2,156-158, lines which might seem to promise a separate future poem on the glories of Apamea, but in fact emphasize what the poet is doing at this moment,\textsuperscript{14} briefly stepping outside the category of didactic verse:

\begin{quote}
\textit{άλλα τά μέν κατά κόσμον άείσομεν εὐρέα κάλλη πάτρης ἤμετέρης ἐρατής Πιμπληνὶ μολπηίν· νῦν δὲ παλίντροπος εἰμι κλυτὴν θηρειὸν ἀοιδήν.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11} As well illustrated in Chuvin's book (above, n. 5).
\textsuperscript{12} Chuvin (n. 5) mentions it just once (172, n. 68).
\textsuperscript{13} For an account of the traditions and standard contents of a Κτῆσις, see Francis Cairns, Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome, Cambridge, 1979, 68-86 (with references to earlier literature). It is interesting to have an inscribed Κτῆσις (c. 207 B.C.) from Magnesia on the Maeander, including various oracles connected with the foundation. See S.Dusanić, Epigraphica 45, 1983, 11-48; the oracles were discussed and reproduced in H.W.Parke and D.E.W.Wormell, The Delphic Oracle, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1956, vol. I, 52ff., vol. II, 153-155.
\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, when Horace says to the fons Bandusiae 'fies nobilium tu quoque fontium | me dicente cavis impositam ilicem | saxis' (Odes 3,13,13-15), one might at first think that he was promising a future poem, but further reflection shows that he refers to the present ode. [Oppian] here has well caught the 'learned' manner; having allowed himself to digress, he recalls his poem to the primary subject matter (cf. Ap. Rh. 1,1220, likewise starting \textit{άλλα τά μέν} ..., 1,648-649, Catullus 64,116 and various passages quoted by Pfeiffer on Callimachus fr. 12.6 = Ap. Rh. 1,1309).
The personal pride which [Oppian] takes in his homeland is also apparent from line 127 ἐμὴν πόλιν, which cannot fail to recall Callimachus on Cyrene (hymn 2,65 Φοιβος καὶ βασιλεύειον ἐμὴν πόλιν ἔφρασε Βάττωι). Alan Cameron\(^ \text{15} \) draws our attention to the abundant evidence (mostly inscriptive) for relatively brief encomiastic poems which were designed for recitation at festivals or competitions in the Hellenistic age, and sugests that extracts from longer works may sometimes have been used for this purpose. If the same held good in the third century A.D., our present passage, 59 lines long, might have been very appropriate for such an occasion.

I should say something about the Cynegetica and its author. The poet's name is unknown. He has traditionally been called Oppian, but this rests on a clearly erroneous identification with the author of the Halieutica, Oppian of Cilicia, whose poem may be dated between 176 and 180 (probable references to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus). Cynegetica belongs a generation later, dedicated to Caracalla, probably in the years when he was sole emperor (212-217). Our poet is a Syrian from Apamea on the Orontes. He is definitely not pretending to be the author of the Halieutica, but, equally clearly, he models his Cynegetica upon the earlier poem.\(^ \text{16} \) If you look at a standard history of Greek literature, you will probably find the Halieutica commended, and the Cynegetica dismissed in a few words as inferior, on linguistic and metrical\(^ \text{17} \) grounds. But in one respect I find Cynegetica more interesting than (I will not say superior to) Halieutica. Despite his technical deficiencies, the Syrian, paradoxically, owes more to the learned Hellenistic tradition than does the Cilician.

I discovered this in the course of commenting on Callimachus' Hecale; for example the Syrian is the only ancient poet to follow Callimachus' coinage οἰόκερως (Cyn. 2,96 from Hecale fr. 69,1 H.), and, from Callimachus' statement that the raven originally rivalled milk in colour (γάλακτι χρωτήν, fr. 74,16), our poet himself coined a compound γαλακόχρωμος (3,478). Subsequently I noticed that Cyn. 3,227 ἵχε χίλος, μὴ τάμιε is based upon Aegeus' words when he restrains Theseus from drinking the poisoned cup, ἵχε τέκος, μὴ πιθ (fr. 7). To change poems, the clausula in Cyn. 3,271 πανείκελλον ὑπήκαιροι echoes the Aetia prologue, fr. 1,31 Pf. πανείκελλον ὤγκήσατο, and, to change poets, Zeus χρύσειος (qua father of Perseus) in Cyn. 2,9 probably comes from a papyrus fragment of Euphorion (Suppl. Hell. 418,42). One small indication of a learned poet is the use of words in ἄμορβες; membership of this exclusive club seems to be confined to Antimachus of Colophon, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, perhaps Euphorion,\(^ \text{18} \) Nicander and [Oppian].

\(^ {15} \) In his forthcoming book, Callimachus and his Critics (Princeton).
\(^ {16} \) Thus our passage corresponds to the briefer allusion to the poet's homeland in Hal. 3,7ff.
\(^ {17} \) His distressing indifference to violations of Hermann's Bridge is illustrated in Cyn. 2,120 δοκερωτα πόθων Μελιβοίης.
\(^ {18} \) If ἄμορβες is to be restored in Suppl. Hel. 415, col. ii, 15. See my note on Hecale fr. 76.
Two more substantial passages of the Cynegeticus are also interesting for their relationship with earlier poetry. The first book opens with an invocation of Caracalla, recalling in manner but surpassing in extravagance Theocritus' encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus (17) - no doubt the intervening period had seen countless similar effusions addressed to Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors. Ptolemy may have been uniquely favoured by Zeus (Theocritus 17,73-76), but Caracalla is himself 'sweet scion of Ausonian Zeus' (i.e. Septimius Severus) Αὐκονίου Ζηνός γλυκερὸν θάλος, Ἀντινῖν (Cyn. 1,3);

Aphrodite wiped her hands on the bosom of Ptolemy's mother Berenice (Theocritus 17,56-57) τὴν μεγάλην μεγάλων φιτώσατο Δόμνα Σεβήρωι,

Both rulers have seemingly universal domination over land and sea: θάλασσα δὲ πᾶσα καὶ αἷα καὶ ποταμοί κελάδοντες ἀνάσσονται Πτολεμαίωι

but Caracalla does not merely rule land and sea - it seems that the whole of Nature is inspired by him and performs for his benefit, θάλασσα δὲ πᾶσα καὶ αἷα καὶ ποταμοὶ κελάδοντες ἀνάσσονται Πτολεμαίωι

19 For directing his praise at such an unworthy object [Oppian] at least had the excuse that Septimius Severus' dynasty was very strongly connected with Syria (Caracalla's mother, Julia Domna, came from Emesa).

20 Compare e.g. Antipater of Thessalonica, 47 Gow-Page (Garland of Philip) = Anth. Pal. 9,297,1, where Gaius Caesar, grandson and adopted son of Augustus, is called Ζηνός τέχος.

21 For this motif, see A.Momigliano, 'Terra Marique', JRS 32, 1942, 53-64.

22 This kind of writing must already have been practised in the Hellenistic age. It seems to lie behind Virgil's quintessentially Hellenistic invocation of Octavian at the beginning of the First Georgic (e.g. 26-28 'te maximus orbis | auctorem frugum tempestatumque potentem | accipiat', for which Mynors compares the θαλάσσα of Menander Rhetor).
When then pass to a dialogue in distichs between the poet and Artemis (20ff.), which ingeniously recalls Callimachus' Aetia-prologue (particularly Cyn. 1,20-21):

Epic subject-matter, including the γένος ἥρων (1,28, cf. Call. fr. 1,5 ἤρωας) is rejected, though the poet slips in an honorific mention of Septimius Severus' campaign against the Parhians (1,31 ἐφρασάμεν Πάρθων τε δύο καὶ Κτησιφώντα).

The second passage comes from Cyn. 4 (230-319). Leopards, we are told, can be made drunk with wine, and so caught more easily. The reason is that leopards were originally women devotees of Dionysus, who rescued the infant god from the enmity of Pentheus and conveyed him to Euboea where he was received and nurtured by Aristaeus. Eventually Bacchus returns to Thebes to confront Pentheus, but the conclusion is not the one with which we are familiar. Pentheus is transmogrified into a bull (4,309-310).

The women become leopards (311-313), and the επαρασχόμεν takes place in these animal shapes (314-315). Any variant version which you might know is rejected as a deliberate falsehood of poets, with typically Hellenistic asperity (313-319):

23 Gow on Theocritus 22,55-74 wrote 'The ensuing dialogue in stichomythia is without parallel elsewhere in epic narrative. At Op., Cyn. 1,20ff. there is an absurd dialogue in distichs between Oppian and Artemis which possibly suggests that dialogue interruptions of the kind were less rare than now appears.'

24 ἐπιστείβομεν and ἐπάτησεν are verbal echoes of πατεύσεις and ετείβεις in Callimachus (fr. 1,25-26 Pl.), while τρητεύον ... ἀταρπόν recalls κελεύθουσ | ἄτριτπον (fr. 1,27-28). Cyn. 1,17 τοῦτο μὲ Καλλιάτη κέλεται perhaps suggests Callimachus' conversations with individual Muses (including Calliope) in Aetia bks. 1-2. So [Oppian] here has conflated Callimachus' reply to the Telchines, dialogue with Apollo, and conversation with the Muses.

25 Is [Oppian] claiming already to have written a poem on this subject?

26 Chuvin (n. 5) on the cover of his book (with the caption on the page facing his title-page) illustrates this legend by means of a bronze coin struck at Nicaea in the time of Vespasian.

27 There follows a catalogue (268-272) of the inventions with which Aristaeus enriched country life; compare particularly Nonnus, Dionysiaca 5,229-279.

28 Line 310 ('he ... arched his neck and made the horns spring from his forehead' (A.W.Mair, Loeb)) describes the transformations in what we might be tempted to call an 'Ovidian' manner (the same applies to several transformations in Nonnus' Dionysiaca - perhaps drawn from lost Hellenistic transformation poetry?) This transformation of Pentheus is not to be found in the book by P.M.C.Forbes Irving, Metamorphosis in Greek Myths, Oxford, 1990.

29 In the spirit Callimachus, hymn 1,60 δηναίοι δ' οὐ πάμπαι ἄληθεε ἢσαν ἄλαθοι.
This digression is 90 lines long, and full of the most unusual mythology.\(^{30}\) Aristaeus was beloved of learned Hellenistic poets; we now have passages relating to him in Callimachus (fr. 75,33-35 and perhaps 58-59), Apollonius (2,506-527) and Euphorion (Suppl. Hell 443-4ff.), and he is a constant preoccupation of Nonnus. But it is not only the presence of Aristaeus which makes this passage the closest parallel in Greek didactic poetry to the Aristaeus/Orpheus epyllion in Virgil's Fourth Georgic.

Turning now to the passage glorifying Apamea on the Orontes (Cyn. 2,100-158), I would like to disentangle various elements of this, and, where possible, to trace them to their origins and dates. To start with the simplest, the name of the city, which is here called Pella (101, 114). This was given, as Strabo tells us (16,2,10) 'by the first Macedonians', i.e. it is pre-Seleucid, dating from about 330 B.C., after Alexander the Great had gained control of the area. The name, of course, was brought from Macedonian Pella, and with it came a re-naming of the river Orontes as Axios, from the river which flowed by Macedonian Pella. As J.D.Grainger says of such imported names (Cities of Seleucid Syria, Oxford, 1990, 42):

"Exact precision was clearly not required - the Axios flows south, but the Orontes north... It is thus only the broad similarities which apply ... [Macedonian] Pella was sited by a lake [as was Syrian Pella] and by a major river."

The names Pella and Axios go together, and must surely have been transferred to Syria at the same time. Even though our first evidence for the re-naming of the Orontes comes 150 years later, on the bronze coinage of Antiochus IV,\(^{31}\) and the only other Greek mention (to my knowledge) of 'Apamea on the Axios' is in the ecclesiastical historian Sozomenus (fifth century A.D.),\(^{32}\) the name 'Axios' must have been in regular use locally, since it can apparently be recognized in the Arabic name for the Orontes.\(^{33}\) One would expect [Oppian] to couple either Pella and Axios or Apamea and Orontes; instead we find Pella and Orontes - perhaps in both cases the less popular and more remote name to suit this context of the mythical past? I shall suggest that, although the name Axios does not occur in this passage of [Oppian], it may be relevant to some of the other mythology which we find here.

If you wished to construct a mythical past for a city of recent foundation, it would be a bonus to find some heroic myth, with a reputable literary ancestry, which was connected

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\(^{30}\) Line 267 may conceivably throw light on a damaged fragment of Callimachus' Aetia (fr. 75,58-59 Pf.); see ZPE 86, 1991, 12.


\(^{32}\) Patrologia Graeca 67, 1457 'Απεμεία τῆς πρὸς τῷ Αξίων ποταμῷ.

\(^{33}\) See Chuvin (n. 5), 171 with n. 61.
with the vicinity; \(^{34}\) our poet has had just one such piece of good fortune. Among the many
claimants to the grave of Memnon, son of Aurora, was Paltos on the Syrian coast, near
Apamea and a little to the south of Laodicea. The sponsor was, in Greek terms, highly
prestigious, no less than Simonides. \(^{35}\) \[Oppian\] too mentions a shrine and cult of Memnon
in this neighbourhood (152-153);\(^ {36}\)

\[
\text{Μεμνώνιον περὶ νηὸν, ὅθ΄ Ἀκτύριοι ναετῆρες}
\text{Μέμνωνα κακύουσι, κλυτὸν γόνον Ἡριγενεῖς.}
\]

In other respects our poet has not been so lucky, though I doubt whether he had to create
much of the mythology for himself; most things probably go back to the earlier Hellenistic
period, either to a poet or an ingenious local prose antiquarian. Particularly puzzling is
Archippus, ruler of Pella’ (114, Αρχιππος δ’ ἐτάρων, Πέλλης ἡγήτορι δίης), for whom
Heracles performs this labour on the basis of friendship rather than compulsion (113-114). I
expected to find the name Archippus among the Macedonian royalty or nobility in the fifth
or fourth century B.C., but was disappointed.\(^ {37}\) Could the choice of this name allude to the
fact that in the Hellenistic period, from the time of Seleucus I, Apamea was the centre of the
Seleucid cavalry force (Strabo 16,2,10 speaks of λειμόνας ... ἵπποβότους), or even\(^ {38}\) to
Seleucus’ office of hipparchos in the Macedonian army?

When Hellenistic poets celebrated the foundation, history or religious cults of a
particular city, they would make a point of mentioning local geographical features which
had seldom, if ever, been given a wider currency. Thus Callimachus in his Fifth Hymn
speaks of the ‘Creian mountain’ (40-41) and ‘the rocks now called Pallatides’ (42) at Argos,
for neither of which there is other certain evidence, and in the Second Hymn Apollo stands
on a hill near Cyrene called Myrtoussa (91).\(^ {39}\) Similarly, \[Oppian\] alone names the

\(^{34}\) Thus Apollonius Rhodius in his Foundation of Alexandria was able to bring in at least one link with
heroic mythology - the flight over Egypt of Perseus bearing the Gorgon’s head, producing poisonous snakes
from the drops of blood which fell to the ground (fr. 4 Powell).

\(^{35}\) Page, PMG 539.

\(^{36}\) It is by no means clear that \[Oppian\] refers to Paltos - indeed lines 150-151 suggest a place nearer to the
city, somewhere on the Apamean plain. \n
\(^{37}\) We hear of an epistates called Archippus c. 180 B.C. in the reign of Philip V (’Αρχιππ. Ἐφ. 1934-1935,
117ff.), but he does not seem important enough. The only (other) mythical Archippus is a recent discovery,
from an Oxyrhynchus papyrus referring to the Heraclea of Rhianus (Suppl. Hell. 715) - a Heracle epic indeed,
but that Archippus is Boeotian, and nothing suggests that he had a close connexion with Heracles.

\(^{38}\) As suggested to me by Dr. Michael Whitby in St. Andrews. See J.D.Grainger, Seleukos Nikator, 1990,
18-20.

\(^{39}\) In this case we do have some supporting evidence (see F.Williams ad loc.).
mountains which press on Apamea from East and West, Diocleion and Emblonos\textsuperscript{40} (123-124):

\[\text{ἡ} \text{μὲν} \text{ἀντολήθη} \text{Διόκλειον} \text{δέμας} \text{αἰτύ,} \\
\text{ἐκ} \text{δ᾽} \text{ἄρα} \text{δυσμάων} \text{λαϊών} \text{κέρας} \text{Ἐμβλωνοῦ.}\]

There may perhaps be another local name in line 149. After Heracles has diverted the river Orontes from the flooded plain, the earth re-emerges, and, in the best learned aetiological manner, the continuing fertility of the soil up to the poet's own time (\textit{eícετι} νῦν, 150)\textsuperscript{41} is ascribed to the hero's labour (148-151):

\[\text{ γαῖα} \text{ δ᾽} \text{ἀνέπνευσε} \text{μελανόχροος,} \text{οὐθατόεσσα,} \\
\text{κύματος} \text{ἐξαναδόξα,} \text{νέον} \text{πέδον} \text{Ἡρακλῆος.} \\
\text{πάντη} \text{δ᾽} \text{εἰς} \text{νῦν} \text{σταχυκομέουσι} \text{ἄρουρα,} \\
\text{πάντη} \text{δ᾽} \text{ἐργα} \text{βοῦν} \text{θαλερᾶς} \text{βέβριθεν} \text{ἄλωά.}\]

Although we lack other evidence to this effect, one could reasonably deduce from νέον πέδον 'Ἡρακλῆος (149) that part of the Apamean plain was known to the local Greeks as 'the Plain of Heracles'.\textsuperscript{42} This name might have prompted, or at least encouraged, the fanciful connexion between Syrian bulls and the cattle which Heracles captured from Geryon in the far West.

[Oppian] introduces this link with a line (109) which would not have disgraced one of the luminaries of the Alexandrian Museum:\textsuperscript{43}

\[\text{κεῖνοι,} \text{ τοὺς φάτις} \text{ἐκεῖ} \text{Διὸς} \text{γόνον} \text{Ἡρακλῆα ...}\]

In Greek terms, however, to bring Heracles with the cattle of Geryon to the site of Syrian Apamea seems particularly implausible. To complete the Labour, Heracles should of course deliver the cattle to King Eurystheus, as he does in Apollodorus (2,5,10). After killing Geryon, Heracles was thought to have travelled with the cattle through Sicily, Italy, Gaul and Epirus. During that journey several attempts were made to steal the cattle (the best known by Cacus on the site of future Rome), and Hera also made them wander with a gadfly. Consequently other breeds were alleged to descend from the cattle of Geryon.\textsuperscript{44} But on

\textsuperscript{40} The name Emblonos is of an unusual type, but I have not succeeded in casting any light on it. Could it have been brought from Macedon, like Pella and Axios (see above)? Alternatively, could it be eastern? Having discovered that there was a village called Blouné in the appropriate area (R.Mouterde, S.J., A travers l'Apamène, Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph, Beyrouth, 28, 1949-50, 5) I wondered whether this might preserve a trace of the ancient name. My orientalist colleague, Dr. Sebastian Brock, kindly wrote 'I imagine the mountains must be peaks of the Jebel Ansariyeh, the North-South range to the West of the Orontes. I cannot think of a suitable Semitic root for Emblonos. A connexion with the village Blouné does not seem very likely to me, but, I suppose, could be possible. Probably the peak that would seem most prominent would be Nebi Yonnes (the prophet Jonah): unfortunately I have not succeeded in discovering its earlier name!'

\textsuperscript{41} For \textit{eícετι} νῦν cf. e.g. Phanocles fr. 1,28 Powell, Ap. Rh. 1,1354, 2,717, etc.

\textsuperscript{42} With 'Heracles' no doubt representing an indigenous god.

\textsuperscript{43} Note the spondica fifth foot, and the stress on inherited tradition.

\textsuperscript{44} E.g. the Thesprotian and Epirote in Aelian, N.A. 12,11.
every occasion Heracles made strenuous efforts to recover even single animals; in [Oppian], by contrast, it seems to be implied that he willingly deposited the whole herd in Syria (109-110). Elsewhere we find Heracles with the cattle as far afield as Thrace, but to bring them to Syria is paradoxical; the poet suggests that in some sense this was 'destined' (ἐμέλλεν 112, cf. 128). On the other hand, the notion of taking them east and giving them progeny there would please a Hellenistic poet who lived in those parts. Compare the case of Actaeon's dogs. An epic fragment shows interest in what happened to them after their master's death, but it was Nicander of Colophon (fr. 97) who developed this further: they accompanied Dionysus to the East, were healed of their madness in the crossing of the Euphrates at Zeugma, and became the ancestors of the Indian dogs.

Although the presence of Heracles at Apamea does not fit well the classical version of his Labour to bring the cattle of Geryon to Eurystheus, Heracles does have numerous connexions with the East; e.g. he sacks Troy, and serves Omphale in Lydia. Sometimes he is identified with an eastern god or hero, as with Melkart in Tyre - Nonnus (Dion. 40,429ff.) has a detailed account of Starclad Heracles (ἀκτροχίτων) as founder and presiding deity of Tyre. Heracles was also said to have been the original founder of Daphne, near Antioch (later claimed by Seleucus I as the site of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne). And we are not so far from Nemrud Dagh, where in the mid-first century B.C. Antiochus I of Commagene portrayed himself on terms of warm friendship with Heracles, as was Archippus in Cyn. 2,114. So perhaps the myth of Heracles at Apamea owes something to an eastern god or hero identified with Heracles; this seems particularly likely if, as suggested by line 149 (see above), part of the Apamean plain was known locally as 'the Plain of Heracles'. The smiting of rocks to open up a new channel for the river Orontes (128ff.) may be considered a typical work of Heracles. Leaving aside his least glorious Labour, to cleanse the Augean stables by diverting the river Alpheus, I suspect that this labour is based particularly on Heracles' opening up of the Vale of Temple to clear a path for the river Peneus, all for the benefit of the Greeks (Diodorus 4,18,7). The description of that work in Seneca, Hercules Furens 283-288

diritus qualis iugis
praeceps citat flumini quaerens iter

45 Apollodorus 2,5,10.
46 P.Oxy. 2509. Many have ascribed this to the Hesiodic Catalogue, but Martin West strongly disagreed (CR N.S. 16, 1966, 22, 'The author of the Hesiodic Catalogue would turn in his grave of he knew that it had been attributed to him'), and the fragment was not included in Merkelbach and West, Fragmenta Hesiodea, Oxford, 1967. Subsequently we have discovered that the killing of Actaeon by his own dogs did appear in the Hesiodic Catalogue (Timothy Renner, HSCP 82, 1978, 282-287).
47 See Chuvin (n. 5), 228ff.
48 G.Downey, 82-83.
This leads us to the mythology associated with the river Orontes, which is overflowing and joining its water to that of the Apamean lake, thus threatening to engulf the city (127). Heracles makes separate channels through which the waters of the river and of the lake can reach the sea (130-131):

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Since, as we have seen, the Orontes in the vicinity of Apamea was also called Axios, in harmony with the name Pella (which preceded Apamea), it is worth glancing at a map of Macedonian Pella and the Macedonians Axios, as they may have been shortly before the first Macedonians left to settle in Syria:51

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50 One might think that μέγαν for μέλαν in the Loeb was a simple misprint, but for the fact that A.W.Mair translated 'the mighty body of the Syrian shore'.

You will see on the Macedonian map too a subsidiary channel from the Axios to the lake, and an outlet from the lake to the sea. [Oppian] presents the situation in mythological terms: Orontes was desperately in love with the nymph of the lake, Meliboea (named in 120), daughter of Oceanos, and hence forgot about the sea (117-118):

\[\text{xaropo} ð' \text{êpelêtheto pôntou,}
\text{daièmenos Nûmfh kuvanôpîdôc Ókeanínê.}\]

This mythology is unparalleled and unexplained. If, however, we allow that the name Meliboea (129) may be a minor variation for Periboea,\(^52\) then it is possible to suggest an origin for the myth - an origin more probably due to a learned poet than to the soldiers of Alexander the Great who first called their Syrian settlement Pella. In Iliad 21,141-143 the river-god Axios loves, and has a child by, a water-nymph called Periboea:\(^53\)

\[\text{tôn ð' \text{A}xîôc èpîrêvêthroc}
\text{γεînato kai Perîboia, \'Akkekamenvôc òthugàtrôn}
\text{preîbôtatîc· tîh yâr ra mîcîl potamôc bâthôdînêc.}\]

Supposing that Periboea could stand for Meliboea in another text, we may be able to find the same local mythology (or something very like it) still alive more than two centuries after [Oppian]'s time. Much the most promising place to look for it is in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus, a rich source for the hellenized myths of Syria and Asia Minor. In Dion. 17,262-314 we hear how the Indian\(^54\) chief Orontes is defeated by Dionysus, stabs himself, falls into the river to which he gives his name and is buried by the nymphs (17,310). The mention of Daphne in Dion. 40,134 and 149 shows that this burial took place near the future Antioch. In 40,113ff. Protonoe, widow of Orontes, bewails her husband’s death. She asks to be transformed into a stream (138) or a fountain (139), so that she can have a watery reunion with Orontes. Then she adds (146-148)

\[\text{oû mîcîl ëgîw poîthôwvca paîrèrhoûma iðwv \'Orôntvnh,}
\text{oîc fûgâc Perîboia, kai oû pote kampûlon ùdwar}
\text{ðv ònacîeràzouca fûlâzôma ùghôn ãkôttîn.}\]

Chuvin\(^55\) says that Nonnus does not name Periboia's would-be husband. But look again at lines 146-147. A very natural interpretation (indeed, the most natural) is surely that

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\(^{52}\) The same variation between Meliboea and Periboea occurs in the name of Ajax’s mother. I doubt whether the entry in P.-W. s.v. Meliboia 4 is relevant to [Oppian].

\(^{53}\) For discussion of this Periboea, see Hammond (n. 51, above ), 297. Chuvin (n . 5, above), 169 n. 48 notes that Periboea is a name often associated with water in one way or another.

\(^{54}\) One may be surprised to find an Indian chief in Syria. As Chuvin (n. 5), 281 puts it, ‘L'absence de la Mésopotamie et de l'Iran dans le trajet de Dionysos constitue sans aucun doute une des aberrations géographiques les plus frappantes des Dionysiaques. Parti d'une Assyrie et d'une Arabie qui se ramènent en fait à la Phénicie et à la Syrie, Dionysos n’a qu’à franchir le Caucase pour arriver en Inde.’

\(^{55}\) I am not like runaway Periboea; I will not pass charming Orontes whom I love, I will not draw back my winding water and avoid a watery spouse’ (A.W.Mair, Loeb).

\(^{56}\) (n.5), 170, n. 49. I said the same in CQ N.S. 26, 1976, 148.
Periboea’s lover was none other than Orontes himself. Then there would be a typically Nonnian touch of malicious humour: Periboea had the bad taste to reject the love of Orontes, but Protonoe, if only she were given the same opportunity, would not make the same mistake. So in [Oppian] Orontes suffers from a fruitless passion (δυσέρωτα πόθον, 120) for the water-nymph Meliboea, while, according to Nonnus, in much the same region he vainly loves the water-nymph Periboea. It seems economical to regard them as minor variants of the same myth. I would guess, however, that Nonnus’ source is not [Oppian]. Apart from the slight difference of name, Meliboea in [Oppian] is clearly a lake-nymph (131, εὐπλοκάμων λίμνης), while Nonnus’ Periboea seems to be a river-nymph. Dion. 40,147-148 καμπύλων ὕδωρ ἄνακτειράζων suggests to me a myth which purports to explain the peculiar windings of a river’s course. There is a certain (not uncharacteristic) awkwardness in Nonnus: if Orontes has only just died, he has not had much time to fall in love with, and be rejected by, the water-nymph. This would hardly have troubled Nonnus, who is combining a timeless myth (the river-god’s love for a water-nymph) with his narrative of the Indian war in which Orontes is one of Dionysus’ enemies.

While the naming of the Syrian city as Pella, and its nearby river as the Axios, can be confidently ascribed to the first Macedonian settlers in the time of Alexander the Great, the river-god’s passion for Periboea or Meliboea (perhaps taking a hint from the Iliad where, by contrast, Axios’ love for Periboea is successfully consummated) suggests either an ingenious prose chronicler or a learned poet. In the Hellenistic age there were close connexions between the two, as we can see from the case of Callimachus’ Aetia, which derived almost all of its subject matter from local chroniclers, several of whom are mentioned by name in the poem itself. The desire to connect the Syrian bulls with those which Heracles captured from Geryon has the same flavour. Is there any reason to think that a Hellenistic poet might have been specially interested in the myths of Apamea on the Orontes?

As it happens, there is. This poet would have been one of the biggest names around at the time when Antiochus III (the Great) succeeded to the throne in 223 B.C. By then the greatest age of Hellenistic poetry had passed, but there were still figures of substance to be hired. We hear of several men of letters connected with Antiochus III, and to the post of Public Librarian (which would inevitably invite comparison with the Librarianship at Alexandria) he invited the scholar-poet Euphorion of Chalcis, who would probably have been in his early fifties at the time, and perhaps was living in Athens.

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57 See G.O.Hutchinson, Hellenistic Poetry, Oxford, 1988, 41 with n. 30. Another place where prose chroniclers and learned poets rub shoulders is in the sources quoted at the head of each chapter for the myths in Parthenius’ Ἐρωτικὰ Πρὸιματα.
Euphorion's poetry was strongly influenced by that of Callimachus, we have no evidence that the former was ever connected with Alexandria, and so he might be quite willing to join a rival court. It is a natural assumption that Antiochus' Library was situated in his capital, Antioch.\(^59\) Perhaps, after working there, Euphorion retired to live in Apamea on the Orontes; at any rate, the majority opinion, recorded in the Suda (ε 3801 Adler), was that he was buried in Apamea:

Εὐφορίων... ἢλθεν πρὸς Ἀντίοχον τῶν Μέγαν ἐν Εὐρίδει βασιλεύοντα καὶ προέστη ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐκείνης δημοκράτιας βιβλιοθήκης. καὶ τέλευτάς εἰς Ἄπαμείαν, ὡς δὲ τινες ἐν Ἀντιοχεία.

Euphorion was certainly interested in the Labours of Heracles,\(^60\) in the hero's journey to the far west\(^61\) and in his return with the cattle of Geryon - the line-ending of fr. 52 Powell χαλκεύτης ὁκέατοι βουσκλήθεις εὐροθείνη is repeated in Cyn. 2,110.\(^62\)

It would be interesting to know how much poetry, and of what kind, Euphorion continued to write after his migration to the Seleucid realm.\(^63\) Only one clear piece of evidence survives. Fr. 174 Powell alludes to a dream which indicated to Laodice, mother of the first Seleucus, that her son would become ruler of Asia:\(^64\)

'Seleuco regnum Asiae Laodice mater nondum eum enixa providit; Euphorion provulgavit.'

Seleucus I had been dead for some sixty years when Euphorion came to Syria. No doubt Antiochus the Great still liked to be reminded of the origin of his dynasty,\(^65\) but perhaps it

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\(^{59}\) Thus Downey (n. 7), 94. If the Library was in Antioch, and Euphorion had worked there before moving to Apamea, that might account for the alternative opinion recorded in the Suda (below) that he died in Antioch.

\(^{60}\) Frs. 24, 37 and 51 Powell all concern Cerberus.

\(^{61}\) Fr. 166 (the Pillars of Heracles, previously called after Briareus).

\(^{62}\) For another link between Euphorion (SH 418,42) and [Oppian] (Cyn. 2,9) see p. 155 above. There is in fact a papyrus fragment of Euphorion (Suppl. Hell. 429) in which a Periboea is wooed or wedded (429,4) in watery surroundings, but I lay absolutely no stress on this, since only the first half of the lines is preserved; nothing suggests any connexion with Apamea, and the whole context is totally obscure. Euphorion may be hopping from one myth to another, as he does frequently.

\(^{63}\) The surviving fragments of Euphorion contain many geographical references to Asia Minor, but, of course, he could have made these while living in Chalcis or Athens H.W.Parke, The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor, 1985, 173, suggested (not very plausibly, to my mind) that Euphorion's account of the Grynean Grove (fr. 97 Powell) was meant to gain the favour of the Attalids.

\(^{64}\) Preserved in Tertullian, of all places. Van Groningen (n. 58 above) is inclined to attribute this to a prose work (his fr. 183), but I would have thought a poem more likely. There are several other references to such a dream, which also showed that the father of Laodice's son was Apollo. Appian (Syr. 56) and Justin (15,4) mention a ring with an anchor engraved upon it, a gift from the god. Already in 1843 A.Meineke, commenting on this fragment of Euphorion (his Euphorion 45 in Analecta Alexandrina, p. 77), noted the relevance of the anchor which often appears on early Seleucid coins. Robert A.Hadley, 'Hieronymus of Cardia and Early Seleucid Mythology', Historia 18, 1969, 142-152, did not include the testimony to Euphorion.

\(^{65}\) The 'regnum Asiae' of Seleucus I would also be of special concern to Antiochus III, since the latter made strenuous efforts to regain control of the eastern territories (Parthia and Bactria) which had been lost in the intervening period.
is worth raising the possibility that Euphorion was concerned with the city which Seleucus I
founded to commemorate his mother, and that was Laodicea on Sea, one of the sister
foundations of Apamea on the Orontes. Laodicea contained an object which would certainly
have interested Euphorion - the statue of Artemis supposedly brought by Orestes and
Iphigenia from Tauris to Brauron in Attica. So Euphorion would have found congenial
topics connected with Apamea and its district; as a known mythological innovator, he
himself may have played a part in the formation of local myths. If I am right that Nonnus
knows a myth of Orontes' love for an Apamean water-nymph which is almost, but not quite,
identical to what we find in [Oppian], Cyn. 2, then Euphorion, as one of Nonnus' favourite
models, would be an appropriate source for Dion. 40,146-148.

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66 This had been captured by the Persians and, in due course, presented by Seleucus I to his newly-
founded city of Laodicea on Sea, where it appeared on the coinage and was still preserved in the time of
Pausanias (3,16,8).
67 Pausanias (10,26,8) considers Euphorion's account of the Trojan princess Laodice (cf. fr. 72 Powell -
one need not deduce that the Atridae treated her badly) to be too farfetched to be worth mentioning.
68 In CQ N.S. 26, 1976, 148, I very rashly brought Dion. 40,146ff. into relationship with what is now
Euphorion, Suppl. Hell. 429 (see n. 62 above).

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